

JNGVO demands action against illegal mining in Sengmai River

Imphal, Feb 26: A memorandum was submitted to the Deputy Commissioner of Kakching by the Joint Non-Government Voluntary Organisation (JNGVO), urging the district administration to take strict action against those involved in illegal sand and stone extraction from the Sengmai River. In the memorandum signed by JNGVO President Kshetrimayum Chhatradhari and General Secretary Nongmaithem Bheigyachandra, the organisation stated that the Sengmai River serves as a vital source of water for the people of Pallel, Unapal, Kakching, Keirak, Wabagai, Irengband Hawairou, Mairenbam and adjoining areas. The river water is used for various purposes, including water supply schemes, irrigation for agricultural fields, fish farming, and other domestic needs. The organisation pointed out that during the ongoing dry season, the water level in the river has significantly decreased, and the continuous extraction of sand and stones has further worsened the situation. Upon inspection, the organisation reportedly found that heavy machinery such as JCBs and poclains are being used for large-scale extraction of sand and stones from the riverbed. Stating that water is essential for human survival, the memorandum emphasised that such activities not only affect the availability of water but also pose a serious threat to the ecological balance of the region. The organisation urged the Deputy Commissioner to conduct a thorough inquiry and take appropriate legal action against individuals involved in the alleged illegal activities in order to safeguard public interest and protect the environment.

Preventive pet vaccination camp conducted

Imphal, Feb 26: In view of the upcoming Yaoshang festival, a preventive vaccination camp for pets was organised at Social Workers Congress (SWC), Khongman, in collaboration with the Veterinary Dispensary, Akampat, Imphal East. During the drive, over 40 dogs and cats were administered vaccines to safeguard them against potential diseases. The initiative was undertaken as a precautionary measure to ensure public health and animal safety during the festive season. With Yaoshang around the corner, local playgrounds are expected to witness increased participation of children and youth in sports and cultural activities. Young boys and girls traditionally visit households to collect 'Nakhadeng' as part of the celebration. Considering the heightened outdoor movement and community interactions, the vaccination campaign was conducted to minimise health risks and promote a safe festive environment for residents and their pets. Organisers expressed hope that such proactive measures would contribute to a joyful and incident-free Yaoshang celebration in the locality.

Mizoram launches PMFBY for five crops with a massive 90% state subsidy



Aizawl, Feb 26 : The Mizoram government will roll out a comprehensive crop insurance scheme covering five key crops to shield farmers from financial losses caused by natural disasters and pests and diseases, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister PC Vanlalruata informed the Assembly on Wednesday. The scheme will be implemented under the state's flagship 'Bana Kaih' (Hand-holding) initiative and aligned with the Centre's Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). Vanlalruata said the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department has initiated steps to operationalise the central government's scheme in the state. A State Level Coordination Committee on Crop Insurance (SLCCCI), constituted for implementing PMFBY, has notified five crops for coverage — paddy, ginger, Mizo chilli, cabbage and brinjal (eggplant).

The minister said the scheme will initially be introduced in select districts with high production potential and later expanded in phases to other parts of the state. While the initial phase focuses on selected high-potential areas, the government plans to extend coverage to additional districts in a phased manner," Vanlalruata told the House. Under the notified

plan, ginger farmers across all 11 districts will be covered. Paddy growers in Champhai, Kolasib and Mamit districts will be eligible, while Mizo chilli farmers in Serchhip, Saitual and Hnahthial districts will be brought under the scheme. Brinjal and cabbage growers in Serchhip district will also be covered. To ease the financial burden on farmers, the state government will provide substantial premium subsidies through the Bana Kaih scheme. Small and marginal farmers holding less than one hectare of land will pay only 10 per cent of the insurance premium, with the remaining 90 per cent borne by the state. Farmers with landholdings between one and five hectares will receive an 80 per cent premium subsidy, while those owning more than five hectares will be entitled to a 50 per cent state contribution towards the premium, the minister said. Vanlalruata credited Chief Minister Lalduhoma for prioritising the introduction of crop insurance in the state. Earlier this month, the minister had said that a tender process had been completed and TATA AIG General Insurance Company had been selected as the insurer for the scheme. Under the notified plan, ginger farmers across all 11 districts will be covered. Paddy growers in Champhai, Kolasib and Mamit districts will be eligible, while Mizo chilli farmers in Serchhip, Saitual and Hnahthial districts will be brought under the scheme. Brinjal and cabbage growers in Serchhip district will also be covered. Officials noticed a sudden and suspicious spike in portal entries which, if left unchecked, could have resulted in an inflated government payout.

Mizoram Assembly passes Bill to move State University headquarters to Lunglei

Aizawl, Feb 26: The Mizoram Assembly on Wednesday passed the Mizoram State University (Amendment) Bill, relocating the proposed university's headquarters from Aizawl to Lunglei in the southern part of the state. The Amendment reverses last year's decision to designate Aizawl as the headquarters of the proposed university. Introducing the Bill, Higher and Technical Education Minister Vanlalhlana said the decision was intended to address regional development imbalances and promote equitable growth across the state. The proposed university will function in a "cluster mode", bringing various existing colleges under a unified administrative framework. Although the government had initiated the creation of staff posts and begun the process of identifying a Vice-Chancellor and Registrar, the Minister clarified that the amendment represents a change of site rather than a physical relocation.

"The headquarters had not been fully established in Aizawl; only the site had been surveyed. The centre is not being shifted but changed," he said, adding that the decision followed sustained representations from residents



of Lunglei, Champhai and Mamit districts. While extending support to the Bill, Opposition members raised questions over the timing of the reversal. Some alleged that the government had yielded to pressure from non-governmental organisations and legislators from the ruling party representing

southern districts. BJP member K. Hrahmo alleged that the government reconsidered its 2025 decision after legislators from Lunglei threatened to resign. Chief Minister Lalduhoma sought to allay concerns, stating that the shift of headquarters to Lunglei would not diminish Aizawl's academ-

ic importance. Under the cluster model, several departments and schools of the proposed university will continue to function from colleges in Aizawl, as originally envisaged. Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma announced on November 20 that the main campus of the proposed state university will now

be located in Lunglei, reversing the earlier plan to establish it in Aizawl.

The announcement was made during a meeting of the Lunglei High Powered Committee (HPC) in the southern town. Lalduhoma stated that the government revised the plan in consideration of public opinion and is ready to amend the law if necessary to set up the campus in Lunglei. The new university aims to be teaching-focused and align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which requires all colleges to affiliate with a university within 15 years. Higher and Technical Education Minister Vanlalhlana explained that the state university will follow a cluster model, integrating multiple colleges and institutions under a single academic framework. He added that Mizoram University (MZU), the state's only central university, will be transformed into a research-intensive institution by 2035, leaving the 21 existing colleges in need of affiliation elsewhere. Only three colleges currently meet the criteria for autonomous degree-granting status, and the rest would otherwise have to seek affiliation with universities outside Mizoram.

Samriddhi NE brings together entrepreneurs, buyers and institutions for regional growth

Aizawl, Feb 26: The Samriddhi Northeast 2026 – Entrepreneurs Summit commenced on Wednesday on the NEHHDC campus, Guwahati, marking a significant step towards strengthening the entrepreneurial and artisan ecosystem of Northeast India. Organised by North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC) in collaboration with TiDE and supported by Foundation for MSME Clusters (FMC), the two-day event aims to provide a dynamic platform for entrepreneurs, startups, MSMEs and artisan-led enterprises to engage with buyers, policymakers, financial institutions and ecosystem partners.

During the NEHHDC session, key initiatives for enterprise development, incubation support and market linkage were presented, highlighting the cor-

poration's role in enabling artisans and entrepreneurs to scale from local strengths to national and global markets. A special address was delivered by Pritam Dutta, Director, Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), who emphasized the importance of structured capacity building, innovation and collaboration for strengthening the region's enterprise ecosystem. The highlight of the day was the panel discussion on the theme: "Building Sustainable Enterprises in the Northeast: From Local Strengths to Scalable Markets." The session was moderated by Shri Anjan Chowdhury, NLP Practitioner and Founder of Skillfinity, and featured eminent panelists. The panel deliberated on market access, branding, export readiness, institutional support and the need for innovation-driven business models for artisans

and MSMEs of the Northeast. Post-lunch sessions included an Enterprise Enablement Session by TiDE focusing on digital finance, compliance readiness and formalisation pathways for business growth. This was followed by an interactive workshop titled "The Art of Business Communication for Entrepreneurs", facilitated by Shri Anjan Chowdhury, where participants were trained on effective communication, pitching and professional branding. An Open Platform Brand Pitch session provided selected entrepreneurs an opportunity to present their products and business ideas directly before experts and mentors, receiving valuable feedback and guidance. The day concluded with an Open Discussion & Enterprise Clinics session, offering interactive Q&A on finance, markets, branding and compliance, followed by

a closing session outlining key takeaways and post-event support pathways. Running parallel to the summit is a live enterprise exhibition featuring startups, MSMEs and artisan-led brands from across Northeast India. The exhibition enables product showcasing, buyer interaction and networking opportunities.

Samriddhi Northeast 2026 has drawn participation from entrepreneurs, startups, artisan businesses, MSMEs, buyers and institutional and financial stakeholders, reaffirming its role as a collaborative platform for regional enterprise development. The second day of the event will host the Buyer-Seller Meet, facilitating direct B2B and B2C engagements, product pitching and new market connections, further strengthening commercial linkages for Northeast-based enterprises.

Jan Samvaad based IEC campaign held in Kakching

Imphal, Feb 26: The Government is conducting a structured six-week Jan Samvaad (Public Outreach) based Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign for dissemination of the provisions of the Viksit Bharat -- Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025 (VB-G RAM G) across all the districts in the State. The statement was made by Additional Deputy Commissioner, P. Shantikumar Singh at a Jan Samvaad (Public Outreach) based IEC programme held at Conference Hall, DC Office Complex in Kakching district attended by district officials, including officials from Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (RD & PR) and District Information Office (DIPR). Shantikumar informed that the Act was notified on December 21, 2025, replacing the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005. P. Shantikumar Singh stated that works under the new legislation will be aligned with the broader national mission of Viksit Bharat@2047, with planning to be carried out at the grassroots level through the preparation of a Viksit Gram Panchayat Plan at each Gram Panchayat. He continued that if employment is not provided within 15 days of such application, the applicant becomes eligible for unemployment allowance. The allowance is fixed at one-fourth of the wage for the first 30 days and 50 per cent of the wage for days exceeding 30 days. He further stated that no works will be taken up for a period of 60 days during peak agricultural seasons, particularly during sowing and harvesting.

Experts at conclave push for acceleration of renewable energy growth in North East

Guwahati, Feb 26: The Northeast India Clean Energy Conclave was organised in Guwahati on Thursday, bringing together senior government leaders, regulators, industry representatives, financial institutions and technology providers to help chart a structured roadmap for renewable energy scale-up across the Northeastern states.

Organised by the International Forum for Environment, Sustainability and Technology (iFOREST) at NEDFi House as a dedicated regional knowledge and investment platform, the conclave focused on unlocking the region's estimated 130 GW renewable energy potential.

With nearly nine per cent of India's waterbodies and significant hydro and solar resources, the Northeast has the potential to anchor India's next phase of clean energy expansion. However, installed renewable capacity remains limited, underscoring a substantial opportunity for developers, financiers and technology providers.

Presenting the Northeast's clean energy growth opportunity, Mandvi Singh, programme director, iFOREST, said "The Northeast stands at a pivotal moment in India's clean energy transition. With strong hydro and solar resources and rising demand, it can play a significant role in the country's next phase of renewable growth."

"The priority now is to convert identified opportunities into bankable projects through policy clarity, offtake certainty, and integrated storage and transmission planning," Singh said.

Arup Misra, chairman, Assam Pollution Control board said, "Renewable energy is not trying to push fossil fuel out. It is trying to integrate a more variable, reliable and flexible energy delivery system."

The conclave was inaugurated by Jadav Saikia,



secretary (power), Government of Assam, who said, "Assam has notified its solar, PSP and thermal power generation policy in 2025 so that future clean energy transition becomes smooth and easy. Currently, three PSP projects are in progress of capacities more than 3000 MW capacity."

The Northeast is projected to witness a steady rise in electricity demand—from 24,417 MU in 2025–26 to 34,572 MU in 2031–32, with peak demand expected to increase from 4,996 MW to

7,192 MW. Meeting this demand reliably will require not only additional capacity but a diversified, flexibility-oriented power system.

The region's renewable energy potential is dominated by hydro resources in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Meghalaya, complemented by expanding solar opportunities across Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Nagaland, and Mizoram. Solar deployment, though nascent, is gaining traction with supportive state policies and pilot initiatives, including battery energy storage and floating solar projects.

NE/EAST

60 Northeast Districts in focus as India targets HIV control by 1 December 2027

Guwahati, Feb 26: With 60 high-priority districts in the Northeast under the scanner, India has set an ambitious target to achieve HIV control by 1 December 2027, coinciding with World AIDS Day, under the banner of Mission AIDS Suraksha. Dr Gupta said the concentration of high-priority districts in the region underscores the Northeast's critical role in India's HIV response. "The Northeastern states remain a priority due to their unique epidemiological patterns and vulnerabilities. Context-specific interventions and stronger district-level planning are essential," he noted. In Assam alone, districts such as Cachar, Dibrugarh, Kamrup Metro, Nagaon, Nalbari, and Sivasagar have been identified as high priority. In Arunachal Pradesh, East Siang, Lower Dibang Valley, Namsai, Papum Pare, and Tirap are among those under review. At the same time, Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills, East Khasi Hills, Ri Bhoi, and West Jaintia Hills are also part of the intensified monitoring framework. The Northeast has historically reported higher HIV prevalence in certain pockets compared to the national average, influenced by factors such as cross-border mobility, difficult terrain, stigma, and limited access to healthcare in remote areas. Officials emphasised that strengthening inter-departmental coordination, expanding testing and ART coverage, and enhancing community outreach will be key to accelerating progress. Senior officials, including Project Directors of State AIDS Control Societies from all seven Northeastern states, are participating in the review, which is being conducted in three batches to allow state-specific deliberations. The deliberations in Guwahati are expected to culminate in tailored roadmaps aligned with each state's epidemiological profile, reinforcing India's commitment to ending AIDS as a public health threat in the Northeast by 2027. The meeting is reviewing implementation under the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP), focusing on micro-level performance indicators, identifying ser-



vice delivery gaps, and preparing district-specific corrective action plans. A central goal of Mission AIDS Suraksha is achieving the global 95-95-99 targets — ensuring that 95% of people living with HIV know their status, 95% of those diagnosed receive sustained antiretroviral therapy (ART), and 99% of those on treatment achieve viral suppression.

District representatives are expected to draft actionable strategies during the workshop to move towards "Surakshit Plus" status by meeting these benchmarks. The announcement was made by Dr Rakesh Gupta, Additional

Secretary and Director General of the National AIDS Control Organisation under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, at the inaugural session of a three-day regional review meeting in Guwahati on Tuesday. The Guwahati workshop marks the launch of the first among 11 regional Suraksha Sankalp Karyashalas being held across India during February–March 2026. These workshops aim to fast-track progress in 219 high-priority districts nationwide, of which 60 are located in the seven Northeastern states, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura (excluding Sikkim).

Tangkhum Naga Long condemns Litan violence,

Guwahati, Feb 26: The Tangkhul Naga Long (TNL), the apex civil body of the Tangkhul Nagas, has condemned recent incidents of violence in Litan and adjoining Naga-inhabited areas, alleging targeted attacks on Naga villagers and encroachment on ancestral land. In a statement issued on Wednesday, the TNL Working Committee said the unrest followed an alleged attempt to murder a Tangkhul villager on the evening of February 7 in Litan. It stated that Stalin A. Shimray, a school teacher, was assaulted around 9.10 p.m. without provocation and sustained grievous injuries. The organisation further alleged that on February 8, armed Kuki militants entered Sikibung/Sharkaphung village and set fire to more than 23 houses belonging to Tangkhul Nagas, including that of the village headman. It claimed that gunshots were fired towards inhabited areas, triggering panic among residents.

The TNL expressed concern over what it described as the open movement of fully armed Suspension of Operations (SoO) cadres in the presence of central security forces over the past 18 days, alleging that such movement violated the revised SoO agreement. It further claimed that foreign militants, including cadres of the KNA(B), were present in SoO camps. Raising questions over the role of central security forces, the TNL alleged that instead of safeguarding Naga lives and property, certain forces appeared to be siding with Kuki militants. It accused the Centre of attempting to create a "separate homeland/administration" for Kukis within Naga areas and warned against what it termed "demographic engineering" in Naga-inhabited regions. According to the TNL, fresh incidents were reported on February 23, when parts of the Lungter Hill Range in Sinakeithe village were allegedly set ablaze. The body also alleged that a villager, Aseng Awungshi, was abducted at gunpoint, and that another narrowly escaped after shots were fired at him.

