

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge addresses two massive election rallies in Barak Valley

Guwahati, Apr 06: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday launched a sharp attack on the BJP government and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma while addressing two massive election rallies at Barkhola and Nilambazar in Barak Valley.

Beginning his speech, he greeted mothers, youth, farmers, workers, and members of the media, recalling that Indira Gandhi had once described the region as an “island of peace” due to its natural beauty and calm environment. However, he alleged that over the past 10 years, the people of Barak have been neglected and treated with indifference by the government. Referring to the incomplete flyover in Silchar and the stalled Tarapur elevated corridor project, he said this is not merely a delay

in projects but a daily struggle for ordinary people, with students, workers, and patients suffering due to these failures. He also highlighted the recurring floods in nearby areas, which destroy homes, damage crops, and leave families displaced, adding that the BJP has failed to provide any permanent solution. Criticising the poor drainage system and severe traffic congestion in Silchar, Kharge said the BJP can make any promise for votes. He alleged that during elections, the BJP promises to implement the Assam Accord, make Assam free from floods and erosion, and grant tribal status to certain communities, but later forgets all commitments. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is more focused on handing over Guwahati airport to private hands, while Home Minister Amit



Shah talks about infiltrators but fails to take action. He claimed that while the BJP has been in power both in Delhi and Assam for the last 10 years, it has not effectively deported illegal migrants. Questioning the BJP's claims of nationalism, Kharge asked whether India attained independence only

after Modi became Prime Minister. Referring to the historical role of the Congress, he highlighted the sacrifices of leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, who spent years in jail and Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, who laid down their lives for the unity of the nation. He noted that no member of the Gandhi family has

held the position of Prime Minister or Chief Minister since 1989 and cited Sonia Gandhi's decision to decline the Prime Minister's post as an example of sacrifice. In contrast, he alleged that Himanta Biswa Sarma is driven only by the pursuit of power, wealth, and land. Kharge also referred to media reports alleging multiple passports in the name of the Chief Minister's wife, questioning how a person could possess golden, VIP, and ordinary passports, and demanded a thorough clarification. He urged people to question such issues when leaders seek votes.

Mentioning Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra, he said Rahul Gandhi walked from Kanyakumari to Kashmir to understand people's suffering, whereas Narendra Modi merely waves from vehicles. He also criticised political

developments in Assam, alleging that electoral delimitation has been used strategically to weaken Congress by dividing minority, Dalit, and tribal areas. He asserted that democracy belongs to the people, not to any ruling party, and that leaders like Modi and Himanta are temporary.

He further alleged that the BJP is now using money to put up flags across areas where it had no presence earlier. Targeting Prime Minister Modi, Kharge said promises of creating 2 crore jobs annually, doubling farmers' income, and the benefits of demonetisation have all proven false. He remarked that 24 crore jobs should have been created in 12 years but were not, and described Modi as misleading the people. He added that the BJP's “double engine” government has now failed.

In Brief

Rahul Gandhi accuses Ruling BJP

Guwahati: Amidst intensified campaigns by the ruling and the Opposition alliance, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Sunday addressed election rallies in three Assam Assembly constituencies—Biswanath, Golaghat and Kamalpur – raising allegations of corruption against the BJP government and chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. During his campaign, Gandhi termed Sarma as the “most corrupt chief minister in India” and asserted that if the Congress comes to power, his imprisonment was inevitable. He also declared that divisive politics would not be allowed on the sacred land of Assam. Addressing massive public gatherings, Gandhi directly targeted the chief minister, alleging that he constantly makes irresponsible statements.

Assam CM Launches Fresh Attack on Congress

Itanagar: A senior official reported that three bodies were recovered from a steep valley in Arunachal Pradesh where a minitruck from Assam had fallen. State Disaster Management Secretary Dani Salu stated that 20 remains have been found since Friday. The bodies will be returned to their families for further transport. Salu mentioned that there were 21 laborers aboard, including the driver. Search operations will end once a confirmed count of the laborers is obtained. The recovery operation, resumed at dawn by a joint Army and NDRF team, followed the accident occurring on December 8, about 40 kilometers from Hayuliang.