Hidden camera found in TISS Guwahati girls' hostel bathroom

Guwahati, Feb 26: The discovery of a hidden camera in the bathroom of a girls' hostel at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Guwahati campus in Jalukbari, has sparked concern among students, prompting a police investigation.

The device was reportedly noticed on Tuesday when a student spotted a suspicious object while using the hostel bathroom. Upon closer inspection, it was found to be a concealed camera. The incident led to unrest among students, who de-

manded immediate action and accountability from the institute to safeguard their privacy and security. TISS authorities have since lodged a First Information Report (FIR), and Guwahati Police have initiated an investigation. The administration further stated that it stands in solidarity with the affected students and that support services have been put in place. "TISS Guwahati stands in solidarity with all the students and support services are in place for the most affected students. The

institute remains committed to ensuring a safe, secure, and respectful campus environment for all students. We request that all media and stakeholders respect the privacy of the students while reporting on this matter," it added. In a statement, the TISS Guwahati administration described the incident as a "serious privacy violation and is entirely unacceptable and condemnable." The institute said it has filed a police complaint and is fully cooperating with the investigation.

Tripura crime rate declines by 8.30 percent as narcotics crackdown intensifies, says CM

Guwahati, Feb 26: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Wednesday said the state government has intensified its crackdown on narcotics trafficking, border-related crimes, and cyber offences, while asserting that the overall crime rate declined by 8.30 percent in 2025 compared to the previous year. Addressing the Tripura Police Week celebration, Saha said, "Registration of cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act rose by 11.06 percent in 2025 compared to 2024. Seizures of ganja increased by 14.41 percent, cough syrup by 145.73 percent, and narcotic tablets by 26.67 percent during the same period." According to him, the destruction of ganja plantations doubled, with a 94.71 percent increase. "To identify and detect ganja plantations, we are taking the assistance of advanced technology and science. Overall seizure and destruction of narcotic substances rose by 92.70 percent, with an estimated value of Rs 1,641.89 crore," the chief minister said. On border security, Saha said police were acting as a second line of defence and action was being taken against touts facilitating infiltration. "In 2025, 576 infiltrators and 102 touts were arrested," he added. He said several bank accounts linked to cybercrime had been frozen and the cyber police station was being strengthened. "Criminals have changed their modus operandi; technology has to be



adopted to fight new-age crimes and criminals," he said. Saha said the overall crime rate declined by 8.30 percent in 2025 compared to the preceding year. "The total number of cases dropped from 4,033 in 2024 to 3,698 in 2025, with property-related crimes being among the lowest in the country," he added. On crimes against women, the chief minister said the state ranked 11th in terms of the least number of cases reported, with an average of 37.8 cases per one lakh population. "Women help desks have been set up in all police stations, the 1091 women's helpline has been operationalised, and at least one women police station has been established in each district," he said. Saha said

road accidents declined by 8.82 percent in 2025 compared to 2024, while deaths due to accidents fell by 13 percent. "Sixteen black spots and 84 accident-prone areas have been identified as part of our measures to ensure zero fatalities due to accidents. We have also introduced interceptors," he added. He said around 20 vehicles and more than 100 motorcycles had been flagged off for police use, and 80 more vehicles would be distributed. "Modernisation of the police force, including exploration of artificial intelligence and GPS-enabled systems, is necessary for effective policing," he said while responding to a query during a press conference.

At the press conference, Saha said the law and order situation had improved and attributed the increase in tourist footfall to better policing. "Political interference in policing has been removed permanently," he added. He said police had been instructed to take necessary steps to maintain peace. According to him, the conviction rate increased last year and now stands at a very satisfactory level. The new criminal laws provide a time-bound approach for speedy trials, he added. Saha also said 500 police personnel donated blood during a camp organised to mark Police Week and that awareness rallies against drug abuse would be conducted across the state.

Mizoram PMFBY for five crops with up



Aizawl, Feb 26: The Mizoram government will roll out a comprehensive crop insurance scheme covering five key crops to shield farmers from financial losses caused by natural disasters and pests and diseases, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister PC Vanlalruata informed the Assembly on Wednesday. "While the initial phase focuses on selected high-potential areas, the government plans to extend coverage to additional districts in a phased manner," Vanlalruata told the House. Farmers with landholdings between one and five hectares will receive an 80 per cent premium subsidy, while those owning more than five hectares will be entitled to a 50 per cent state contribution towards the premium, the minister said.

Vanlalruata credited Chief Minister Lalduhoma for prioritising the introduction of crop insurance in the state.

Earlier this month, the minister had said that a tender process had been completed and TATA AIG General Insurance Company had been selected as the insurer for the scheme. Under the notified plan, ginger farmers across all 11 districts will be covered. Paddy growers in Champhai, Kolasib and Mamit districts will be eligible, while

Mizo chilli farmers in Serchhip, Saitual and Hnahthial districts will be brought under the scheme. Brinjal and cabbage growers in Serchhip district will also be covered.

To ease the financial burden on farmers, the state government will provide substantial premium subsidies through the Bana Kaih scheme. Small and marginal farmers holding less than one hectare of land will pay only 10 per cent of the insurance premium, with the remaining 90 per cent borne by the state. The scheme will be implemented under the state's flagship 'Bana Kaih' (Handholding) initiative and aligned with the Centre's Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). Vanlalruata said the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department has initiated steps to operationalise the central government's scheme in the state. A State Level Coordination Committee on Crop Insurance (SLCCCI), constituted for implementing PMFBY, has notified five crops for coverage — paddy, ginger, Mizo chilli, cabbage and brinjal (eggplant). The minister said the scheme will initially be introduced in select districts with high production potential and later expanded in phases to other parts of the state.

Foundation stone laid for new Namrup Police Station under MOITRI scheme

Dibrugarh, Feb 26: The foundation stone for the new building of Namrup Police Station in Assam's Dibrugarh district was laid by Naharkatia LAC MLA Taranga Gogoi in the presence of Dibrugarh Superintendent of Police Abhijit Gurav Dilip.

The new police station will be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 2.56 crore under the Mission for Overall Improvement of Thana for Responsive Image (MOITRI) Scheme of the Assam Government. The scheme aims to upgrade police infrastructure across the state to ensure improved public service delivery and promote a more citizen-friendly policing system. Addressing the gathering, MLA Taranga Gogoi noted the state government's commitment to modernising police stations and strengthening law enforcement infrastructure. She stated that the new building would provide enhanced facilities for police personnel as well as the public, fostering a more efficient, transparent, and responsive work environment. Speaking on the occasion, SSP Abhijit Gurav Dilip said the upgraded infrastructure would significantly improve operational efficiency and enable the police to serve residents more effectively. He added that



the MOITRI scheme reflects the government's vision of strengthening trust between the police and the community by improving facilities and accessibility. The upcoming building is expected to feature modern amenities, improved workspace arrangements, and dedicated public interface areas. Upon completion, it is anti-

cipated to bolster policing capabilities in Namrup and surrounding areas of Dibrugarh district. Local residents and officials present at the event welcomed the initiative and expressed hope that the new infrastructure would contribute to enhanced public safety and smoother grievance redressal mechanisms in the region.

Furniture brand Royaloak expands retail presence in NE

Guwahati, Feb 26: Leading furniture brand Royaloak Furniture has expanded its retail presence with the launch of its second flagship store at Dharapur in Guwahati.

The new store showcases the brand's premium international furniture collections and reinforces its commitment to delivering high-quality home furnishing solutions in Northeast India. The store was inaugurated in the presence of Vijai Subramaniam, Chairman, Royaloak Incorporation Pvt Ltd and Mathan Subramaniam, Managing Director.



Spread across 18,500 square feet, the store offers a comprehensive range of furniture for living rooms, bedrooms, dining spaces, study and office areas, outdoor settings, home décor and mattresses.

The expansion is expected to generate employment opportunities and strengthen partnerships with local vendors and stakeholders.

Speaking at the launch, Subramaniam said the company remains committed to expanding its footprint and delivering international-quality furniture at affordable prices while enhancing customer experience in emerging markets.

Royaloak Furniture is India's premier furniture brand, offering modern and luxurious furnishings for every home. Founded in 2010, the company operates over 200 stores across India and the UAE and provides more than 10,000 products sourced from 12 countries.

Manipur, Mizoram under intensive review as India fast-tracks HIV control target for 2027

Aizawl, Feb 26: "Granular planning, data-driven monitoring and strong local ownership are essential to bend the curve of new infections in high-prevalence States like Manipur and Mizoram", said Dr. Rakesh Gupta, Additional Secretary and Director General, NACO while addressing the participants in the second day of the ongoing three-day review workshop under Mission AIDS Suraksha.

During the workshop an intensive review of the HIV response in Manipur and Mizoram was undertaken. The workshop, being held in Guwahati, is convened by National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare to accelerate progress in high-priority districts of the Northeastern region of the country.

Chaired by Dr Rakesh Gupta, the workshop is reviewing state-specific epidemiological trends, district-level gaps and targeted strategies to fast-track India's progress towards achieving the 95-95-99 targets and attaining HIV control by December 1, 2027, coinciding with World AIDS Day.

During the deliberations on the Day 2 of Suraksha Sankalp Karyashala, detailed district-level reviews were undertaken for the 12 identified high-priority districts of Manipur and the 11 high-priority districts of Mizoram. The discussions examined epidemiological trends, programme coverage, treatment outcomes, viral load suppression levels and outreach among high-risk groups. Manipur, with an adult HIV prevalence of 0.81 per cent and an estimated burden of over 23,000 people living with HIV, remains a priority State in the national HIV response. Districts including Bishnupur, Chandel, Churachandpur, Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal and Ukhrul were reviewed in detail to assess micro-level indicators and identify gaps in testing, linkage to treatment, retention in care and viral suppression.

Mizoram, which has the highest HIV prevalence rates in the country at 2.75 per cent and an estimated burden exceeding 26,000 people living with HIV, was also reviewed extensively. Districts such as Aizawl, Champhai, Kolasib, Lunglei, Serchhip, Mamit and Siaha were assessed for district-specific strategies,



with particular emphasis on intensified testing strategies, index testing, improved linkage to treatment, scaling up OST services, and focused interventions among youth and high-risk groups. Special attention was given to bridging gaps in early detection and strengthening follow-up mechanisms to ensure treatment adherence and viral suppression.

Dr Gupta in his address emphasised, "India has set a clear and time-bound goal to attain HIV control by December 1, 2027. Every high-priority district must translate this commitment into measurable outcomes aligned with the 95-95-99

targets."

The primary objective of the workshops is to strategise and accelerate progress towards achieving the global 95-95-99 targets, ensuring that 95% of all people living with HIV know their HIV status, 95% of those diagnosed receive sustained antiretroviral therapy (ART), and 99% of those on treatment achieve viral suppression.

The workshop will continue with further technical sessions and state reviews aimed at consolidating efforts under Mission AIDS Suraksha to attain HIV control by December 1, 2027.

MZP demands stricter ILP enforcement in Mizoram to curb rising non-local influx

Aizawl, Feb 26: The Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), Mizoram's apex student body, has expressed serious concern over a growing influx of non-tribal people into the state and the apparent circumvention of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system. The organisation has urged the state government to strengthen existing mechanisms to ensure stricter adherence to ILP regulations. During a press conference in Aizawl on Monday, MZP President C. Lalremruata said recent mon-



itoring revealed a critical gap in enforcement. An increasing number of non-locals, he noted, are entering the state

under "self-sponsorship" or through sponsorship by other non-local entities, bypassing the traditional requirement for

endorsement by indigenous permanent residents. A verification drive conducted on Saturday in coordination with the 'College Students' Union of Aizawl led to the apprehension of 90 individuals residing or working in the state without valid permits. The individuals were handed over to the state police for formal legal proceedings. Lalremruata pointed out a shift in the movement patterns of non-locals, noting that many are now using motorcycles, predominantly registered in Assam community.

Assam tribal students demand fair probe into racial abuse case in Delhi

Guwahati, Feb 26: The All-Assam Tribal Students Union (AATSU) has demanded a fair, impartial and thorough investigation into the incident of a couple hurling racial slurs at three women from Arunachal Pradesh in New Delhi.

The couple has, meanwhile been, arrested and produced before a court which subsequently remanded them to 14 days' judicial custody. An investigation by Delhi Police is underway.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, AATSU expressed deep anguish and concern over the incident in Malviya Nagar, South Delhi during which the women from Arunachal were allegedly subjected to racial slurs, humiliation, and intimidation by their neighbours following a minor dispute over repair work in their rented accommodation.

According to widely circulated video footage and media reports, the victims were verbally abused with degrading remarks, stereotyped on the basis of appearance and profes-

sion, and subjected to racially charged statements targeting people from Northeast India.

Calling the incident a grave violation of constitutional values, AATSU emphasised that this was not merely a neighbourhood disagreement but a serious act of racial hostility and cultural contempt.

"Such behaviour undermines the principles of dignity, equality and unity, and causes deep distress not only to the affected women but to Northeastern citizens across the country," the union stated.

The union further urged the Delhi Police to conduct a fair and impartial inquiry based on evidence and witness statements, besides ascertaining all facts surrounding the incident, including verification of video footage.

It further demanded strict and appropriate legal action against the accused if they are found guilty under relevant sections of the law.

PLA, PREPAK cadres arrested from different locations



Imphal, Feb 26: Security forces arrested an active cadre of RPF/PLA, identified as Chingakham Rocky Singh alias Sanathoi alias Ipumba (38) of Andro Torongthel from Ingourok Makha Leikai area under Nongpok Sekmai-PS, Thoubal district. A mobile phone along with SIM card was seized from him. Security forces also arrested an extortionist, a PREPAK active cadre, namely Nahakpam Sibananda Singh alias Amuthoi (32) of Phouden Moirang Palli, from Singjamei Thongam Leikai area, Singjamei-PS Imphal West district. An associate of his who assisted him in the transaction of the extortion money, one Deviya Mongjam (29) of Kwakeithel Nganapithong Mapal, Imphal West District was also arrested from her residence. Two mobile phones, an iPad and an Aadhaar card were seized from them. Meanwhile, security forces arrested a constable driver of Manipur Police, identified as Kongkham Sanajaoba Singh alias Ibomcha (43) of Utlou Chanura, under Nambol-PS, Bishnupur district from his locality. Despite serving in the Manipur Police department, the arrestee was involved in recruitment of cadres for KCP (MFL) as an active cadre of the banned organisation.

Neheru statue vandalism

Guwahati, Feb 26: Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Gaurav Gogoi, has strongly condemned the incident in which miscreants allegedly used a JCB to damage the statue of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, at Poilapool in the Lakhipur constituency of Cachar district. In a statement, Gogoi said, "Such an act does not merely destroy a statue; it insults the legacy of a great leader and distinguished freedom fighter who laid the foundation of modern India."

He further stated that while there may be differences in political ideology, any attempt to erase demo-

cratic history through such unethical actions is completely unacceptable.

The APCC president also expressed concern that despite such a disgraceful incident occurring during the BJP's tenure, the government has maintained a disturbing silence on the matter. "The strength of India and Assam lies in upholding pluralism and democratic values — and we must safeguard them at all costs," he added.

Gogoi urged the authorities to immediately identify those involved in the condemnable act and take strict action against them. He asserted that the people of Assam will never accept such acts of vandalism.

Silchar Murder Case Verdict After Two Decades

Silchar, Feb 26: More than two decades after a murder that shook Silchar and led to curfew being imposed in the town, a Fast Track Court in Cachar district has sentenced three men, including a local businessman, to life imprisonment in connection with the 2004 killing of Munna Majumdar. In a significant judgment delivered on Wednesday, February 25, the Court of the Additional Sessions Judge (Fast Track Court), Cachar, presided over by Bankim Sharma, pronounced life imprisonment for cloth merchant Dhanraj Surana and his two employees, Ratan Debnath and Rinku Dev alias Madhusudan Dev. Surana is a resident of Swarupa Complex in Janiganj, Silchar, while Debnath and Dev are residents of Udharband. Munna Majumdar, a resident of Shiv Colony in Silchar, was employed at Surana Garments, owned by Surana. According to court records, on November 5, 2004, Surana and his two employees took Majumdar to Silchar Medical College and Hospital, where he was declared brought dead. The circumstances surrounding his death immediately aroused suspicion, triggering widespread public outrage. The incident severely affected the law-and-order situation in Silchar at the time, prompting authorities to impose curfew to prevent further escalation. The case drew intense public attention, particu-



larly due to the employer-employee relationship between the accused and the deceased, and remained one of the most talked-about criminal cases in the town's history. After prolonged legal proceedings spanning over two decades, including detailed examination of evidence and witness testimonies, the Fast Track Court concluded the trial and delivered its verdict, sentencing all three

accused to life imprisonment. Legal observers have described the judgment as a reaffirmation of the judiciary's commitment to accountability, irrespective of social or economic status. The verdict is being viewed as a strong message against criminal impunity and a landmark decision in one of Silchar's most significant and long-pending murder cases.

requested the government to extend the incentive coverage to an additional one lakh beneficiaries. She emphasized that in order to achieve the target of 2.18 lakh rooftop solar installations by 2027, continued policy support and expansion of the incentive framework will be essential.

IAF to hold Agniveervayu recruitment rallies for NE in March

Aizawl, Feb 26: The Indian Air Force (IAF) has invited applications from eligible youth from North-western states to participate in Open Recruitment Rallies for selection of Agniveervayu. According to official information, the recruitment rally for candidates from Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura will be held at 34 Assam Rifles, Mandir Gate, Zokhawsang, Aizawl, Mizoram from March 9 to 12, 2026. Female candidates will report on March 9-10, while male candidates will report on March 11-12, at 6:00 am. Another rally covering candidates from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim will be conducted at HQ Eastern Air Command, IAF, Upper Shillong, Meghalaya from March 20 to 23, 2026.

iFOREST Hosts Northeast India Clean Energy Conclave to Accelerate Renewable Growth

Guwahati, Feb 26: The International Forum for Environment, Sustainability and Technology (iFOREST) on Wednesday hosted the Northeast India Clean Energy Conclave 2026 at NEDFi House in Guwahati, bringing together senior government officials, regulators, industry leaders, financial institutions and technology providers to chart a structured roadmap for scaling up renewable energy across the Northeastern states.

The Conclave focused on unlocking the region's estimated 130 GW renewable energy potential. Despite holding nearly 9 percent of India's waterbodies and possessing significant hydro and solar resources, only around 2.3 GW of renewable capacity is currently planned for deployment, highlighting a vast untapped investment opportunity. With electricity demand in the Northeast projected to rise by over 40 percent by 2031-32, participants stressed the need for a diversified, storage-integrated and reliability-focused power system.

Presenting the region's clean energy growth opportunity, Mandvi Singh, Programme Director at iFOREST, said the Northeast stands at a pivotal moment in India's energy transition. She emphasised that converting identified opportunities

into bankable projects would require policy clarity, assured offtake mechanisms, and integrated planning for storage and transmission.

The Conclave was inaugurated by Jadav Saikia, IAS, Secretary (Power), Government of Assam, who highlighted Assam's recently notified solar, pumped storage and thermal power generation policies in 2025 aimed at smoothing the clean energy transition. He informed that three pumped storage projects with a combined capacity exceeding 3,000 MW are underway and that Assam has successfully implemented the PM Suryaghar Muft Bijli Yojana, targeting over 91,000 rooftop installations, making it first in the Northeast and tenth nationally. He added that more than 200 MW of new photovoltaic projects are in the pipeline and that transmission and distribution losses have been reduced to 14 percent in 2023-24.

Shri Kumar Sanjay Krishna, IAS (Retd), in his special address, noted that global climate finance commitments remain uncertain amid geopolitical tensions and economic pressures. He stressed the importance of generating domestic investment momentum in renewable energy.

Baishali Talukdar, Deputy Manager of

the Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL), stated that prior to the announcement of the state's rooftop solar incentive policy, Assam had only around 1,000 rooftop solar installations. However, within just two months of the policy being introduced, the response was overwhelming, with more than two lakh applications received.

She noted that earlier, most stages of the application and approval process were conducted offline, which often led to delays. The system has now been fully digitised, with end-to-end online processing. Approvals are currently being granted within seven days, significantly streamlining the procedure and contributing to the scheme's growing popularity across the state.

Talukdar further informed that approximately 92,000 rooftop solar installations have already been completed within a short span of time.

The number of registered vendors has also increased substantially, rising to around 1,000. She expressed confidence that APDCL is set to surpass the one lakh installation milestone shortly.

Following the Assam Government's announcement of state incentives for up to one lakh rooftop installations, APDCL has

requested the government to extend the incentive coverage to an additional one lakh beneficiaries. She emphasized that in order to achieve the target of 2.18 lakh rooftop solar installations by 2027, continued policy support and expansion of the incentive framework will be essential.

Electricity demand in the Northeast is projected to increase from 24,417 MU in 2025-26 to 34,572 MU in 2031-32, while peak demand is expected to rise from 4,996 MW to 7,192 MW. Experts at the Conclave observed that meeting this rising demand will require not just additional capacity but a modernised and flexible renewable energy architecture integrating rooftop and distributed solar, floating solar, pumped storage, battery energy storage systems, biomass, modernised hydro and smart grid solutions.

With industrial expansion initiatives such as Advantage Assam 2.0 underway, the region's growing commercial and industrial demand is expected to open new opportunities for innovative renewable procurement models. The Conclave concluded with a call for coordinated action across policy, regulation, finance and infrastructure to position the Northeast as India's emerging clean energy growth corridor.

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Editorial

Beyond the Mist: Unlocking Shillong's Tourist Promise

Perched at an altitude of nearly 1,500 metres in the heart of Meghalaya, Shillong is a city that seems tailor-made for tourism. Popularly known as the “Scotland of the East,” it combines breathtaking natural scenery with a rich cultural heritage that few Indian hill stations can rival. The city’s attractions are diverse and plentiful. Elephant Falls, Ward’s Lake, Shillong Peak, and the nearby living root bridges of Cherrapunji offer visitors an extraordinary blend of natural wonder and indigenous ingenuity. The temperate climate, lush pine forests, and rolling green hills create an atmosphere of rare tranquillity, drawing travellers seeking respite from the chaos of urban life. Shillong’s cultural vibrancy is equally compelling. Celebrated as India’s rock music capital, it attracts a younger demographic hungry for authentic, offbeat experiences. Local festivals, traditional Khasi crafts, and the warmth of its people further enrich the visitor’s experience. Yet the city’s potential remains largely untapped. Poor road infrastructure, inadequate waste management, and unregulated construction continue to erode its natural charm. Sustainable tourism policies and strategic investment are the need of the hour. Shillong stands on the threshold of greatness. With vision and will, it can become one of Asia’s finest destinations. (DB)

How is Reform’s charmless candidate still a contender in Gorton and Denton? Ask Labour

Every barb Labour has directed at the Greens can now be returned with interest. “It’s a wasted vote.” “Do you want to see Reform in power?” New polling ahead of the crucial Gorton and Denton byelection this week, while by no means decisive, puts the Greens first on 22%, followed by Reform UK (20%), then Labour (18%), with 31% undecided. But still Keir Starmer falsely claims that “only Labour can beat Reform”. Does he want to see Reform in power? I’m not a party person. I subscribe to the old-fashioned belief that journalists should have no political loyalties. But I see the Greens stepping into the howling void Labour has vacated and becoming everything you might have wanted Labour to be. In their byelection contender, Hannah Spencer, they have a brilliant candidate: a working plumber and plasterer with first-hand experience of the cracks and leaks in our social fabric and bright ideas for fixing them. Here and in many other constituencies, the Greens now appear to be the most plausible opposition to take on the extreme right. YouGov’s voting intention polls show that since January 2025, Labour’s national share has declined from 26% to 18%, on a steady downward cruise that no rhetoric, U-turn or reboot has been able to jolt. The Greens, in contrast, on an equally steady trajectory, have risen in the same period from 8% to 17%. Throughout the Gorton and Denton contest, the gambling companies have judged them the best bet. So if, as Labour claims, the key aim is to stop Reform UK from gaining power, it should stand its can-

didate down and let the Greens walk home. Of course, I’m not being entirely serious: I know Labour would never entertain the idea. But I’m using this outrageous proposal to highlight two things. The first is the way its rhetoric that suggests clinging on to nurse for fear of something worse backfires the moment a better nurse arrives. The second is that its claim to be laser-focused on stopping Reform rings hollow the moment it falls behind another contender in the polls. This is not and has never been Labour’s primary aim. If it were, it would have introduced electoral reform. I cannot emphasise this enough: the only thing that would allow Nigel Farage’s party to take power is our unfair and undemocratic first-past-the-post system – and Starmer’s determination to maintain it. If stopping Reform were the overriding aim, Labour would also deploy what research shows is the killer attack line against that party. A survey of 6,000 people by the group Persuasion UK found that by far the most effective message of five options was focused on corporate interests and went as follows: “Nigel Farage says he’s on people’s side – but when you take a closer look it’s pretty clear who he’s really fighting for, isn’t it? It’s the rich, the powerful, his mates in big business.” It explained that Reform UK has taken vast donations from fossil fuel investors and climate science deniers. This, Persuasion UK said, is why Farage wants to cut public services, workers’ rights and taxes for the richest. “He’s not smashing the system. He and his rich friends basically are the system.” None of the other attack lines came anywhere near this

for efficacy. So why doesn’t Labour use it? Because that might alienate the people Starmer seems keenest to appease: Labour’s own corporate backers and the billionaire proprietors of the rightwing press. The leadership’s key objective is not stopping Farage, but frightening people into voting Labour. Quite frankly, it has nothing else left. One by one, it has destroyed the hopes that people vested in it, alienating potential voters on everything from Gaza to benefits to its self-destructive apeing of Reform’s rhetoric on immigration; from its vicious factional warfare against left-wingers in the party to its tearing up of environmental protections and attacks on wildlife, which, in a country of nature lovers, is utter, self-defeating madness. Disgust and disillusionment among former supporters is everywhere palpable. This byelection should have been a stroll for Labour. Not only was Gorton and Denton among its safest seats, but the Reform candidate, Matt Goodwin, is among the most unprepossessing people I’ve ever met. I was up against him on Question Time a year ago. We were picked up in the same car from the station; then I watched how he interacted with others, including a political ally, in the green room. He came across as utterly charmless and squirming with discomfort. When he tried to smile, his lips stretched, but no other part of his face seemed to move. This could explain why he has been seen so little in the constituency he’s contesting. For God’s sake, don’t let him near the voters! He presents a target a mile wide. He has suggested punishing women who don’t have children through the

tax system, while removing income tax “for women who have two or more children”. First the punitive right in this country, in the form of the Conservative chancellor George Osborne, penalised women for having more than two babies through the two-child benefit cap. Now, in the form of Goodwin, it proposes to whip them the other way. As ever, women’s reproductive choices must yield to culture wars waged by power-hungry men. Last week the Guardian revealed that Goodwin was accused by a young woman working at GB News, where he presents a show, of making inappropriate comments that she took to be sexual harassment, causing her great distress. He apologised after she made a complaint. A source at GB News remarked that Farage believed “that is just Matt being Matt”. Ah yes, like “Boris being Boris”: the endless licence granted to the most obnoxious men in politics, while denied to everyone else. As for the 44% of people in the constituency with minority ethnic backgrounds, Goodwin has claimed “it takes more than a piece of paper to make somebody ‘British’”. You have been warned. What could be easier than trouncing him? But I have the feeling that if Labour stood unopposed, it would still manage to lose. Had it set out to alienate its base while infuriating voters everywhere, it could not have done a better job. I’m delighted to see how well the Greens are doing. But we also need a strong and sincere Labour party. It’s tragic to witness how Starmer and his moral bypass of a government have ruined it – and opened the door to something much worse.

2009 BDR carnage: A 2024 inquiry committee uncovers evidence against prominent politicians and military figures

For 17 years, the killing of 74 people, including 57 of the nation’s top military officers, during a mutiny at the then BDR headquarters in Pilkhana has remained an open wound, clouded by state-led investigations dismissed by critics as a facade of justice. In 2024, the Ministry of Home Affairs set up a seven-member body to re-examine the findings of the 2009 BDR mutiny commission, following widespread criticism of the 2013 mass trial. The inquiry was tasked with uncovering evidence that the previous report may have overlooked due to political interference.

The previous official investigation into the mutiny blamed years of pent-up anger among ordinary soldiers, who felt their appeals for pay raises and better treatment were ignored. Rampaging troops from the then Bangladesh Rifles (now Border Guard Bangladesh) murdered some of the brightest military officers during the two-day revolt that began in Dhaka’s Pilkhana on February 25, 2009 and spread across the country.

However, the new body, the National Independent Investigation Commission, which submitted its final report in November 2025, contradicts the findings and said the massacre had direct involvement of the then-ruling Awami League leadership. It specifically named lawmaker Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, former defence and security adviser to the prime minister Tarique Ahmed Siddique, and former army chief General Moeen U Ahmed, among others. The report, submitted to former chief adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, has not been made public, and details of the evidence against the accused have not been disclosed.

The Daily Star has seen the report, which gathered evidence against some of the top civil and military officials as well as politicians. Meanwhile, on February 23, the newly formed BNP government announced that it would con-

stitute another commission to reinvestigate the incident to ensure justice. In the latest report, the most substantial evidence against Tarique Ahmed Siddique and General Moeen U Ahmed comes from the testimony of Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman, who was present at the scene on the day of the mutiny. Waker, then a major and second-in-command of the 17th East Bengal Regiment, arrived at the scene around 10:30am. He positioned troops from the 46th Independent Infantry Brigade near Gate 4 of the BDR headquarters and was prepared to intervene.

According to Lt Gen (ret’d) Abdul Mubeen, then the principal staff officer of the Armed Forces Division, he instructed Waker to take position on the rooftop of a building in Dhanmondi near the Pilkhana gate and fire several rocket shells targeting the gate. Mubeen said Tarique later ordered him not to intervene. Tarique subsequently confronted Mubeen and questioned whether he had the authority to order such a move. Mubeen later became the Chief of army staff.

According to the report, Waker, unable to reach the commander of the 46th Brigade for orders, contacted Major General Tarique Siddique. The report says Tarique bypassed the chain of command and explicitly instructed him not to launch an attack, citing the government’s decision to pursue a political resolution.

According to the report, Tarique was alerted to the massacre as early as 9:37am, when Major Md Zaedi Ahsan Habib, who was trapped in the Darbar Hall as the killings unfolded, called him seeking help. Tarique had previously been Zaedi’s commanding officer. Zaedi survived and later testified before the Commission.

In his testimony, Maj Gen Rezanur Rahman Khan, additional director general (operations) of RAB, then a colonel, told the Commission that he received news of the mutiny around



9:30am from BDR officers and set out for Pilkhana with his forces. He said he had already ordered RAB-2, RAB-3 and RAB-10 to proceed to Pilkhana and had authorised them to open fire if necessary.

On the way, Tarique called and instructed him to go instead to the state guest house Jamuna. Upon arrival, the then director general of RAB told him to cancel the order to fire and advised him to contact the appropriate authorities regarding army deployment. Rezanur said he was also instructed by the then DG of the Special Security Force, Brig Gen Joynal Abedin, and by Tarique not to intervene. He relayed those instructions to his forces on the ground.

According to his statement, he repeatedly sought permission to enter Pilkhana with RAB personnel but was not approved. The report further said that on the morning of 27 February, when Brig Gen Abdul Hakim Aziz, then the director of Military Operations (DMO) at the Army Headquarters, entered Pilkhana in an armoured personnel carrier, Tarique allegedly verbally reprimanded him

for bringing the vehicle inside. It also says that on the evening of 25 February 2009, Major General Sultanuzzaman Saleh -- then brigadier general at the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) -- went to the National Monitoring Centre (NMC) to conduct mobile phone monitoring under Tarique’s instruction, bypassing the chain of command. The Commission noted that because Sultanuzzaman monitored networks for an extended period without valid authorisation and outside his regular duties, the possibility that he was identifying officers’ locations and relaying the information to the mutineers could not be ruled out. National Monitoring Cell (NMC) chief Brig Gen Md Khorshed Alam told the Commission that Saleh barged into the NMC and took over. NMC was the predecessor of the NTMC and was located inside the DGFI premises. In his interview with the Commission, General Moeen U Ahmed, then the army chief, said he attended an emergency cabinet meeting at the prime minister’s residence, Jamuna, and was tasked with

overseeing the military response. The Commission found that the army chief failed in his duty to protect his officers by not issuing specific operational orders to the 46th Independent Infantry Brigade and instead spending critical hours at Jamuna. Despite reports of officer fatalities by noon, the report says he supported political negotiations and ordered troops to withdraw to a position two miles away, a move that allegedly allowed the attackers to continue the killings and later escape. The Commission called Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh a key coordinator of the massacre.

One premise of this accusation is that Taposh had a close acquaintance with some of the sepoy and jawans convicted as primary conspirators of the BDR mutiny. Sepoy Selim Reza, currently incarcerated, told the Commission that ahead of the 2008 general election, Taposh met several BDR personnel to discuss their grievances. The group was brought to him by Torab Ali, a ward-level Awami League leader in Dhaka. Torab Ali later died in jail after being accused and

convicted in the 2009 BDR carnage case, though he was subsequently acquitted of conspiracy charges. Another incarcerated BDR member, Nayek Sheikh Shahidur Rahman, who was close to Torab, told the Commission that Torab had described a secret planning meeting at Taposh’s residence. He claimed those present included former lawmakers Sheikh Selim, Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Mirza Azam, Torab Ali, along with mutiny leaders like Sepoy Milon. Rahman said Torab objected to a plan to kill officers but was overruled by Sheikh Selim. Shahidur Rahman is the sole source for this alleged meeting. According to the report, a sweeper, Abdul Hakim, also witnessed Taposh holding meetings with jawans and BDR’s deputy assistant director Syed Tauhidul Islam on three occasions. DAD Tauhid, who was sentenced to death in the BDR carnage, was named in the report as a key coordinator. On February 25, 2009, DAD Tawhid led a 14-member rebel delegation to the then prime minister’s residence (Jamuna) to negotiate a surrender and seek a general amnesty for

the mutineers. The report also notes that during the two-day massacre, Tawhid maintained command over the rebel factions. Sepoy Selim Reza (now incarcerated), who was present at the meeting, said that Hasina had promised to make DAD Tawhid the director-general of BDR.