PM Modi Highlights Vision for Globalising Assam

Guwahati: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 6 stated that while the past decade focused on preserving Assam's identity, the coming years would aim at positioning the state on the global stage and strengthening its self-reliance. Addressing an election rally in Barpeta ahead of the Assembly elections, Modi outlined the achievements of the BJP-led government over the last ten years, noting that its primary focus had been on ensuring peace, harmony, and development in the state. Drawing a contrast with the Indian National Congress, he alleged that the opposition lacks a long-term vision and remains focused on short-term political gains. In comparison, he said the Bharatiya Janata Party is guided by a long-term roadmap aimed at building a developed Assam as part of a developed India. “The last decade was about restoring peace and stability in Assam. The next phase will be about expanding prosperity, enhancing self-reliance, and showcasing Assam's identity on the global platform,” Modi said.

Riniki Bhuyan Sarma Denies Foreign Assets, Counters Gaurav Gogoi Amid Political Row

Guwahati, Apr 06: Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, wife of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, on April 6 rejected allegations of holding foreign assets, asserting that neither she nor her family has any business interests or properties outside India.

Responding to a post by Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi, she said, “Neither I, nor my children, nor my husband have any business interests or assets in Dubai or anywhere outside India.”

In a sharp counter, she questioned Gogoi whether his wife has or has ever had a bank account in Pakistan, and asked if he would make such details public.

She also accused him of

shifting his claims, stating that within 24 hours he moved from referring to a “Golden visa on an Egyptian passport” to an “Indian passport.”

The exchange follows a series of questions raised by Gogoi, who had sought clarification from the Chief Minister regarding alleged foreign links.

He had asked whether Sarma's wife holds a Dubai Golden Visa, whether it is linked to an Indian passport, and whether any family members own property or operate businesses abroad.

Gogoi also questioned whether such assets, if any, were disclosed in election affidavits and said that the Chief Minister should welcome an investigation if

there is nothing to hide.

The controversy originates from earlier allegations by Pawan Khera, who claimed that certain documents indicated multiple passports linked to Sarma's wife and raised concerns over possible legal violations.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has dismissed the claims as baseless, calling the documents “fake” and alleging a politically motivated attempt to defame the Chief Minister ahead of the Assembly elections.

The ongoing exchange marks a fresh escalation in the political confrontation between the BJP and the Indian National Congress in Assam ahead of the polls, with both sides trading serious allegations.

Gaurav Gogoi Hits Back at Himanta Biswa Sarma, Raises Questions on Family Assets

Guwahati, Apr 06: Escalating the political confrontation in Assam, State Congress president Gaurav Gogoi launched a sharp counter-attack against Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, accusing him of repeatedly misleading the public and vowing to expose alleged irregularities linked to his family's assets and overseas business interests.

Responding to Sarma's recent statements, Gogoi said the Congress would bring to light what he described as “falsehoods” surrounding the Chief Minister's family wealth. He raised a series of questions, asking whether the Chief Minister's family holds a “Gold Card” in Dubai, owns property there, and whether such assets were disclosed in his election affidavit.

Gogoi asserted that if any such assets were found to be undisclosed, it could attract disqualification under election laws. He also called for central agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate to initiate an investigation into the matter.

Stepping up the attack, he said that if the Congress comes to power, it would take strict legal action against what he termed as “illegal properties and businesses” linked to the Chief



Minister's family.

He also made broader allegations, claiming links to activities such as cow smuggling and the coal mafia, though no supporting evidence was presented publicly.

The remarks mark a sharp escalation in the ongoing political war of words between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the Indian National Congress in Assam, with both sides trading serious allegations involving financial irregularities, foreign links, and potential legal violations ahead of the elections.

Himanta Biswa Sarma Launches Fresh Attack on Congress, Alleges Foreign Interference and Fake Evidence

Guwahati, Apr 06: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on April 6 intensified his political attack on the Congress, alleging foreign interference, use of fabricated evidence, and warning of strict legal action that could lead to imprisonment for senior party leaders.

Referring to recent allegations made by Congress leaders, Sarma claimed the controversy has politically backfired on the party. Citing informal “satta bazar” trends, he said the NDA's projected tally increased from 94 seats in the morning to 99 by night following the developments. “Congress is finished in Assam,” he remarked, adding that public support for the BJP-led alliance was visibly rising.