Major Sumon Ahmed of the 4th East Bengal Regiment told the Commission that during the mutiny, he saw Taposh, former police inspector general Nur Mohammed, Nanak, and Mirza Azam enter and exit the BDR HQ several times without hindrance, while others, including the army, were barred. He also said that around 11:30am, he saw Taposh distributing leaflets to the jawans. Around midnight of the day of the mutiny, Taposh, former home minister Sahara Khatun, and the then IGP held a meeting with the mutinous jawans. Subedar Major Gofran, an eyewitness, said Sahara asked the jawans whether they wanted Taposh or Nur Mohammed as director-general.

The events following the mutiny brought further scrutiny to Taposh. Five military officers who had

been on duty during the mutiny, took action against the rebels, or were involved in post-event investigations, were forcibly disappeared, tortured in a joint interrogation cell, and imprisoned for five years through a court-martial. They were accused of attempting to assassinate Taposh with a remotely controlled bomb on 21 October 2009, outside his law office in Motijheel. The officers named in the case were Major Helal, Capt Rezaul Karim, Capt Khondokar Rajib Hossain, Capt Md Fuad Khan, and Capt Subayel Ibne Rafique. The Commission noted that all five were at their respective stations on the day of the attack and could not have been involved. According to the report, Capt Rezaul had fired at rebels during the mutiny and later received a stand-down release for disobeying the army chief’s order. Fuad and Rajib had defied orders to keep the army out, seized weapons from the armoury, and launched a rescue operation into Pilkhana on 26 February to save surviving officers. Subayel had acted similarly, taking arms from the 14th Engineering Brigade to aid the rescue.

Capt Rezaul told the Commission that they were forcibly disappeared and framed to remove them from the investigation and destroy the evidence they had gathered. All five said they were tortured in the “Aynaghar”-famed Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC). Brigadier General Imamul Huda, who headed the court-martial, admitted that the officers appeared physically abused during their hearings. The initial investigation could not prove the allegations. Yet, after the court-martial, the officers were taken to the AIC, tortured again, and forced to give confessional statements under duress. They told the Commission that Brig Gen Huda threatened them with prolonged torture if they did not sign a blank paper. The Commission’s review of the court-martial proceedings found gross discrepancies, indicating the officers had been deliberately framed.

Yes Bank flags forex card fraud: \$0.28 mn approved, \$0.1 mn blocked, restricts

New Delhi: Several companies are likely to remain in focus today after announcing key updates such as stake sale decisions, dividend payouts, fund-raising plans, fresh business orders and management changes. These developments could lead to stock-specific movement during the session. Here’s a quick look at the key stocks that may see action today. The dividend will be paid to shareholders whose names are recorded as of March 6, 2026. The decision was approved by the company’s board in line with listing rules. This payout will go directly to eligible investors.

Markets recap

Indian benchmark indices closed slightly in the green on Wednesday (February 25). The Sensex ended 50 points higher at 82,276, while the Nifty added 58 points to finish at 25,483. The stake sale was done through an Offer for Sale, which allows promoters to sell shares through the stock exchange. The government had the option to sell an additional 2% stake under a greenshoe option. However, it has chosen not to use this option. As a result, the total divestment will remain limited to 2%.

Sanofi India

Sanofi India has recommended a final dividend of Rs 48 per share for the financial year ended December 31, 2025. Each share has a face



value of Rs 10. Earlier, the company had already declared an interim dividend of Rs 75 per share in October 2025. If shareholders approve the final dividend at the annual general meeting, the total dividend for the year will be Rs 123 per share. Stocks to watch today, February 26, 2026

Reliance Industries

Reliance Industries, led by Mukesh Ambani. Mukesh Ambani, has made a change in its group structure. Reliance Enterprise In-

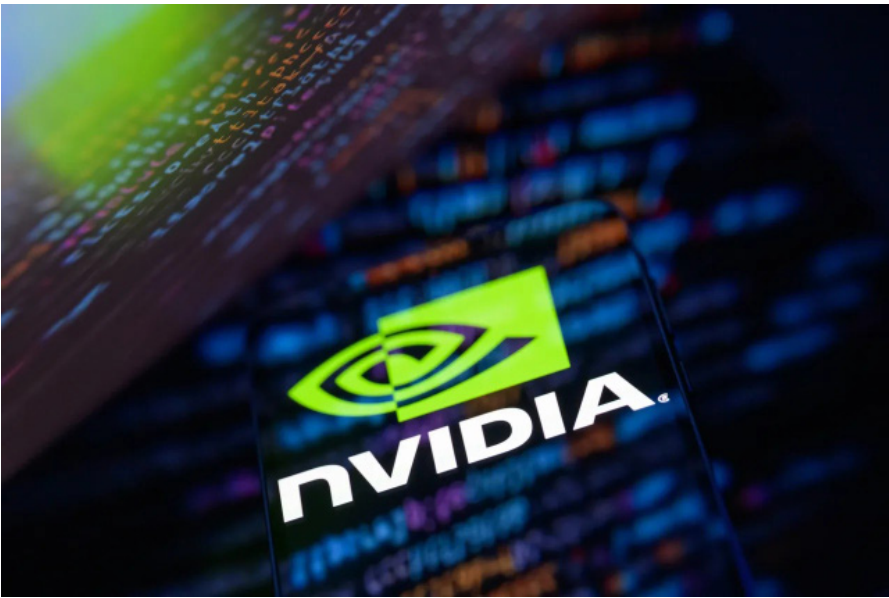
NBFC reform index meeting will prioritize stability

New Delhi: New Delhi: The Department of Financial Services (DFS) will meet today to discuss the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) recommendations on the Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) sector. A key item on the agenda is the introduction of a comprehensive reform index for NBFCs. In its annual report for FY24-25, the RBI mentioned said as a part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen systemic resilience, the Financial Stability Department (FSD) has introduced a non-banking stability map and index to assess better evolving risk factors affecting the stability of the NBFC sector. The focus is on deepening the supervisory architecture for NBFCs and enhancing the system’s ability to withstand emerging risks. An in-house liquidity stress-testing framework for NBFCs is being developed to complement existing solvency-focused models, providing regulators with a more holistic view of sectoral vulnerabilities. A senior partner at a domestic rating agency said, “This push for clarity is intended to reduce regulatory ambiguity, align expectations across stakeholders, and ensure that NBFCs evolve within a well-defined supervisory framework.” The agenda also includes proposals to simplify KYC processes for NBFCs, ease branch-licensing norms for gold-loan NBFCs, align risk weights with banks, and reduce friction in customer onboarding and compliance. The meeting will additionally review the current 50% haircut on bonds, with a proposal to introduce a graded haircut structure linked to credit ratings. Another key item for discussion is the creation of a Digital Payment Intelligence Platform (DPIP), which would leverage AI and cybersecurity tools to detect and prevent fraud across digital payment ecosystems. The DFS will also discuss taxation matters, including a proposal to exempt NBFCs from TDS obligations under Section 194A and a call for increased allocation of pension funds to corporate bonds. In parallel, a growth-at-risk model is being designed to help policymakers understand how current financial conditions and sectoral vulnerabilities shape the distribution of future economic growth, aiming to deepen supervisory insight, strengthen governance expectations and enhance the long-term stability of the NBFC ecosystem. The DFS will also review the requirement for prior RBI approval for management changes in NBFCs that result in more than 30% of directors, excluding independent directors, being replaced. The discussion is expected to centre on governance reforms, including more structured leadership rotation and clearer regulatory signalling on the future trajectory of NBFCs, particularly those with a potential to transition into banks.

As investors dismiss optimistic sales projections, Nvidia shares drop 1%

New Delhi: Nvidia reported better-than-expected results for the January quarter on Wednesday. The chip giant also gave a revenue forecast for the current quarter that was higher than what analysts had predicted. The stock barely moved in after-hours trading. Investors have grown used to Nvidia comfortably beating estimates quarter after quarter. This was the 14th straight quarter of strong results. So even though the numbers were good, many on Wall Street seemed to expect something more. Chief Financial Officer Colette Kress told analysts on a conference call that Nvidia expects sales growth to go beyond the \$500 billion revenue pipeline it shared back in October for 2026. She did not give an exact timeline but said the company expects growth in every quarter of calendar 2026. The optimism comes largely from big spending by the biggest technology companies. Cloud giants like Alphabet, Microsoft, Amazon and Meta Platforms have projected total capital spending of at least \$630 billion in 2026. Most of that money is expected to go into building data centers and buying powerful processors to run AI systems. The upbeat forecast helped push Nvidia shares up more than 3% in extended trading, Reuters reported. But the early excitement didn’t last.

As the earnings call progressed, the gains faded. By late after-hours trading, around the time of the update, the stock had turned flat and was down about 1%. Analysts, according to Reuters, say the latest numbers suggest that fears of an AI slowdown have not shown up yet. Bob O’Donnell of TECHanalysis Research said it is also notable that Nvidia’s data center revenue is no longer coming from just a handful of hyperscalers, but is spreading on a large scale. That, he said, shows interest in AI computing continues to grow in different corners of the market. Nvidia also addressed concerns about chip supply. Some investors had worried that production limits at contract manufacturer TSMC could slow its growth. The company said it has secured enough inventory and manufacturing capacity to meet demand beyond the next several quarters. However, it did note that supply shortages will affect its gaming business. Competition is heating up. Nvidia’s dominance in AI chips is not going unchallenged. Rival AMD is preparing to launch a new flagship AI server later this year. The company has already secured deals with some of Nvidia’s top customers, including Meta. The pullback was linked to investor worries about China and also to “whisper number” in the market, with some traders expecting an even stronger outlook than what the company delivered. The chipmaker said it expects stronger-than-expected revenue in the first quarter, as major tech companies continue pouring money into artificial intelligence. Nvidia said it expects fiscal



first-quarter sales of \$78 billion, plus or minus 2%. Analysts had been expecting around \$72.60 billion, according to LSEG data. For the quarter that ended in January, Nvidia reported revenue of \$68.13 billion. That was higher than the \$66.21 billion analysts had predicted. Adjusted profit came in at \$1.62 per share, above estimates of \$1.53.

Nuvama is betting renewable energy

New Delhi: Waaree Energies’ share price is up over 1% in early trade today after the sharp cut on February 25. Speaking on the implications of the US tariff action on the company, Nuvama Research said that the company is “strategically placed to benefit from the multi-decadal renewable energy and green hydrogen opportunity. The brokerage house does not see any impact from the 126% US countervailing duty and has maintained a ‘Buy’ rating. Nuvama has set a target price of Rs 3,867 on Waaree Energies, and this indicates nearly 43% upside potential from the current market price. Nuvama Research on Waaree Energies: No impact from 126% US duty. A key concern for the market has been the preliminary 126% US countervailing duty on solar module imports from India. Nuvama Research said Waaree Energies has clarified that the

tariff is linked to the origin of solar cells and not the location of module manufacturing. Nuvama Research estimates that revenue and EBITDA will grow at a strong pace over FY25–28E. The report said, “We estimate Waaree’s EBITDA would surge at a 40% CAGR over FY25–28E, increasing from INR27bn to INR80bn driven by a robust 33% CAGR in revenue.” Revenue is projected to rise from Rs 14,444.5 crore in FY25 to Rs 33,894.6 crore in FY28E, while adjusted profit is estimated to increase from Rs 1,912.5 crore to Rs 4,623.4 crore over the same period, based on Nuvama Research estimates. As the report states, tariffs. Nuvama Research said Waaree Energies is increasing its US footprint to support its order book and capture better realisations. TCS set for a strong rally? 4 reasons CLSA sees 33% upside potential

Jhunjhunwala & Damani’s 55%+ crash: ‘big bulls’ refuse to sell these 2 stocks

New Delhi: In the Indian markets, where momentum is often mistaken for merit, the ultimate test of an investment strategy is not the speed of its rise, but the resilience of its holders during a protracted decline. For Radhakishan Damani and the estate of the late Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, two names that serve as the twin pillars of Indian value investing, that resilience is currently being tested by two stocks. Plus, Concord is virtually debt free, so it does not have to worry about hefty interest payments, giving it freedom to use the profits to grow the business or give back to investors by means of dividend, which it is doing. The current dividend yield is 0.95%, one of the highest in the industry that averages around 0.11%.

BF Utilities: Why Damani Ignores the 4.7x Leverage Red Flag

Incorporated in 2000, BF Utilities Ltd is engaged in the generation of electricity through wind mills and Infrastructure activities. With a market cap of Rs 1,845 cr as on 25th February 2026, the company primarily generates wind power which is then utilised by Bharat Forge Ltd. at its plant in Pune and is also involved in the infrastructure business. Radhakishan Damani bought a stake in the company in per the filings for the quarter ending June 2020, and as

per the filings for the quarter ending December 2025, he held 1% worth Rs 19 cr.

While the broader indices play with solid highs, these two specific stock holdings have corrected by over 55% from their all-time high prices. If it was the portfolio of an average investor, it would have typically triggered a stop-loss or could have led to panic-selling. But Damani and Jhunjhunwala, till date, have remained noticeably static, refusing to let go of these beaten down stocks. And such conviction is definitely not something based on sentimentality; rather, it hints towards the high level of convictions these Warren Buffett of India have in these stocks. With a market cap of Rs 11,870 cr as on 25th February 2026, the company is a pharmaceutical company specializing in Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) and formulations. The company is engaged in development and manufacturing of niche fermentation-based APIs and finished dosage formulations for domestic and international markets. This contraction in the core financials is one of the major reasons for the correction in the stock price. Plus, the commercialization of the new Valthera injectable facility and the setup of the US subsidiary (Stellon Biotech) involved high fixed starting-up costs.

These expenses hit the bottom line of Concord before the revenue from these units could scale up, creating a margin drag. Looking at the valuation, the company’s share is trading at a current PE of 37x, and the industry median is 28x. But there are a couple of things that could have held the attention of the Jhunjhunwala’s in the stock. Like the fact that the company has recorded strong capital efficiency. The company has a current ROCE (Return on Capital Employed) of 28% while the industry median is 15%. Which means for every Rs 100 the company uses as capital, it generates a profit of Rs 28 on it, while its industry peers average only around Rs 15. The estate of late Rakesh Jhunjhunwala bought a stake in the company as per the filing for the quarter ending September 2023. As per the filings for the quarter ending December 2025, this holding is currently 24% worth Rs 2,854 cr, making it the 4th largest holding in the portfolio.

The company was listed in August 2023 at a share price of around Rs 940 and climbed to log its all-time high of Rs 2,664 a year later in September 2024. However, since then, the price has corrected by over 55% to its current price of Rs 1,135 as on 25th February 2026. Let us look at the financials of the company to

see if we can find the reason for this sharp decline. The sales of the company jumped from Rs 512 cr in FY20 to Rs 1,200 in FY25, logging a compound growth of 19%. For the first 3 quarters of FY26 (April to December 2025), the sales recorded were Rs 729 cr, which is a drop from the figure of Rs 770 cr for the same three quarters in the previous year. The EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortization) of the company went from Rs 205 cr in FY20 to Rs 506 cr in FY25, logging a 5-year compound growth of 20%. And for the first 3 quarters of FY26, the company has logged EBITDA of Rs 247 cr, once again a drop from Rs 313 cr for the same quarters in the previous year. Regarding Net profits, the company recorded a 19% compounded growth from Rs 169 cr in FY20 to Rs 372 cr in FY25. For the first 3 quarters of FY26, the company has recorded profits of Rs 171 cr. This is also a drop from the figure of Rs 232 cr of the same quarters in previous year. The share price of BF Utilities Ltd was around Rs 275 in February 2021 and as on 25th of February 2026 it was Rs 490. This current price is however over an 80% correction from its all-time high of Rs 2,628. In fact, the stock has corrected by over 43% just in the last 6 months.

IndiGo announces direct flights Bhavnagar to Navi Mumbai



New Delhi: IndiGo will start flying directly between Bhavnagar (BHU) in Gujarat and Navi Mumbai twice a day on March 29, 2026. This is part of the airline’s plan to improve regional travel in western India. The airline said that the route will have 14 flights a week and will use ATR planes. Bookings are currently open through the airline’s official website and authorised travel partners. The airline said that the new service is meant to make it easier to get from an industrial center in the Saurashtra area to India’s financial capital region. It will also connect Bhavnagar to IndiGo’s larger domestic and international network. Details about the new flight’s start and timetable.

IndiGo said that Bhavnagar will be its 97th domestic station and 142nd station overall. This will expand the airline’s presence in Gujarat and neighbouring regions. The airline will fly between Bhavnagar and Navi Mumbai twice a day in each direction, but only if

the government gives its approval. IndiGo’s news statement said that Bhavnagar is a key commerce and industry hub in Gujarat’s Saurashtra area. The company mentioned activities in manufacturing, ship breaking, salt manufacture, and diamonds, among other sectors. The airline claimed that better air connections might promote trade and investment, make it easier for people and commodities to travel quickly, and make it easier to get to the Mumbai area and other places. Vinay Malhotra, IndiGo’s Head of Global Sales, said that the move also strengthens the airline’s footprint in Gujarat. He said, “IndiGo now flies to and from five airports in Gujarat: Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Rajkot, and now Bhavnagar.” Malhotra said that the new route would link Bhavnagar to IndiGo’s larger network and “boost trade and economic growth across the region,” which is in keeping with the airline’s mission of making air travel easier for everyone.

Trump’s theatrical State of the Union address offers little hint of any change in course

London: Donald Trump delivered a combative State of the Union address on Tuesday night that hailed what he said was an American “turnaround for the ages.” At a time when polls suggest many in the US are dissatisfied with the current state of the nation – and with Trump’s leadership of it – the president offered little hint of a change of course. Instead, with an eye on crucial midterm elections later this year, he delivered a sales pitch to the nation, a patriotic rallying cry to his loyal supporters and taunts for his political opponents. It was a speech filled with theatrical flourishes – the kind of made-for-the-camera moments the man who once Early on, he welcomed the US Olympic men’s hockey team to the gallery. They held up their gold medals as Republicans chanted “USA!” and even Democrats stood and applauded. Later, Trump praised military heroes including a 100-year-old World War Two veteran who received a Medal of Honor, and a Coast Guard swimmer who rescued 165 people trapped in last year’s Texas flooding and was given a Legion of Merit award for Extraordinary Heroism. Although his speech set a record for length at 107 minutes, these moments quickened the pace of the evening and fit with the president’s larger theme of American patriotism and accomplishment. His speech opened with familiar lines. “Our nation is back,” he said. It was the “hottest” country in the world. At one point, after blaming Democrats for creating a crisis of “affordability,” he added: “We are doing really well.” He pointed to



thriving incomes, a growing stock market, lower petrol prices, a southern border with dramatically reduced undocumented migrant crossing and tamed inflation. “Our country is winning again,” he concluded. The challenge for the president is that his public approval ratings are hovering around 40 percent, and the American public wants him to do more to address their concerns. Two months ago, he gave a national address from the White House where he struck similar themes and cited similar statistics – but it hasn’t convinced the public. The president and his aides appear to be hoping

that with a bigger State of the Union audience, which should measure in the tens of millions, the results will be different. What Trump didn’t do in this speech, however, was offer much in the way of new policies. He sprinkled the Supreme Court decision striking down many of the duties he had previously imposed. Three of the justices who had ruled against the president remained expressionless as they watched on from the front row. Earlier, Trump and Chief Justice John Roberts – who penned the court’s tariff opinion – briefly shook hands, but neither man smiled. In

a speech that was frequently interrupted by cheering Republicans in the crowd, Trump’s tariff discussion prompted murmurs from Democrats and uncomfortable silences from Republicans, many of whom have been uneasy about their economic cost and the threat their unpopularity with the public might pose to their electoral chances. Or maybe he believes the mood will shift, with renewed sense of patriotism, during the nation’s 250th birthday celebrations this summer. Callouts to military heroes and gold-medal-winning hockey players in the audience, could hint that this is a political

Rolls-Royce profits soar 40% amid booming demand for AI datacentre power



London: Rolls-Royce’s profits soared by 40% last year as the engineering company’s turnaround gathered pace, helped by booming demand for power from datacentres. The company reported underlying profits of £3.5bn for 2025, up from £2.5bn the year before, as it also promised to give up to £9bn to shareholders over the next three years through share buybacks, its biggest return of cash to investors in a decade. Its chief executive, Tufan Erginbilgic, a former BP executive, has transformed the engine maker’s fortunes since taking over in January 2023, when he told staff the company was standing on a “burning platform”. Since then profit has soared as he cut costs, renegotiated loss-making contracts and pushed through better commercial terms with airline customers. The strong results posted on Thursday were driven in part by an increase in demand for power from datacentres, as technology companies race to build infrastructure to support artificial intelligence. Profits at Rolls-Royce’s power systems division, which makes generators for the sites, jumped 60% to £852m last year. The bulk of the company’s profits still come from its civil aerospace business, however, where there was strong demand for its commercial jet engines. It also makes money every time one of its engines is in the air. Rolls-Royce serviced more engines last year, it said, and benefited from better contract terms, with a 41% jump in profits from the division to £2.1bn. It also had to navigate the turbulence caused by Donald Trump’s tariff war in 2025, although the company was eventually exempted for its engines, which power Boeing’s 787 passenger jet, as part of a US-UK trade deal struck in May. Erginbilgic said Rolls-Royce’s turnaround “continues with pace and intensity. We are consistently achieving outcomes that were not possible

before our transformation.” Months earlier, at the National Conservatism Conference in July 2024, Homan said, “Trump comes back in January, I’ll be on his heels coming back, and I will run the biggest deportation force this country has ever seen.” Homan’s public confidence that he would secure a prominent position in immigration enforcement in the future Trump administration apparently extended to private conversations as well — particularly those discussing deals. In September 2024, during a meeting with two men he believed were business executives, Homan reportedly accepted a Cava bag filled with \$50,000 cash from them in exchange for his promise to help them win government contracts if Trump should return to the White House. Discussing the business of immigration enforcement was not out of the ordinary. The company raised its forecast significantly, now expecting an operating profit of between £4.9bn and £5.2bn by 2028 – about a third more than it had previously targeted. Rolls-Royce said it would return £2.5bn to shareholders this year alone, as part of the longer-term buyback plan. The company only completed its first buyback in a decade last year, returning £1bn to investors. Last June, Rolls-Royce was chosen to build the UK’s first small nuclear reactors at Wylfa in north Wales, backed by £2.5bn of government funding. The company said it was confident the business would be making money within five years. Rolls-Royce shares rose almost 7% on Thursday morning, helping to push the FTSE 100 to a record high of 10,825 points, up 18 points, or 0.15%. Levant quantities (multi-kg) of plutonium will now be on new roads across the southern United States, along with radioactive waste generated during production.

WPP to sell assets and cut jobs in radical shake-up to counter

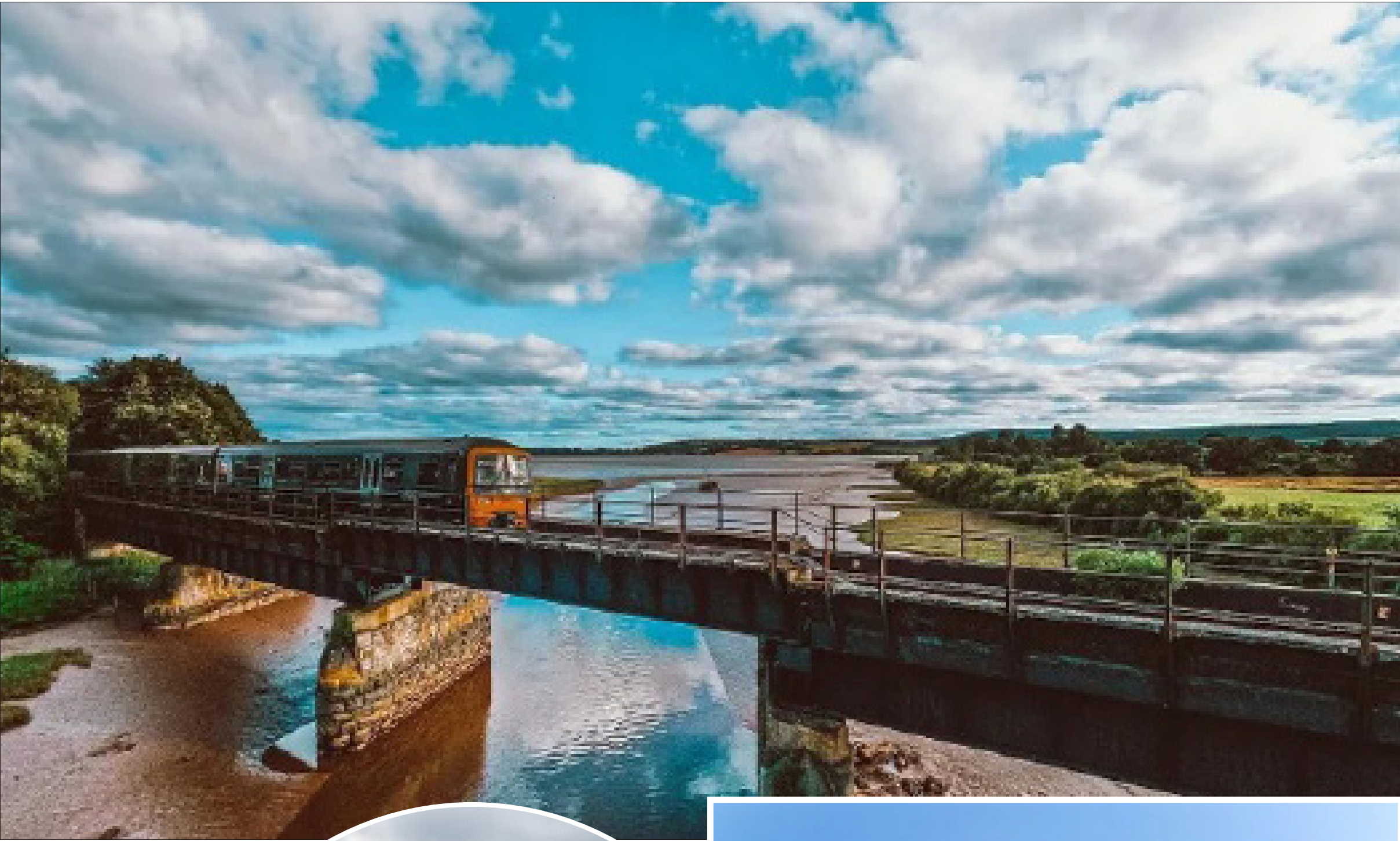
London: The beleaguered UK advertising group WPP has announced a radical restructure to counter the threat posed by the growth of artificial intelligence, including plans to sell assets and job cuts. Aiming to be “a simpler, lower-cost, AI-enabled business”, the London-based company laid out plans to achieve £500m of annual savings by 2028, at a cost of £400m over two years. Cindy Rose, the chief executive who took over last summer, said the company was “unveiling a bold plan for a simpler, more integrated WPP that’s fit for the future and built to win”. It has struggled to stem a growing exodus of clients and is racing to match the AI and data capabilities of rivals, amid fears that AI will allow customers to bring more marketing functions in-house. Rose said WPP had identified several assets that it wanted to shed, without naming them. A significant proportion of the cost savings are expected to come through reducing jobs. The company did not specify how many roles would be cut from its 100,000 strong workforce but said it would eliminate duplication in finance and support and take out some layers in the organisation. Since its inception in the mid-1980s, the steepest cuts WPP has made were 7,200 jobs as a result of the global advertising recession in 2009, and 7,000 in 2020 because of the impact of the pandemic. A large chunk of the savings will be reinvested into “high-growth” areas, such as a new division to partner with clients on AI transformation. Called enterprise solutions, it already employs more than 1,000 people. On Oct. 1, 2024, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) announced it produced, for the first time in over a decade, a new plutonium pit — the explosive core of nuclear weapons — at Los Alamos National Lab. But what does this have to do with a high schooler biking along the interstate during the pandemic? As part of a new plan to restart large-scale production of plutonium pits for the first time since the Cold War, the NNSA plans to ship nuclear cores across the length of US interstates without clearly informing residents. This raises the risk of accident — or malicious attack — for American communities along the interstates, like mine. On other modern programs, the NNSA has been more forthcoming. The agency produced a high-quality route map to accompany the release of its Surplus Plutonium Disposition Environmental Impact Statement showing exactly where and how material would be moved. Although that program is now in limbo under new direction from the Trump administration, the map gives the clearest look at where plutonium is or could be shipped. In a separate effort, for plutonium waste being shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), the DOE has shared a few maps of its routes that are easily available on its websites. The question remains: Why hasn’t the NNSA published a map of routes that will support plutonium pit production? It has been forthcoming about other programs and has published the length of the routes for the plutonium pit program, albeit on page 481 of an appendix to a draft environmental impact statement. The lack of clarity on what routes pits will be moved on — especially as the inclusion of SRS is dramatically



expanding the involved regions — is troubling. After all, weapons-relevant quantities (multi-kg) of plutonium will now be on new roads across the southern United States, along with radioactive waste generated during production. The troubled company is reorganising its sprawling business empire with hundreds of units into four main divisions: media, creative, production and enterprise solutions, focused on four regions: North America; Latin America; Europe, the Middle East and Africa; and Asia Pacific. Its ad agencies – Ogilvy, VML and AKQA – will be brought together under the WPP Creative umbrella and have the same back office to reduce costs but continue as separate agencies. Trump administration, the map gives the clearest look at where plutonium is or could be shipped. In a separate effort, for plutonium waste being shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), the DOE has shared a few maps of its routes that are easily available on its websites. The question remains: Why hasn’t the NNSA published a map of routes that will support plutonium pit production? It has been forthcoming about other programs and has published the length of the routes for the plutonium pit program, albeit on page 481 of an appendix to a draft environmental impact statement. The lack of clarity on what routes pits will be moved on — especially as the inclusion of SRS is dramatically expanding the involved regions — is troubling. After all, weapons-relevant quantities (multi-kg) of plutonium will now be on new roads across the southern United States, along with radioactive waste generated during production. Rose, who signalled job cuts on arriving last year, added: “Our recent underperformance has been driven by excessive organisational complexity, a lack of an integrated operating model and inconsis-

tent strategic execution. While disappointing, I see huge potential as these issues are all within our power to fix and we’re already making great progress.” Her comments came as WPP reported a 3.6% drop in comparable revenue to £13.6bn for 2025, and a 26% fall in profit before tax to £1.1bn. Performance at its ad agencies worsened in the fourth quarter, after client losses in the US and UK, further weakness in Europe and declines in China, partly offset by improving performance in India and Australia, the company said. It slashed its dividend for 2025 by 62% to 15p. Despite recent contract wins, from companies including Jaguar Land Rover and Estée Lauder, WPP forecast like-for-like revenue this year below analysts’ expectations, estimating a “mid- to high single-digit” drop in the first half with “an improving trajectory” in the second half. After a series of profit warnings, the company fell out of FTSE 100 after nearly 30 years in December, having lost its crown as the world’s biggest advertising group by revenue to the French rival Publicis Groupe in 2024. The company was valued at £25bn only nine years ago but its share price has slumped more than two-thirds over the past year to under £3bn. The stock fell more than 6% on Thursday. Last week the US rival Omnicom, which completed a \$13bn (£9.6bn) takeover of the rival Interpublic in November, doubled its target for annual cost savings to \$1.5bn. The announcement, which included savings of \$1bn by reducing “labour costs” by 2028, cheered investors, which sent its share price soaring 15%. Earlier this month, new data showed UK advertising agencies had their biggest annual exodus of staff last year, led by younger workers, as artificial intelligence tools threaten to replace workers and force the industry to cut jobs and costs.