He reiterated that Pawan Khera could face legal consequences, noting that a police complaint has already been filed. “The police will decide whether to arrest Pawan Khera or not,” he said, describing the matter as “a crime against the country.” He also referred to Rahul Gandhi's use of the word “alleged,” but maintained that primary responsibility lies with Khera.



The Chief Minister further claimed that he had prior knowledge of the developments, stating that on March 27 he had alerted a journalist that

“something was about to happen.” He added that the issue has also been brought to the attention of the Government of India.

Escalating his allegations, Sarma questioned why Congress leaders allegedly relied on Pakistani social media sources. He accused Gaurav Gogoi of being linked to such networks, asking, “Why is Pakistan helping Gaurav Gogoi?” He also claimed that internal sources within the Congress had hinted at the move beforehand.

Sarma alleged that Pakistan has been attempting to influence Assam's electoral process, an issue he said he has been raising since July. “Why did you take help from a Pakistani social media group?” he asked, framing the matter as one of national security rather than mere political rivalry.

Drawing a historical comparison, he said the Congress had used similar tactics in the past, referring to instances where political figures were targeted using questionable methods.

He concluded by asserting that the government will pursue the matter through legal channels, including approaching the courts if necessary, and warned that those involved in fabricating and circulating such allegations would face strict consequences under the law.

Rahul Gandhi accuses Ruling BJP of Corruption in Assam

Guwahati, Apr 06: Amidst intensified campaigns by the ruling and the Opposition alliance, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Sunday addressed election rallies in three Assam Assembly constituencies—Biswanath, Golaghat and Kamalpur – raising allegations of corruption against the BJP government and chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. During his campaign, Gandhi termed Sarma as the “most corrupt chief minister in India” and asserted that if the Congress comes to power, his imprisonment was inevitable. He also declared that divisive politics would not be allowed on the sacred land of Assam. Addressing massive public gatherings, Gandhi directly targeted the chief minister, alleging that he constantly makes irresponsible statements. “None of Assam's great leaders ever spread hatred; instead, they promoted love and unity. You have a record—the most corrupt, most hate-spreading and most irresponsible Chief Minister in India is the Chief Minister of Assam,” he alleged. Predicting legal consequences, Rahul Gandhi said the chief minister is aware that the “Congress lions” would send him to jail. He compared the situation to a deer in the jungle that remains fearful

of a lion, stating that the chief minister is similarly restless and making erratic statements out of fear. He asserted that sooner or later, the chief minister would face consequences and have to apologise to the people of Assam and Congress leaders. Describing Assam as a bouquet of diverse communities, Gandhi said the state's real strength lies in its unity across religions, languages and communities. He further claimed that thousands of bighas of land have been allotted to corporate entities, including Adani Solar, Ambani, Adani Thermal projects, Adani Power Storage, and Baba Ramdev. He questioned whether such land belonged to these individuals, asserting that it belongs to the people of Assam. Criticising the BJP's election promises, Gandhi said the party has repeatedly failed to deliver on its commitments. He cited unfulfilled promises such as granting ST status to six communities, Rs 500 LPG cylinders, and Rs 15 lakh transfers to bank accounts. He also pointed out that tea garden workers were still being paid Rs 250 instead of the promised Rs 350. In contrast, he assured that if the Congress comes to power, tea workers will receive Rs 450 per day and the six communities will be granted ST status.

Narendra Modi Highlights Vision for Globalising Assam Emphasises Self-Reliance Ahead of Polls

Guwahati, Apr 06: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 6 stated that while the past decade focused on preserving Assam's identity, the coming years would aim at positioning the state on the global stage and strengthening its self-reliance. Addressing an election rally in Barpeta ahead of the Assembly elections, Modi outlined the achievements of the BJP-led government over the last ten years, noting that its primary focus had been on ensuring

peace, harmony, and development in the state. Drawing a contrast with the Indian National Congress, he alleged that the opposition lacks a long-term vision and remains focused on short-term political gains. In comparison, he said the Bharatiya Janata Party is guided by a long-term roadmap aimed at building a developed Assam as part of a developed India. “The last decade was about restoring peace and stability in Assam. The next phase will be about

expanding prosperity, enhancing self-reliance, and showcasing Assam's identity on the global platform,” Modi said.