The Exmouth factor – exploring the south Devon beach town by bus, train and on foot



The wide Exe estuary glides past the window. Leaning back in my seat, I watch birds on the mudflats: swans, gulls, oystercatchers and scampering red-legged turnstones. Worn down by a busy, admin-heavy summer, I'm taking the train through Devon for a peaceful break that hasn't needed too much planning. Exmouth is a compact, walkable seaside town, easily reached by train on the scenic Avocet Line from Exeter. No need for stressful motorway driving and, once you're there, everything is on tap: beaches, hotels, pubs, shops and cafes, alongside gentle green spaces and ever-changing seascapes. Exmouth's art deco-style seafront Premier Inn is 10 minutes' stroll from the station, through flower-filled squares and gardens, and will store bags if you turn up early. A decade of sea air has battered the building's exterior, but the restaurant's floor-to-ceiling windows mean breakfast comes with a view of the sea and dune-backed estuary. The open-top 95 bus to Sandy Bay stops almost outside. I drop my luggage and wander the few steps down to Exmouth beach. The soft tawny sand is crisscrossed with gull footprints. It's a warm day and I get in the water straight away. The temperature is perfect, though I feel a strong current. I keep close to shore, looking out at the neogothic tower of Holy Trinity church and the seafront's big wheel. Afterwards, a walk around town morphs into a cafe crawl. Lured by the smell of baking scones, I start with a mug of tea outside Bumble and Bee in Manor Gardens, with its begonia baskets. Nearby, along a wide path with a waterwheel, lily pond and magnolias, a baby T rex and protoceratops are hatching out

of reptilian eggs. They are part of Exmouth's Dinosaur Safari, featuring a life-sized model of a dinosaur that were unveiled in 2016. The town's striking fossil-rich red sandstone cliffs are part of the Jurassic Coast, which has been feted by palaeontologists for centuries. The smell of fresh bread wafts from several bakeries and bacon is being fried at the butcher and deli Lloyd Maunder. In a former stables and cottage nearby, the volunteer-run Exmouth Museum is one of those packed and atmospheric troves of musty local stuff: clay pipes, Edwardian capes, butter pats, bramble scythes. Near the marina, the fishmonger is shelling whelks outside Fish on the Quay. "Best whelks in town. We cook them ourselves," he tells me. "Only whelks in town," laughs his colleague. I chew some by the water's edge before heading to Land and Sea for grilled mackerel with pickled samphire. Just being here is a tonic, slowly exploring the flower-hung gardens

and two-mile long beach. I stop for a while at a free afternoon concert outside Exmouth Pavilion and doze off in a deckchair among palms and pale Michaelmas daisies. I wake sufficiently rested to visit the National Trust's A la Ronde, a 16-sided house on the edge of the town, designed by cousins Jane and Mary Parmenter in the mid-1790s. The 57 bus takes just a few minutes to drop me at Courtlands Cross, close to the house with its oak-framed views of the Exe. A la Ronde is stuffed with souvenirs and decorative fantasies: a seashell-covered gallery that took 10 years to create, an ornate frieze made from feathers, walls full of sketches and silhouettes. There is a secondhand bookshop and the gardens offer playful diver-

sions: croquet on the lawn, shell-themed board games on the orchard tables and a sign that says "Lie down. Look up at the clouds". I decide to walk the couple of miles back to town. A signed path leads down through meadows to the Exe Estuary Trail, a popular cycle ride with tunnels of butterfly-magnet buddleia and a maritime smell of stranded seaweed. "Tea garden open" says a chalkboard by the path at Lower Halsdon Farm. The scones are warm and come with clotted cream from Langage Farm near Plymouth. I notice how quiet it is. Four times an hour, trains hoot and hurtle past on the water-side railway. Otherwise, there's little sound save the plaintive cries of seabirds on the sandbanks and susurrating poplars overhead. Next morning starts with a radiant early dip in



gold-lit water and a short seaward stroll to buzzing Heydays and the neighbouring Hangtime beach cafe, which serves bowls of granola heaped with berries and bananas, and bagels full of rocket, chilli jam and halloumi. A few steps inland, I cross the Maer nature reserve. It's a big, sandy, grassy area, sprouting clumps of silvery sea holly and yellow cups of evening primrose. There's a long-necked brachiosaurus on the far side of the field (that dino safari again). I sit nearby, in the low branches of an evergreen holm oak, and listen to a chiffchaff singing overhead. Heading through parks and well-signed leafy pathways, there are flowers everywhere, from clifftop agapanthus to a bank of pink cyclamen under a

sycamore. For a long, relaxing lunch I head to the River Exe Café, a floating restaurant in the middle of the estuary, reachable only by boat (I take the bespoke hourly ferry from Exmouth Marina). Surrounded by gently rocking waves, I eat sea bream with capers and buttery new potatoes. The cafe is only open from April until the end of September and there's a waiting list for reservations, but you can get lucky – as I did – with occasional cancellations. Cormorants stand guard on a wrecked boat nearby. Local poet Jennifer Keevill compares them to "menacing dinner guests, all in black". Her poems evoke Exmouth's waterscapes: seabirds, sunsets, crumbling cliffs, kite surfers, Christmas Day swimmers. I head back to

the beach for an evening dip and supper in the Premier Inn's own restaurant. I'd usually look for somewhere more distinctive, but I'm tired and it's right here. The hotel's seafront terrace, with tubs of lavender and French marigolds, turns out to be a good place to watch the sun set over the sea and eat plates of inexpensive pub-style grub. Next day, inspired by Keevill's poem Ferry to the Other Side, I take the seasonal boat across to Starcross (April-end of October) and walk a circuit past the bracken deer park at Powderham Castle, up through groves of sweet chestnuts and down past marshes full of water mint and warblers. From the ferry, there are distant views of Exmouth and its "landmark buildings / a clock tower, a cafe,

a row of old houses". Back on the east bank, I stop at Land and Sea for a valedictory half of malty Otter Ale and then a crisp beer from Teignworthy brewery on the glass-walled balcony of The Grove. Looking out across the sunlit water, I feel any trace of tension slip away. It's my last evening and I'm loath to leave. Local resident Geoff Crawford is enthusiastic about Exmouth: "I've lived here 14 years. Travelled the world all my life ... and I love this place more than anywhere else." An easy escape and seafood-lover's paradise, Exmouth is a restful place to decompress beside the water. There are walks, boats and buses on the doorstep if you need them, but it's also ideal for just being. Sit back, relax and watch the sun set.

Taapsee Pannu discusses the film industry’s fixation with the cleavage of female actors



New Delhi: Bollywood star Taapsee Pannu has discussed the film industry’s fixation on the cleavage and midriffs of female actors. The actor explained that her previous comments on the South cinema industry’s obsession with midriffs and Bollywood’s obsession with cleavage were taken out of context. She also explained why, at the beginning of her career, she decided against taking on such assignments.In an earlier interview, Taapsee revealed that when she

was asked about the South industry’s purported fixation with the midriff in a prior podcast, she was informed that Hindi cinema places greater emphasis on a female actor’s cleavage. Her comment was taken out of context, though. “For me, the problem is about a certain gaze, whether it’s the midriff or the cleavage,” she continued. She added that she never distinguished between the South’s obsession with midriffs and Hindi’s obsession with cleavage. She also talked about how, in Bollywood, she was never requested to show off her stomach or pad her bras, but in the South, she was, mostly because she didn’t accept attractive roles in Hindi movies. “I don’t know what the obsession is, but let’s acknowledge that there is an obsession, whether in Hindi or in the South,” she stated. It doesn’t matter which part of yours is highlighted. What matters is that there is an obsession. The director had to explain this to me, which was obviously unpleasant for them as well. And with so few women on the set, how do you manage that? Therefore, you must communicate it indirectly. Naturally, the director

needs to make sure it functions when she returns from the van. Thus, the entire procedure is a little awkward. ”I was too new,” she added, defending her decision to take on those roles. I assumed this was the standard procedure. You must pay attention to the director, who serves as the ship’s captain. Unless it was truly going too far, I had to do it. You also think that since heroines do this, I should do the same. I never regret doing those things when I look back on it. Because I would constantly have the want to do it if I didn’t. You want to be referred to as a mainstream actor regardless of what you do. You won’t be referred to as a mainstream actress unless you perform those roles. Taapsee is currently receiving recognition for her role in Anubhav Sinha’s film Assi. Kani Kusruti, Revathi, Manoj Pahwa, Kumud Mishra, and Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub play important roles in the courtroom drama, in which Taapsee plays a lawyer battling to get justice for a rape survivor. Critics have given the movie mixed reviews, and it has made over ₹5 crore at the box office so far.

The GlenJourneys, a whiskey company owned by Ajay Devgn, has made Rs. 4 crore in just four months



Mumbai: Actor Ajay Devgn’s luxury whiskey company, The GlenJourneys, has achieved a noteworthy business milestone with a turnover of more than ₹4 crore. Just four months after launching into the market in October of last year, the premium brand has sold 8,622+ bottles, the business said in a statement. The company is currently looking to expand internationally through exports. The GlenJourneys’ creators said in a statement that Ajay Devgn and Cartel Bros.’ premium single-malt whisky brand had sold 8,622+ bottles and generated an astounding total turnover of

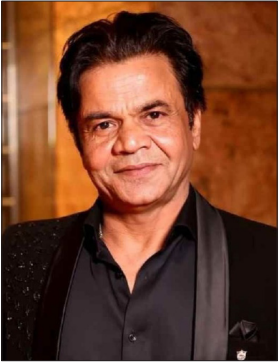
₹4.14 crore. at six Indian states, the brand is present at 437 retail locations. After starting in Maharashtra in October 2025, it moved on to Goa, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Haryana in January and February of 2026, respectively. In 23 more states and union territories, including Punjab, Pondicherry, Rajasthan, and Chandigarh, the brand has now submitted registration applications. The duty-free areas of major Indian airports, including Mumbai, Lucknow, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Trivandrum, Amritsar, and Mangalore, also offer GlenJourneys. ”The GlenJourneys is rooted in time-honoured Scotch traditions and character.” Ajay Devgn said in a statement outlining his opinions on the brand’s development. It is very satisfying to see the positive reaction from Indian customers. We have every reason to rejoice as we see the brand develop gradually and gain awareness across the globe.

Through upscale retail and on-trade channels, I am actively involved in developing a brand that appeals to Indian consumers, particularly those outside of metropolitan areas. We

anticipate high sales momentum in the future due to increased demand. GlenJourneys is currently considering growth. With the introduction of a new smoky version scheduled for June 2026, the firm plans to significantly broaden its product line. In addition to requesting registration in other Indian states, it is considering international markets. The company recently obtained export orders for 150 bottles of their 21-Year-Old expression and 900 bottles of its Cask Series to Dubai. Plans for US and Canadian expansion are in the works. On the professional front, Ajay Devgn most recently starred with Rakul Preet Singh and R Madhavan in De De Pyaar De 2. Anshul Sharma’s romantic comedy did poorly at the movie office, grossing slightly over ₹100 crore globally. Critics gave it mixed reviews as well. The actor’s next appearance will be in Drishyam 3, the last installment of the wildly popular Drishyam series. On October 2 of this year, the movie will be released in theaters. In the upcoming year, he also plans to release Dhamaal 4 and Golmaal 5.

Rajpal Yadav promises to meet students at Gurukul

Mumbai: Students at a gurukul school in the Shahjahanpur area of Uttar Pradesh have expressed displeasure that comedian-actor Rajpal Yadav did not visit them, even though they had previously sent him money taken from their pocket savings while he was incarcerated.However, Yadav stated that he had not yet had the chance to spend quality time with his family members and that he will most certainly meet, embrace, and snap pictures with them. On February 21, some forty Gurukul Seva Trust students packed a piggy bank with money they had saved from their pocket expenses and mailed it to Yadav’s ancestral village address in Kundra as a show of support after he was arrested, according to school officials. In a heartfelt letter, the kids also expressed how much they wanted to meet him once he was freed. pupils can be heard saying, “Namaste Rajpal bhaiya, we have learned that you have returned home after being released from jail,” in a 29-second



video that has gone viral. You deserve congratulations. ”We all want to see you and find out if the assistance we sent you was successful. Why didn’t you reply to our letter if you did? We’re angry with you. In the video, the kids also stated that he could have at least spoken to them to reassure them even if he was unable to meet them.Yadav told on the phone that he had just recently come home and had not yet had a chance to spend quality time with his family. He claimed to be compiling information about those who had offered him assistance. ”I was informed that the kids came from an orphanage

when I first saw them. ”In my opinion, children who have an ashram are not orphans,” he stated.

“I am a person who believes in the guru tradition, and all those children are my own,” Yadav remarked after learning that the kids attended a gurukul school. Without a doubt, I’ll meet them, give them a hug, and snap pictures with them. The pupils filled the piggy bank together, and before it was shipped, some extra money was added, Kumar Sagar, the chairman of the Gurukul Seva Trust school, told on Wednesday. In 2010, Yadav borrowed Rs 5 crore for his movie “Ata Pata Lapata” from Murl Projects Private Limited. After neglecting to pay back the money, he was eventually imprisoned. According to the school administration, the kids mailed him their savings at that time as a token of support.

Yadav, who is from Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh, is well-known for his well-liked comedic parts in Hindi movies.

Inside Photos From The Haldi Ceremony of Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda



New Delhi: Pre-wedding celebrations for Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna, who are getting married on February 26, are well underway. The pair has now shared a sneak peek at their private haldi ceremony on social media via their individual Instagram Stories.Vijay shared a preview of the exclusive setup with his followers on his Instagram Stories section.An exquisitely designed outdoor haldi venue can be seen in the first scene. Delicate pink rose petals cover a circular area that is surrounded by soft wooden paneling. Two tiny



wooden stools are positioned in the middle for the bride and groom to use during the ceremony. Baskets filled with vibrant orange and yellow marigold flowers around the space, giving it a joyous and auspicious feel. A tranquil garden-like atmosphere is created by the rich floral arrangements in warm tones that adorn the backdrop. Vijay posted a close-up of customized floral name placards in another story. Rashmika’s nickname, “Rushie,” appears on one flower-shaped card, while “Vijay” appears on the other. The design piece, which is



surrounded by marigolds, roses, and fresh lilies, gives the customary ceremony a more personal, romantic feel. Rashmika Mandanna also offers a few glances.In one, a gorgeously decorated table was featured, and in another, their dogs, Storm and Aura, were shown in a cute image.Pre-wedding festivities for Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda are in progress in Udaipur. Mehendi is planned for the evening, between 7 and 8 PM, while the haldi ceremony is slated for the day. As part of the early festivities, the sangeet was held last night.

According to sources, the pair will honor both of their heritages by holding two traditional wedding ceremonies: Rashmika Mandanna’s side will have a traditional Coorg (Kodava) wedding, while Vijay Deverakonda’s family will have a traditional Telugu wedding. “Beautifully blend cultures while celebrating their individual heritage” is how the actor pair will do this, the source continued. The ‘Virosh Premier League’ was a friendly competition between the bride and groom’s teams that was played last night prior to the sangeet. In a play on their names, Vijay and Rashmika, the pair has called their nuptials “Virosh Wedding.” Friends, relatives, and coworkers from the industry are among the about 100 guests invited. The Telugu cinema industry has sent representatives to Udaipur for the much-anticipated wedding, including actors Ashika Ranganath and Eesha Rebba, stylist Shravya Varma, and directors Rahul Ravindran and Tharun Bhascker. Kalyani Priyadarshan, an actor from Lokah, revealed glimpses of the wedding on her Instagram Story.

In October 2025, Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna exchanged vows in a private ceremony in Hyderabad.

Malti’s premature birth was forced to be announced by Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas



New Delhi: Malti Marie Jonas is the daughter of Nick Jonas and Priyanka Chopra. Malti was born prematurely through surrogacy in January 2022 and remained in the NICU for more than 100 days before being sent home. Priyanka Chopra recently talked about the most trying period of her life and how she and Nick Jonas dealt with their daughter’s stay in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) immediately following her delivery.Priyanka Chopra stated, “We went with her to the NICU,” on Jay Shetty’s podcast. She sobbed the first time, and only one of us was permitted at a time. It sounded like a kitten, just like a cat. That’s all we have. It was such a horrible period for me personally.“But somehow, because we were in and out of the hospital, I remember it leaked, and we got a text saying that the papers were going to publish her birth; if we didn’t, they would in three hours,” she went on. We were therefore somewhat compelled to announce her birth. We didn’t know what would happen to her or how she would be, so we wanted to maintain our own version

of events. For the next three months, Nick would play his guitar and sing to their daughter, Priyanka said, explaining that everything they did was focused on taking care of her. All of my mantras, including my Mahamrityunjay, Gayatri, and Om Namah Shivmantan, would play quietly within her crib all day long on this tiny iPod of mine. Numerous others sent out prayers for her. She was cherished, coveted, and highly sought after. Her voyage to reach our planet was quite difficult.

In December 2018, Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas were married in Rajasthan. Nick disclosed that Malti was born weighing a mere 1 pound 11 ounces. Before she could leave the neonatal intensive care unit, she needed to get six blood transfusions and undergo weeks of close observation.”I’ve never really talked about the extremely intense circumstances under which she came into the world,” the singer stated. In April, the month of her birth, we anticipated her arrival. After that, we received a call informing us that it might happen sooner.

When we arrived at the hospital, she weighed 1 pound 11 ounces and was essentially purple.

Nick went on to explain that while Malti was in the NICU, he and Priyanka would each work 12-hour shifts at the hospital. “My wife and I essentially worked 12-hour shifts at the hospital for 3.5 months during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are always visceral things, and I can still smell it. Being there every day and witnessing other families experiencing a similar circumstance was both reassuring and terrifying. After fighting daily for three and a half months, Malti gradually began to put on a few pounds. She had received six blood transfusions and was doing well. After 3.5 months, we were able to bring her home,” he continued. Jonas conveyed his profound respect for Malti’s perseverance during it all. He stated, “I feel like she knows how she entered the world and what that first chapter of her life was like, and so every day is a gift, and you can actually feel it in her in the way that she behaves and how exciting everything is.”