Extending greetings on the BJP's foundation day, he reiterated the party's guiding principle of “Nation First” and urged continued public support to achieve the goal of a developed and self-reliant India. Highlighting the state's potential, Modi pointed to improvements in connectivity, which he said have boosted tourism

and regional growth. He also mentioned that Assam's Joha rice is set to gain international recognition, benefiting local farmers. “Connectivity is expanding, tourism is growing, and its benefits are reaching every corner of Assam,” he added, reaffirming the government's commitment to development. Assam will go to polls for its 126 Assembly constituencies on April 9, with counting of votes scheduled for May 4.

Assam CM's wife files FIR against Cong leader Pawan Khera

Guwahati, Apr 06: Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, wife of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, has filed an FIR with the Crime Branch of Guwahati police against Congress leader Pawan Khera for allegedly making “baseless” allegations against her. Police have registered a case based on her FIR.

At a press conference in New Delhi on Sunday, Khera claimed that Riniki Bhuyan Sarma has passports from three different countries -- the UAE, Egypt, and Antigua and Barbuda -- besides businesses and assets in the UAE and the United States which were not disclosed in her husband's election affidavit.

NE/EAST

TTAADC polls:
Kokborok will be re
cognized by BJP

Guwahati, Apr 06: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Sunday unveiled the BJP’s manifesto for the April 12 polls to the tribal council, promising recognition to Kokborok language, a masterplan for headquarters Khumulwng, a football academy and a medical college.

Voting for the 28-member Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) will be held on April 12, and the counting is scheduled to take place on April 17.

Saha, speaking to the reporters at Khumulwng in West Tripura district, said there are allegations of corrupt practices in Tipra Motha-run TTADC, and the BJP will take action against “unethical practices” if voted to power in the tribal council.

In the manifesto, the party promised to rename TTAADC as Tripura Autonomous Territorial Council (TATC), give proper recognition to Kokborok and other tribal languages and take steps to preserve the customary laws and tradition of tribal societies.

The party also promised

to set up a medical college, formulate a masterplan for Khumulwng, headquarters of the tribal council, extend Mukhya Mantri Rubber Mission to the region and establish a modern football academy.

The ruling party also promised skilling of tribal boys and girls to ensure they get jobs.

The chief minister said the BJP’s goal is to speed up development in the tribal areas if the party is given a mandate to run the tribal council.

“Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his last monthly radio programme ‘Mann ki Baat’, praised the installation of solar panels in Reang refugee camps and the supply of drinking water in Jampai hills. We are always focused on development, be it plains or hills,” he said.

Saha said the BJP, which is contesting all the 28 seats, will win the tribal council polls.BJP state president Rajib Bhattacharjee, Tribal Welfare Minister Bikash Debbarma and party vice president Rebati Tripura were also present during the event.

Utkal Divas celebrated

Kohima, Apr 06: Nagaland governor Nand Kishore Yadav graced the celebration of Utkal Divas, marking the Foundation Day of Odisha, held at Dr. Imkongliba Ao Hall, Lok Bhavan, Kohima, on April 1.According to a press release from the PRO, Lok Bhavan, the governor in his address expressed pleasure in joining the Odia community and highlighted the historical significance of the day, commemorating the formation of Odisha on April 1, 1936, as India’s first state created on a linguistic basis.

He noted that the occasion symbolizes not only statehood but also cultural pride, linguistic identity, and resilience of the people of Odisha. The governor lauded Odisha’s rich heritage, recalling its glorious past from the ancient Kalinga civilization to the spiritual prominence of Lord



Jagannath. He also referred to the transformative impact of Emperor Ashoka’s Kalinga War, which reshaped history with a message of peace. Highlighting Concluding his address, he extended warm greetings and best wishes to the people of Odisha residing in Nagaland and across the country, expressing hope that the occasion

Earlier, in his welcome address, commissioner & secretary to the governor, Thava-seelan K, described Odisha as a land of glorious history and vibrant culture, remarking that such celebrations strengthen bonds of friendship between the people of Odisha and Nagaland.

Congress “committed five sins” against the Assamese people, according to Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Guwahati, Apr 06: Union Agriculture minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday accused the Congress of committing five major sins against the people of Assam since independence.

Addressing two election rallies at Bokakhat and Naduar, Chouhan alleged that in 1947, during partition, the Congress was in “favour of handing over Assam to Pakistan”, but it was the state’s first Chief Minister Gopinath Bordoloi, who struggled hard to ensure that it remained a part of India.

The second sin committed by Congress was during the India-China war of 1962, when then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru “bade farewell to the state and left it to its fate”, he said. The Congress’s third sin was “allowing infiltrators to settle in the state and giving them protection”, which led to pressure on its resources and em-



ployment opportunities, but the BJP is committed to freeing all land from the clutches of infiltrators, the Union minister said.Chouhan said the Congress committed the fourth sin by “failing” to create job opportunities, forcing the youth to leave

the state to seek employment outside. He said the party’s fifth and final sin was that it “weakened” democracy and “promoted” dynastic rule in the country.The Union minister said that the Congress made Priyanka Gandhi in charge of elections in As-

sam, but when she came, senior leaders left the party.The Congress is a divided party, and “how can they ensure the welfare of the people and progress of the state. It is only the BJP that can take the journey of development ahead”, he added.Chouhan also alleged that the Congress did nothing for tea garden workers of the state for decades.“The tea garden workers toiled hard for years and sent tea across the globe, but they did not even have the right of the land on which their homes stood. It is the BJP government at the Centre and state that ensured land rights for the workers”, Chouhan asserted.He campaigned for NDA constituent GP’s candidate and minister Atul Bora at Bokakhat and for BJP candidate Padma Hazarika at Naduar.Polling for the 126-member Assam assembly will be held on April 9. Votes will be counted on May 4.

Congress alleges Sarma’s wife holds three passports, Dubai properties

Guwahati, Apr 06: The Congress on Sunday alleged that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma’s wife possesses passports of three countries and that he concealed information about her properties, but the BJP leader “categorically rejected” the claims as “malicious” and “fabricated” and vowed to take legal action “within 48 hours”.Targeting Sarma as the campaign peaks for the April 9 election in Assam, Congress’ media and publicity department head Pawan Khera showed, at a press conference, purported documents to support the allegations and demanded that the Election Commission cancel his nomination for allegedly concealing information in his poll affidavit. Hitting back at Khera, Sarma said that as Assam moves decisively towards a historic mandate, such desperate and baseless attacks only expose the Congress’ sinking ground.“These are malicious, fabricated, and politically motivated lies aimed at misleading the people of Assam,” the Assam Chief Minister said. He alleged that “documents being circulated show multiple glaring inconsistencies, suggesting a crude and poorly executed attempt at digital manipulation”. Sarma said his wife and he will be filing both criminal and civil defamation cases within the next 48 hours against Khera for making “reckless and defamatory statements”.In his press conference here, Khera said Assam Chief Minister Sarma and his wife “have faced numerous allegations over time — such as land grabbing, misappropriation of temple donations, siphoning off government subsidies”.“However, the documents we are presenting before you today pertain to matters extending beyond India’s borders,” Khera said.“Riniki Bhuyan Shar-



ma, the wife of he Assam Chief Minister, holds three passports,” he alleged. Khera claimed that she has a UAE Passport, which was issued on March 14, 2022 and expires on March 13, 2027.He claimed the second passport in her name is from Antigua and Barbuda, which was issued from August 26, 2021, and expires on August 25, 2031.Khera also alleged that the third passport in her name is from Egypt which was issued on February 13, 2022 and expires on February 12, 2029.“Himanta Biswa Sarma’s entire politics is predicated on hatred against Muslims; yet, his wife holds passports from two Muslim countries?” Khera alleged.“Are they making preparations to flee the country in the event of an electoral defeat?” Khera said.Rejecting Khera’s claims, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma said she will take legal action against him. “I expected a spokesperson of a national party to exercise basic due diligence, rather than circulate