The Bluff, directed by Frank E. Flowers and starring Priyanka Chopra, will be available on Prime Video on February 25. The movie takes place in the Caribbean in the late 19th century, when a former pirate must defend her family when her past catches up with her.Ismael Cruz Cordova plays T.H. Bodden in The Bluff, Safia Oakley-Green plays Elizabeth Bodden, Vedanten Naidoo plays Isaac, and Priyanka Chopra plays Ernell Bodden.

Karl Urban plays Captain Connor. The project also involves David Field, Pacharo Mzembe, Gideon Mzembe, Temuera Morrison, and Zack Morris.

Aamir Khan says he was unable to meet Salim Khan while he was in the hospital

New Delhi: Salim Khan, a seasoned scriptwriter, has been hospitalized for more than a week.

On February 17, Lilavati Hospital admitted him for surgery to repair a brain hemorrhage. Since then, a number of celebrities have paid the elderly writer visits, including Javed Akhtar, Sanjay Dutt, and Shah Rukh Khan. Aamir Khan provided an update on Salman Khan’s father amid worries over his health. Speaking to the media at an occasion, Aamir Khan stated that he spent time with the family but was unable to visit Salim Khan while he was in the hospital. He remarked, “Main Salim sahab se milne gaya tha, hum sab dua kar rahe hain ki woh jaldi se theek hojaayen (I went to meet Salim Sahab, and we are all praying

that he recovers soon) because he is in the intensive care unit.” I sat with the family even though I was unable to meet him in person. ”Jo mujhe Alvira ji bata rahi hai, har roz ki unki health improve ho rahi hai,” Aamir stated, sharing what he knew about Khan’s condition. Hum sab prarthna kar rahe hain ki woh jaldi ghar aa jaayen aur unki health bhi wapaa aa jaaye (Alvira ji tells me every day that his health is getting better). We’re all hoping for a speedy return home and complete recovery of his health. Aamir and his girlfriend, Gauri Spratt, had gone to the hospital. After experiencing a brain hemorrhage and a spike in blood pressure, the veteran screenwriter was admitted by his family physician. In order to prevent his health from getting worse, he was also

placed on a ventilator. “He was having jerks, and his blood pressure was high,” the physicians confirmed. We took care of him. In order to prevent his condition from getting worse, we had to place him on a ventilator. It had nothing to do with his critical nature. We carried out the necessary research. We had a minor operation on him today.

DSA, or digital subtraction angiography, is the name of the process. Khan’s sons-in-law Atul Agnihotri and Aayush Sharma, as well as his children, superstar Salman Khan, Arbaaz Khan, and daughter Alvira, were spotted outside the hospital with other well-wishers as worries about his health grew. Several politicians and Javed Akhtar, his longtime literary partner, were also spotted.

Mira Rajput posts a heartfelt birthday greeting for Shahid Kapoor

Mumbai: On February 25, Bollywood actor Shahid Kapoor celebrated turning 45. Mira Rajput Kapoor, the actor’s wife and businesswoman, sent him a heartfelt birthday message. Mira wrote a touching email to Shahid, describing him as the love of her life, and they had cozy moments together. Actor Ishaan Khatter, Shahid’s half-brother, also sent him birthday greetings. Mira shared loving photos of herself with Shahid on Instagram on Wednesday. In the pictures, Mira was seen kissing and cuddling Shahid while he held her in his arms, demonstrating their subtle PDA. “Simply the best... happy birthday, love of my life,” Mira commented next to the photos. Ishaan Khatter also shared a throwback picture of himself sitting in Shahid’s lap as a child, reading a book. He paired it with a recent photo of himself, now grown up, sitting in Shahid’s lap again. Along with the pictures, he wrote, “What to even say... not much has changed? Love ya, big brother. Happy birthday... Here’s to having each other’s back (or godi) always.” The connection between Shahid Kapoor and Mira Rajput was orchestrated; their family introduced them

through a religious group. While Shahid was immediately captivated by her during a lengthy talk that lasted several hours at a farmhouse in Delhi, Mira waited almost six months to make up her mind. She had lovely hazel eyes that stayed with him after he saw them on a walk after twilight.Shahid made the decision to proceed even though he was aware of their 13–14 year age difference and had some reservations at first. Eventually, unfazed by his fame, Mira consented to the match. On July 7, 2015, the couple tied the knot in a small ceremony in Delhi. At the moment, Shahid is starring in Vishal Bhardwaj’s O Romeo. Avinash Tiwary, Nana Patekar, and Triptii Dimri all play major parts in the movie. Critics gave it mixed reviews, and movie has already made ₹60.36 crore at the domestic box office and ₹94.45 crore globally.His upcoming film is Cocktail 2, which was produced by Maddock Films and directed by Homi Adajania. Rashmika Mandanna and Kriti Sanon have important roles in the movie as well. Filming is finished, and a later release date is anticipated.

On February 28, PM Modi will begin a nationwide HPV vaccination campaign

New Delhi, Feb 26: On February 28, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will begin a statewide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination program from Ajmer, marking a significant public health initiative.

The campaign's goal is to shield 14-year-old girls nationwide from cervical cancer, which is still a major health issue in India. The inaugural event is set for 11:30 a.m., according to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Virtually, every State and Union Territory will participate in the initiative. From their separate headquarters, chief ministers, administrators, state health ministers, and top health officials are anticipated to take part. All 14-year-old girls will receive a free single dose of the Gardasil-4 vaccine at government health institutions as part of the campaign. Ayushman Ar-



ogya Mandir Primary Health Centers, Community Health Centers, Sub-District and District Hospitals, Government Medical Colleges, and Hospitals are among them. Cold Chain Points have been installed in healthcare facilities to guarantee that vaccinations are stored properly. Additionally, committed medical officials will be on hand to handle any adverse events that may arise after vaccination (AEFI). HPV vaccination is optional, officials have made clear. However, prior to vacci-

nation, parents' or guardians' written approval is required. The U-WIN digital platform will be used to handle documentation and approval. To guarantee optimal coverage, the vaccine will be made available every day at specific government locations for the duration of the three-month vaccination campaign. The HPV vaccination will be accessible on regular immunization days following the conclusion of the special promotion period. The Health Ministry claims that States

and Union Territories have already received the necessary vaccination doses according to their target demographic. Additionally, officials have received training in preparation for the HPV vaccination program's implementation. States have been requested to make sure that specific vaccination session locations are ready for the launch day and that vaccine doses are delivered to every cold chain point. Persistent Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection is the cause of cervical cancer. One of the few tumors that can be avoided by vaccination is this one. The national implementation is expected to drastically lower India's future cervical cancer burden, according to the government. The launch on February 28th is the first of what officials say is a significant step to safeguard teenage girls and improve preventative healthcare in the nation.

CJI harshly criticizes the council, and the center apologizes amid the NCERT book dispute



New Delhi, Feb 26: Solicitor General Tushar Mehta offered an unconditional, unqualified apology on behalf of the Ministry of Education before the Supreme Court on Thursday, amid the ongoing controversy over the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) book. The NCERT director and school education secretary were also sent a show-cause notice by the Supreme Court to provide an explanation for why no action should be taken. The dispute began when the Supreme Court ob-

jected to a chapter on "corruption in the judiciary" in the class 8 NCERT social science textbook.

The Supreme Court harshly criticized the NCERT on Wednesday, saying Chief Justice of India Suyra Kant stated that "there appears to be a deep-rooted, well-planned conspiracy to defame judiciary," according to news agency PTI, even though the council said it "regrets the inclusion of inappropriate material" in the chapter titled "The Role of the Judiciary in Our Society." As the court stated that it may

order the removal of passages from the NCERT book, CJI Kant was cited as saying, "It is my duty to find out who is responsible; heads must roll." CJI declared, "No one will be allowed to go scot-free."

After discovering "inappropriate textual material and error of judgement" in a chapter on the judiciary, the NCERT apologized and withdrew the distribution of its recently released Class 8 Social Science textbook, which caused a stir. "The aforesaid error is purely unintentional and NCERT regrets the inclusion of inappropriate material in the said chapter," the council said in a statement in response to criticism. The council clarified that it holds the judiciary in the highest regard and views it as the defender of the Indian Constitution and the guardian of fundamental rights. "The aforesaid error is purely unintentional and NCERT regrets the inclusion of inappropriate

material in the said chapter," the council said in a statement in response to criticism. The council clarified that it holds the judiciary in the highest regard and views it as the defender of the Indian Constitution and the guardian of fundamental rights. According to NCERT, on February 24, 2026, the social science textbook "Exploring Society: India and Beyond, Vol II" for Class 8 was made available. But when the textbook arrived, it was discovered that some offensive language and a mistake in judgment had unintentionally made their way into Chapter No. 4, "The Role of Judiciary in our Society." The Ministry of Education's Department of School Education and Literacy also noted this and ordered that the book's distribution be strictly halted pending further directives. According to NCERT, the same has been complied with.

Before the match between India and Zimbabwe, an imported chemical was sprayed in Chepauk



Chennai: On Thursday, India will play Zimbabwe in a crucial T20 World Cup 2026 Super Eight match at Chennai's MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chepauk. Suryakumar Yadav and company's chances of making it to the semi-finals are in jeopardy after losing to South Africa by a staggering 76 runs. In addition to winning their final two games against Zimbabwe and the West Indies, they also need to hope for favorable outcomes. Overall, India cannot afford to make any mistakes going forward. The team plays a night game at Chepauk versus Zimbabwe. During the second innings, the site provides a significant amount of dew, which makes batting easier and bowling equally difficult. According to a report, Chepauk Stadium is utilizing a new im-

ported chemical called "Dew Cure" to combat the challenge and ensure impartiality throughout the game. Details were provided, including the fact that the chemical was imported from the US. According to the report, "Dew Cure" was sprayed on the ground on Tuesday and Wednesday with the intention of repeating the application on Thursday afternoon in order to cut down on dew during the India vs. Zimbabwe night game. During the game, humidity levels are expected to be between 80 and 90 percent. By the middle of the second inning, the ball may be moist and the outfield may become smooth. Chepauk has historically been a surface where spinners had the upper hand. Batting takes time, the ball turns, and the pitch grips. However, that edge wanes as soon as the turf gets wet and the white ball starts to skid. Balls of length come on more quickly. Shots that are not timed go farther. For bowlers, not batters, the margin for error decreases.

Therefore, the toss becomes more than just a ritual. When heavy dew is predicted, captains in Chennai under the lights nearly always choose to chase. Using a wet ball to defend a total is a completely different skill. Yorkers become more difficult to execute, slower balls lose their bite, and grip becomes inconsistent. Both Zimbabwe and India have lost their Super Eight games going into Chepauk. South Africa destroyed the reigning champs, giving up 76 more runs than they could pursue. Even worse, Zimbabwe was thrashed by the West Indies in a 107-run loss that revealed weaknesses with the bat and the ball.

President Murmu Applauds Ayush Medicine's Contribution to Health

New Delhi, Feb 26: On Wednesday, President Droupadi Murmu stated that Ayush medical systems had significantly improved the health of the populace. "Since the beginning of modern medicine, systems like Yoga, Ayurveda, and Siddha have been helping people," she stated.

She stated that healthy inhabitants are crucial to the nation's development in her remarks following the opening of the National Arogya Fair in Shegaon, Buldhana district. According to the President, there is a wealth of therapeutic plants and health-promoting herbs in our farms, kitchens, and forests. Maintaining the balance of the ecosystem and supplying raw materials for medications depend on the conservation and enhancement of this priceless treasure. "Medicinal plant cultivation promotes soil health and conservation in addition to improving farmers' financial circumstances. As a result, encouraging AYUSH systems helps to preserve the environment in addition to enhancing people's physical and financial well-being, she said. According to the President, Ayurveda, yoga, and other AYUSH disciplines provide advice on living a balanced, healthful life. The significance of integrated medicine in illness prevention is now acknowledged worldwide. In addition to enjoying the health and stress-relieving benefits of Ayurvedic medications and therapies, people all over the world are taking up yoga, she said. The President claims that actions like quality control, medication standardization, and evidence-based research will increase the acceptance and recognition of AYUSH systems. According to her, the Ministry of AYUSH is always working to achieve this goal.



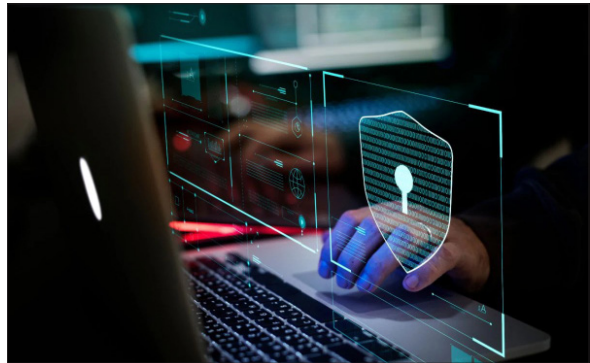
International standards have been followed in the establishment of general criteria for research and drug development. Ayurveda, yoga, and other AYUSH systems are being established as trustworthy, scientific remedies for contemporary health issues through a number of scientific initiatives, she stated. She was confident that current scientific interventions, innovations, and international cooperation would make conventional medical systems more widely available and well-liked. The President declared, "We will succeed in making them an essential component of the holistic healthcare system."

The CBI searched six states and arrested three people after a "digital arrest" scam

New Delhi, Feb 26: In connection with a Rs 1.86 crore "digital arrest" scam that targeted a senior man in Kerala, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) carried out searches in six states and detained three individuals in a coordinated nationwide sweep.

The case, according to the FBI, featured unlawfully obtained SIM cards, shell corporations, and mule bank accounts, and it may have worldwide connections. The case concerns the purported deception of an elderly person from Kerala's Kottayam district. Investigators claim that thorough financial trail investigation and computer forensics revealed a network that operated in multiple states. The CBI conducted coordinated searches in Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Delhi on

February 25. According to the investigating agency, it focused on two main elements of the purported scheme: SIM cards that were obtained unlawfully and networks of mule bank accounts. Officials claimed that the digital gadgets, debit cards, bank account records, and other items they found during the searches were incriminating. Blessin Jacob Abraham, a suspected mule account operator, was taken into custody at a Goan hotel. According to the CBI, he is thought to have been instrumental in running mule accounts and enabling cryptocurrency transactions connected to the scam. He was found to have a number of electronic devices. Mohammad Mushtaque, a "shell company operator" according to the CBI, was detained in Nagpur. In order to obtain



the proceeds of the crime, he allegedly oversaw mule accounts through a dummy corporation. Numerous debit cards and electronic gadgets were confiscated from locations connected to him, according to investigators. Mohammad Junaid, the third defendant, was taken into custody in Bengaluru. He allegedly offered "5G SIM upgrades" to gullible people in order to obtain SIM cards fraudulently. According to the agency, he activated

SIM cards that were later utilized in cyber-fraud operations that were thought to have come from outside by using KYC documents fraudulently. According to a statement from the agency, "this operation represents a step in dismantling the enabling ecosystem behind 'Digital Arrest' scams." To find more domestic and foreign partners and to demolish what officials called a larger cyber-fraud infrastructure, more investigation is being conducted.

India vs. Zimbabwe T20 World Cup: Will Rain Affect Their Match?

Chennai: On Thursday, India will play Zimbabwe in a pivotal T20 World Cup Super 8 match in Chennai. After their crushing defeat to South Africa, India's hopes of qualifying for the semifinals were severely damaged.

The Proteas easily defeated the Suryakumar Yadav-led team, losing by 76 runs. The situation worsened when Zimbabwe was soundly crushed by the West Indies; hence, India must win both of their games by wide margins in order to secure their place in the Top 4. India's fate will thereafter entirely depend on other results and Net Run Rate (NRR),



therefore a loss to Zimbabwe will be a significant setback even though it won't eliminate them.

With bright sky and no rain expected on Thursday, Chennai's weather forecast is generally favorable for cricket. It is anticipated that the temperature will

range from 26 to 28 degrees Celsius, with a maximum of 32 degrees. With dew playing a significant role, the humidity is predicted to rise over 70%.

Ahead of India's crucial Super Eights match against Zimbabwe, middle-order batsman Rinku Singh will

be joining the team, according to batting coach Sitanshu Kotak.

Rinku, who has participated in every game India has played in the current T20 World Cup, left the team hotel on Tuesday and traveled to Uttar Pradesh following his father's hospital admission and ventilator support due to liver cancer. On Tuesday, he skipped a practice session.

The batter will return to Chennai on Wednesday night, Kotak revealed during the press conference. "Rinku's dad wasn't feeling well.

So he returned. He remarked, "I believe he will return this evening."

An International Film Festival Will Be Held in Delhi March 25–March 31

New Delhi, Feb 26: Rekha Gupta, the chief minister of Delhi, declared today that the city will host its first-ever international film festival from March 25 to March 31. The International Film Festival Delhi (IFFD) 2026 is the name of the event, which will feature more than 125 Indian and foreign films. In front of Cabinet Minister Kapil Mishra, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta launched the curtain raiser on February 25, 2026, in the Delhi Secretariat. The festival will be a significant step in making Delhi a global hub for culture and film, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said, calling the project a historic opportunity.