poorly fabricated images of imaginary passports and documents. I will now be letting the law take over. Criminal charges are being initiated. We can continue this in court,” she said on X.Khera also alleged that Sarma’s wife owns two properties in Dubai.“Many people own properties abroad; however, when a spouse contests an election, these assets must be disclosed in their affidavit. Yet, there is no mention whatsoever of these two Dubai properties in Himanta Biswa Sarma’s affidavit,” the Congress leader asked.Khera also alleged that Sarma’s wife owns a company based in Wyoming, USA. The list of members for this company includes the names of the couple and their son, he claimed.“Himanta Biswa Sarma has stashed his money in Wyoming by setting up shell companies,” he alleged. Home Minister Amit Shah must answer as to whether he will constitute an SIT to investigate these matters, Khera said.

Congress works to unite people: Rahul in Assam

Jaipur, Apr 06: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said the philosophy of his party is that of the celebrated musician Zubeen Garg, who worked his entire life to unite Assam.

Addressing election rallies in Biswanath and Golaghat districts, he alleged that Himanta Biswa Sarma is the “most corrupt CM” in India, and action will be taken against him after the Congress forms a government in the state.

“Zubeen Garg worked his entire life to unite people of Assam; he never misbehaved with anyone. The Congress philosophy is also like that, to spread love against hatred,” Gandhi said. He alleged that the BJP government led by Sarma is spreading hatred against people and communities.“Let him speak for some more days. After that, the Congress will form a government in Assam, and legal action will follow even if he asks for forgiveness. The Congress government will put him in jail for 10-15 years,” Gandhi said.The Congress leader alleged Sarma, along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, has created a “land ATM” to snatch land from the public to give it to a few big industrialists. He said not only Sarma but corruption allegations against his family will be investigated, and action will be taken accordingly.

Gandhi claimed that three big corporate houses have been handed over a total of 98,400 bighas of land in Assam. “It is a land-grabbing syndicate in Assam. But they don’t get land for free. These corporates are the financing machine of the BJP,” he alleged.Raking up India’s trade pact with the US, the leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha claimed it is a loss for New Delhi as taxes on American goods were lowered and the Indian market was opened to them. “Donald Trump controls Narendra Modi due to the Epstein files. There are 35 lakh unreleased files. Trump knows Modi’s hidden facts,” he claimed.Gandhi alleged that the agriculture sector has been opened to US corporations, and the country is dictating India’s purchase of crude oil.“Narendra Modi has also handed over all data to Trump. The dal says India will have to purchase 9 lakh crore worth of goods from the US. This will devastate small industrialists and traders in India,” he claimed.

Assam was detained in Lakhimpur while onboard a moving train
Man kills minor daughter

North Lakhimpur, Apr 06: A man allegedly killed his minor daughter inside a running train in Assam’s Lakhimpur district on Sunday morning.The incident occurred between Kathalpukhuri and Silanibari railway stations aboard the 15813 Dekargaon–Murkongselek passenger train. The accused has been identified as Sunil Murmu, a resident of No. 2 Kadamguri in Dhemaji district. According to eyewitness accounts, passengers discovered the body of a child with a severed head inside an empty compartment, while the accused was seen holding a machete. When confronted, Murmu reportedly attempted to attack a witness, creating panic among passengers.He later jumped off the train near Gate No. 46, close to Silanibari railway station, and tried to flee. Local villagers chased him for several kilometres before apprehending him at Sariyahbari village. He was subsequently brought to Silanibari railway station and handed over to the police.Sources said Murmu had boarded the train earlier in the morning from Borgang railway station



in Biswanath district, leaving behind his wife and another daughter on the platform.

Police have taken the accused into custody, and an investigation into the incident is underway.

Left Front dissatisfied with poll panel decisions for TTAADC polls

Agartala, Apr 06: The Left Front in Tripura on Friday expressed dissatisfaction with the explanations provided by the State Election Commission (SEC) on key electoral issues, including the use of VVPAT, deployment of central forces, and web-casting arrangements, ahead of the upcoming TTAADC and Dharmanagar by-elections.Addressing the media at the CPI(M) state headquarters, Left Front convenor Manik Dey said the responses given by the Commission during an all-party meeting held on April 1 had failed to address the concerns raised by opposition parties. The meeting, attended by senior officials including the State Election Commissioner, the Director General of Police, and the Inspector General (Law and Order), was convened to review poll preparedness and address stakeholders’ apprehensions. However, Dey



stated that the clarifications offered did not inspire confidence among opposition leaders

One of the primary issues raised by the Left Front was the sourcing of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) from outside the state. Dey questioned the rationale behind bringing machines from Madhya Pradesh when EVMs

previously used in Tripura were reportedly available, calling the move “unusual” and raising doubts over procedural consistency.He also referred to a recent remark attributed to Tribal Welfare Minister Bikash Debbarma, saying it had triggered concerns over the integrity of the electoral process. Dey added that a formal complaint had been submitted to the Commission, but no information had been received regarding any action taken. On the demand for Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) systems, the Left Front leader said the Commission had cited logistical constraints in declining the request. He reiterated that the use of VVPAT alongside EVMs is essential to ensure transparency and strengthen voter confidence, adding that the opposition disagreed with the Commission’s position on the matter.

Assam Elections 2026: AJP Guwahati Central candidate Kunki Chowdhury files FIR over AI deepfake video

Guwahati, Apr 06: Asom Jatiya Parishad (AJP) candidate for the 36 Guwahati Central constituency, Kunki Chowdhury has lodged an FIR at the Panbazar Cyber Crime Police Station alleging circulation of an AI-generated deepfake video that purportedly distorts her statements

According to sources, the complaint seeks a detailed investigation into the origin and dissemination of the video, which has been widely circulated on social media. Chowdhury has alleged that the manipulated clip is aimed at misleading voters and damaging her public image during the campaign The development comes amid an ongoing politi-

cal row triggered by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma’s allegations against Chowdhury’s mother, Sujata Gurung Chowdhury, over her alleged social media activity. During a campaign on Thursday, the Chief Minister had claimed that her posts hurt “Sanatani” sentiments and suggested sympathies towards Pakistan, while also alleging support for activists such as Sharjeel Imam and Umar Khalid.Chowdhury has rejected the allegations as “completely baseless”, asserting that such claims reflect political unease. In a video message, she said the traction gained by her campaign in a short span of time had unsettled her opponents. “It has been just 15 days



The development comes amid an ongoing political row triggered by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma’s allegations against Chowdhury’s mother, Sujata Gurung Chowdhury.

since I entered politics, and the support I have received has clearly worried them,” she said.

Her mother, Sujata Gurung Chowdhury, also issued a rebuttal, denying all allegations and stating that she has no involvement in politics. She questioned the intent behind dragging her into the electoral contest and rejected claims related to dietary practices and alleged support for “anti-national” elements, calling for verification of facts.AJP president Lurinjyoti Gogoi further criticised the Chief Minister’s remarks, accusing him of diverting attention from key governance issues and resorting to identity-based rhetoric. He said Chowdhury’s campaign has focused on civic concerns such as artificial flooding, traffic congestion and land rights in Guwahati.

IMD forecasts warmer summer, rainfall in Meghalaya

Shillong, Apr 06: Meghalaya is likely to witness above-normal temperatures and below-normal rainfall during the April to June period this year, according to the India Meteorological Department. As per the seasonal outlook issued by the weather office, both maximum and minimum temperatures across the state are expected to remain above normal. However, the India Meteorological Department clarified that heat wave conditions are unlikely during this period.The forecast also indicates that rainfall across many parts of the Northeast, including Meghalaya, is likely to be below normal.Officials noted that the warmer-than-usual conditions during both daytime and nighttime could lead to increased thermal discomfort, particularly during dry spells. The expected shortfall in rainfall may also impact water availability and agricultural activities, especially in rain-dependent areas of the state.

Supreme Court Orders CBI Preliminary Probe into Contract Allocation Allegations in Arunachal Pradesh

Guwahati, Apr 06: The Supreme Court of India has directed the Central Bureau of Investigation to conduct a preliminary inquiry into allegations of irregular allotment of public contracts by the Arunachal Pradesh government to firms linked to relatives of Chief Minister Pema Khandu.

A bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and N V Anjaria ordered the probe and asked the CBI to submit its report within 16 weeks. The report will determine whether a full-fledged independent investigation is required.