The festival, according to Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, is a celebration of Delhi's creative prowess, cultural legacy, and contemporary perspective rather than just a film event. She pointed out that the platform will provide local technologists and filmmakers with international exposure and provide doors for communication with both domestic and international talent. Bharat Mandapam is one of the notable locations in New Delhi where the city-wide event will take place. "The festival will open new avenues in film tourism, talent development, AVGC, cre-

ative industries, and employment generation," added Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta. The festival is in line with the Delhi Government's Film Policy, according to Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta. The capital is becoming a desirable location for filmmaking because to initiatives including single-window permissions, production support, and industry facilitation. According to her, IFFD was a significant step in establishing Delhi as the film capital of India. She expressed confidence in the festival's long-term effects, saying it will give the city's cultural environment new life and guarantee Delhi a prominent position on the international scene. The Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation is in charge of the government-led IFFD program.

During the week-long festival, more than 125 Indian and foreign films will be exhibited at various locations throughout the capital. The program will feature screenings as well as industry discussions, workshops, cultural acts, masterclasses, and gala premieres. The festival aims to promote film tourism, talent development, industry collaboration, and the orange economy in accordance with



the Delhi Film Policy. Tourism Minister Kapil Mishra announced that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's leadership, Delhi is positioning itself as a global creative capital. The upcoming festival aims to attract distinguished filmmakers,

actors, and industry experts from around the world, showcasing the richness and diversity of Indian cinema.

It is designed to establish Delhi as a vibrant cultural hub, offering young talents an international platform, fostering discussions on new technologies and cinema practices, and enhancing tourism and employment within the creative sector. Highlights of the festival will include grand premieres, special screenings, and dedicated showcases for digital cinema, promoting innovation.

The CineXchange Film Market and Cineverse Expo will facilitate networking and investment for industry professionals. Additionally, masterclasses and panel discussions will offer practical insights, while cultural evenings will enrich the experience.

A strong emphasis will also be placed on film tourism and tightening local economic ties, as well as a single-window system to streamline production processes.

By providing access to international films in public spaces, the festival aims to broaden audience exposure to global cinema, ultimately bridging art, culture, and industry to boost Delhi's creative economy.

Galatasaray survive late Juventus scare to narrowly secure Champions League last-16 qualification spot

Turin: Galatasaray scraped through to the last 16 of the Champions League despite throwing away a three-goal aggregate lead at 10-man Juventus on Wednesday, with two extra-time goals limiting the Turkish outfit to a 3-2 defeat. Victor Osimhen and Baris Yilmaz scored the goals which allowed Galatasaray to win a thrilling tie 7-5 on aggregate and set up a clash with either Liverpool or Tottenham Hotspur in the next round. Galatasaray's previous appearance in the last 16 of Europe's elite club competition was in 2014 and they were fortunate to make it through on Wednesday, even with Juve having to play most of the night with 10 men. Juve were leading on the night through Manuel Locatelli's 37th-minute penalty when Lloyd Kelly was harshly shown a straight red card shortly after half-time for landing from a jump with his studs on Yilmaz's Achilles heel.

Kelly could hardly believe his eyes when he was initially shown a second yellow card. But he was livid after a check on the pitchside monitor led referee Joao Pin-



Heiro to revoke that decision only to show him a straight red card for serious foul play. The English defender was filmed loudly proclaiming the decision "a disgrace" while Juve coach Luciano Spalletti looked on dumbstruck from the sidelines. It was pretty absurd. He gets the ball and

Then what's he supposed to do? Us defenders are penalised too often in today's football," said distraught centre-back Federico Gatti. Leaving that aside, it was a brilliant reaction... it's disappointing that we were just tired when we got to extra time Captain Hakan Calhanoglu.

Galatasaray Survive Scare To Progress

Turin: Galatasaray scraped through to the last 16 of the Champions League despite throwing away a three-goal aggregate lead at 10-man Juventus on Wednesday, with two extra-time goals limiting the Turkish outfit to a 3-2 defeat. Victor Osimhen and Baris Yilmaz scored the goals which allowed Galatasaray to win a thrilling tie 7-5 on aggregate and set up a clash with either Liverpool or Tottenham Hotspur in the next round. Galatasaray's previous appearance in the last 16 of Europe's elite club competition was in 2014 and they were fortunate to make it through on Wednesday, even with Juve having to play most of the night with 10 men. Juve were leading on the night through Manuel Locatelli's 37th-minute penalty heel.

Deepti assures Harmanpreet is fit ahead Of Australia Women's second ODI clash



Hobart: Indian Women's cricket team all-rounder Deepti Sharma provided an update on skipper Harmanpreet Kaur's fitness, saying, "she is fit and fine" ahead of the second ODI of the series against Australia Women, set to be played on Friday at Hobart's Bellerive Oval. Har-

Manpreet Singh sustained a knee injury while batting during the first India Women vs Australia Women ODI at the Allan Border Field in Brisbane on Tuesday. The injury kept her from returning to the field in the second innings of the Match. In a post on X, the Board of Con-

trol for Cricket in India (BCCI) said that Harmanpreet had sustained an injury to her left knee while batting and that the medical team is monitoring her progress. With Harmanpreet unavailable, vice-captain Smriti Mandhana took charge of the side. Speaking in the pre-match press conference ahead of the Hobart ODI, Deepti Sharma, when asked about Harmanpreet's injury, said, "I can say that she is fit and fine." Coming to the match, India Women lost the match by six wickets. After being restricted to 214 in 48.3 overs, Australia Women chased the target in 38.2 overs with six wickets remaining, to clinch the ODI series opener. Deepti Sharma reflected that the team played well in the first ODI but didn't get the desired result, and expressed confidence in bouncing back stronger in the next game. "As a team, we played really good. But, obviously, the result has not come in our way. But, obviously, we are looking forward as a team and we will come back stronger in the next game," the Indian all-rounder said. "Personally, I'm always confident with them whenever we play.

Rabada and Ngidi dismantle West Indies As South Africa seize Super Eights control

Aamedabad: South Africa's pace duo Kagiso Rabada and Lungi Ngidi ripped through the West Indies top order to leave them reeling at five down in their crucial Super Eights clash of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Ahmedabad on Thursday. Rabada and Ngidi struck twice each in the third and fourth overs, triggering a dramatic collapse after the Windies had made a strong start. The sudden burst of wickets swung momentum firmly in South Africa's favour and put the Caribbean side under intense pressure in the powerplay. Earlier, South Africa captain Aiden Markram won the toss and opted to bowl first in the high-stakes encounter.

The Proteas fielded an unchanged XI, while the West Indies brought in Roston Chase in place of Akeal Hosein for the Super Eights fixture. Teams: South Africa: Aiden Markram (c), Quinton de Kock (wk), Ryan Rickelton, Dewald Brevis, David Miller, Tristan Stubbs, Marco Jansen, Corbin Bosch, Kagiso Rabada, Keshav Maharaj, Lungi Ngidi. West Indies: Brandon King, Shai Hope (wk/c), Shimron Hetmyer, Rovman Powell, Sherfane Rutherford, Roston Chase, Romario Shepherd, Jason Holder, Matthew Forde, Gudakesh Motie, Shamar Joseph. India will be chasing for the first time at this World Cup. That was the big news at the toss when Aiden Markram had no hesitation in batting first. Their decision of batting first would have obviously been influenced by the lack of dew not just over the last nights but they have also spent a lot of time in the city over the last two weeks. This is of course their fourth match at the new Motera. This venue typically sees a lot of dew in the Indian Premier League (IPL) so sides have generally opted to bowl first. Maybe Markram thinks that with some cracks on the surface, spin could play more of a role when he has the ball in the second innings. At the toss, Markram added that he doesn't expect the black soil surface to be tacky, at least to begin with. One major call from an Indian perspective is that Axar Patel continues to miss



Out. Washington Sundar, preferred to the left-arm spinner in the last group game against The Netherlands, retains his place. Patel has enjoyed a positive match-up over Markram so there were some legitimate calls to bring back the local boy but Sundar, who can also operate in the powerplay, retains the faith of the team management. Apart from that, the hosts, who enjoyed a big 3-1 in the five-match T20I series against the same opposition to close out 2025 (one match was washed out), have kept their faith in the likes of Abhishek Sharma, the southpaw yet to get off the mark in the World Cup. How South Africa's batters go about their business in the powerplay -- Markram has genuinely led from the front in this regard -- could set the contest up, at least in the first innings.

The city, hosting its first Super Eights match of the tournament, will expect more and more fans to walk through the turnstiles as the match wears on. At the time of toss, though, there were a vast number of empty seats throughout the cavernous Stadium. Skipper Aiden Markram led from the front with a flamboyant half-century as South Africa registered a comprehensive 57-run win over Canada in their opening Group D T20 World Cup match here on Monday. Sent in to bat, Markram blasted 10

fours and a six on way to a 59 off 32 balls. Ryan Rickelton (33), Quinton de Kock (25), Tristan Stubbs (34) and David Miller (39) also made useful contributions as South Africa posted 213 for 4 after being asked to take first strike. In reply, Canada could manage just 156 for 8 in their stipulated 20 overs with Navneet Dhaliwal (64) emerging as their top scorer. Canada had a torrid start to their chase, losing skipper Dilpreet Bajwa who edged a Lungi Ngidi (4/31) delivery to wicket-keeper Quinton de Kock in the first ball of the innings. Thereafter, Dhaliwal and Yuvraj Samra piled up 17 runs in the first two overs before losing two wickets. India will be chasing for the first time at this World Cup. That was the big news at the toss when Aiden Markram had no hesitation in batting first. Their decision of batting first would have obviously been influenced by the lack of dew not just over the last nights but they have also spent a lot of time in the city over the last two weeks. This is of course their fourth match at the new Motera. This venue typically sees a lot of dew in the Indian Premier League (IPL) so sides have generally opted to bowl first. Maybe Markram thinks that with some cracks on the surface, spin could play more of a role when he has the ball in the second innings.

Markram and De Kock carry Indian hopes, pivotal To Proteas success against resilient West Indies



Ahmedabad: As South Africa aim to continue their unbeaten run in the ongoing T20 World Cup, their top-orders, skipper Aiden Markram and Quinton de Kock, will be the key to success against a red-hot West Indies. Not only South Africa will be aiming to continue their winning run in T20 WC to help their bid for maiden white-ball world title win

on Indian soil, but a Proteas win would make the route to semifinals a little more easier for Team India, whose fortunes in the tournament took a massive dent with a loss to them at Ahmedabad by 76 runs.

The Indian audience, who has showered their love and admiration on several South African cricket icons over the years. They would be

hoping that De Kock and Markram, two extremely flashy strokemakers and fan favourites, continue their fine run against West Indies in T20Is. In 15 T20Is against West Indies, de Kock has made 642 runs at an average of 42.80, with a strike rate of over 160, including two centuries and three fifties and best score of 115. In 14 matches, Markram has scored 425 runs at an average of 42.50 and a strike rate of almost 158, with three fifties and best score of 86*. While Markram is the calm, smooth operator with silky smooth cover drives, cuts and aerial hits in his repertoire, de Kock is an in-and-out assassin, with each swing of his bat threatening to split the cricket ball in half. This pair of

ice and fire will be crucial to Proteas' success against WI. South Africa Squad: Aiden Markram(c), Quinton de Kock(w), Ryan Rickelton, Dewald Brevis, David Miller, Tristan Stubbs, Marco Jansen, Corbin Bosch, Kagiso Rabada, Keshav Maharaj, Lungi Ngidi, George Linde, Anrich Nortje, Kwenza Maphaka, Jason Smith. West Indies Squad: Brandon King, Shai Hope(w/c), Shimron Hetmyer, Rovman Powell, Sherfane Rutherford, Romario Shepherd, Jason Holder, Matthew Forde, Akeal Hosein, Gudakesh Motie, Shamar Joseph, Quentin Sampson, Jayden Seales, Roston Chase, Johnson Charles. But their performance on Wednesday was marked more by cynicism than quality.

Pele's 1966 World Cup Jacket Gains New Fans After Bad Bunny Wears It At Concerts In Brazil



New Delhi: A jacket worn by football hero Pelé in the 1966 World Cup has become a success among fans of pop artist Bad Bunny, who borrowed it from a collector's sports merchandise store and wore it in his recent concerts in Sao Paulo, his first on Brazilian territory. Bad Bunny's

tribute to the three-time World Cup champion, who died in 2022 at the age of 82, also featured a tweak in the lyrics of the song MONACO, which the Puerto Rican musician sang as "scoring a goal after Pelé and Maradona" rather than "Messi and Maradona." Cássio Brandão, proprietor of

the Alambrado Futebol e Cultura business, collects vintage soccer artifacts and jerseys and owns over 7,000 of them. He has 115 Pelé memorabilia and helped choose Bad Bunny's jacket. He took excellent care of the art. It returned just with perspiration, drenched with sweat, but still in fine shape. They were quite careful. "It returned in the same suitcase," Brandão explained. Pelé's official Instagram account later complimented the musician for the homage, saying that when someone like Bad Bunny respects "the King on Brazilian soil, it means the crown is still shining." "I think that today, when I see Bad Bunny doing this, it warms my heart to imagine that many kids across Brazil and around the world are going on YouTube trying to learn more about Pelé, watching his goals and better understanding the magnitude and greatness explained Brando.

Atalanta thrash Dortmund, Galatasaray edge Juventus to reach Champions League last-16

Bergamo: Atalanta BC produced one of the most memorable nights in their European history, overturning a two-goal first-leg deficit to defeat Borussia Dortmund 4-1 (4-3 on aggregate) and advance to the UEFA Champions League Round of 16 on Wednesday, according to the UEFA Champions League website. On the other hand, Galatasaray secured their place in the Round of 16 with a 7-5 aggregate victory over Juventus following a 3-2 second-leg thriller on Thursday.

In the Atalanta vs Dortmund match, a dramatic stoppage-time penalty from Atalanta's Lazar Samardzic proved to be the decisive blow in a match that saw the German giants crumble under the intense pressure. Trailing 2-0 from the first leg in Germany, Raffaele Palladino's side knew they needed a perfect start. They found it in the 5th minute when Gianluca Scamacca scored the side's first goal of the night. Just before the interval, the comeback was effectively levelled on aggregate as Davide Zappacosta made it 2-0 in the match. The second half began with Dortmund attempting to steady the ship, but the momentum was firmly with the hosts. In the 57th minute, Mario Pasalic met a Marten de Roon cross and headed home to give Atalanta the lead for the first time in the tie, making it 3-0 in the match. Karim Adeyemi, introduced as a substitute for Jobe Bellingham, silenced the Bergamo crowd in the 75th minute with a curling effort that made it 3-1 on the night and 3-3 on aggregate.



Gate--a result that would have sent the match to extra time. However, as the clock ticked toward the 100th minute, disaster struck for the visitors. Following a VAR review, Ramy Bensebaini was judged to have committed a foul in the area, earning himself a second yellow card and a subsequent red. Lazar Samardzic stepped up in the 90+8th minute to slot the penalty into the corner, helping Atalanta secure their place in the next round.

Coming to the Juventus vs Galatasaray match, the former produced a performance of immense grit at the Juventus Stadium in Turin, but their spirited comeback fell just short as Galatasaray secured their place in the UEFA Champions League Round of 16 with a 7-5 aggregate victory following a 3-2 second-leg thriller. Trailing 5-2 from the first leg, Juventus

Managed to level the tie on aggregate during regulation time despite playing with ten men for nearly an hour, only for the Turkish giants to strike twice in extra time. After several near-misses from Juventus' Federico Gatti and Teun Koopmeiners, the breakthrough arrived in the 37th minute as captain Manuel Locatelli stepped up to coolly convert the penalty and make it 1-0 in the game. However, the momentum shifted dramatically just three minutes into the second half. Defender Lloyd Kelly, who had already been booked, was shown a straight red card after a VAR review. Despite the numerical disadvantage, Luciano Spalletti's men refused to give up. In the 70th minute, Federico Gatti fired home to bring Juventus within one goal of levelling the tie. In the 82nd minute, Weston McKennie

Met a Koopmeiners cross and headed the goal, making it 3-0 in the match and 5-5 on aggregate, sending the match into a thirty minutes of extra time. Galatasaray shone in the extra time as on the stroke of halftime in extra time (105+1'), Victor Osimhen slotted home a goal, making it 3-1. Juventus threw everything forward in the closing stages, but they were caught on the break in the 119th minute as Baris Alper Yilmaz finished a clinical counter-attack to make it 3i2 in the game and 7-2 on the aggregate, ending Juventus' brave resistance and confirming Galatasaray's progression to the Round of 16.

Harry Kane shot against a post during a dominant first half for the hosts, but Joshua Kimmich's own goal gave visitors Sporting a 54th-minute lead, as per the UEFA Champions League website.