The court instructed the CBI to examine contracts awarded between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2025, while allowing the agency to expand the scope if necessary. It also directed the

Arunachal Pradesh government to fully cooperate and submit all relevant records within four weeks, ensuring that no documents are destroyed.

Additionally, the state's Chief Secretary has been asked to appoint a nodal officer within one week to coordinate with the CBI during the inquiry.

The order came in response to a petition filed by the Save Mon Region Federation and Voluntary Arunachal Senaa, represented by senior advocate Prashant Bhushan. The petitioners alleged that contracts worth around ₹1,270 crore were awarded to companies linked to members of the Chief Minister's family, including his spouse, mother, and nephew.

Among the allegations, the petition cited contracts awarded to a construction firm linked to the Chief Minister's



spouse and another firm allegedly owned by his nephew, Tsering Tashi, claiming that due procedures were not followed in the tendering process.

Filed in 2024, the petition sought an independent investigation by the CBI or a Special Investigation Team (SIT), alleging favouritism in the allocation of key public works contracts.

The case has undergone multiple hear-

ings over the past year. In March 2025, the apex court had sought detailed responses from the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, and the state government regarding the tendering process. A report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India was also referenced during earlier proceedings involving allegations linked to former Chief Minister Dorjee Khandu.

During earlier hearings, then Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna had observed that the CAG report referred to guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which prohibit ministers from extending undue benefits to relatives.

The Supreme Court's latest direction is seen as a significant step in assessing whether the allegations warrant a deeper criminal investigation.

Indian National Congress Seeks Action Against Assam CM Over Affidavit Issue

Guwahati, Apr 06: The Congress on Monday filed a complaint with the Election Commission seeking cancellation of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's candidature from Jalukbari constituency, alleging that he "deliberately suppressed" information about his wife's purported offshore assets in his election affidavit.

The complaint comes a day after the Opposition party claimed that Sarma's wife owns property in Dubai and companies in the US, which were not disclosed in his poll affidavit.

In a representation to Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, Congress candidate from Jalukbari Bidisha Neog sought a probe into the alleged concealment of such information.

"The said affidavit does not disclose any offshore or foreign assets despite explicit statutory instructions in Form 26. Documentary evidence from the Dubai Land Department establishes that Riniki Bhuyan Sharma, the spouse of the candidate, is the owner/beneficial holder of two valuable properties in Al Barsha South Fourth, Dubai, UAE," Neog alleged in her complaint.

She mentioned two properties allegedly owned by Sarma's wife and said the "deliberate non-disclosure" violates the mandatory requirements, and it renders the nomination liable to rejection.

"An immediate inquiry be conducted into the suppression of offshore assets, the nomination of Himanta Biswa Sarma be rejected in accordance with Section 36 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and appropriate proceedings under Section 125A be initiated," the Congress candidate demanded.

The Congress also filed a complaint with the Enforcement Directorate, urging it to register a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, for allegedly operating undisclosed assets in Dubai and Wyoming in the US by the Assam Chief Minister's wife.

Assam Seeks NGT Nod to Deploy 1,600 Forest Personnel for Election Work

Guwahati, Apr 06: The Assam government on Monday urged the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to vacate its stay on the deployment of around 1,600 Assam Forest Protection Force (AFPF) personnel for the April 9 assembly elections.

In a reply submitted before the NGT's eastern zonal bench in Kolkata, the state argued that the plea against its March 19 order mobilizing AFPF personnel to assist Assam Police had wrongly "stretched" the provisions of the Biological Diversity Act to cover man-



power deployment. On April 2, the tribunal had stayed the order following a petition by advocate Gaurav Bansal, who claimed that diverting AFPF personnel from their primary duties of protecting biological resources amounted to a violation of statutory obligations under the Act. The state's en-

vironment department, in its response dated April 4, said AFPF members are armed personnel constables, sub-inspectors, inspectors and not forest officers. It emphasized that biodiversity management in Assam is overseen by 2,549 Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs), not dependent solely on AFPF staff.

"The so-called application of the Biological Diversity Act to manpower deployment is misplaced. AFPF personnel are not responsible for the protection of biological resources unless they occur

in notified forests," the reply stated. It added that biodiversity extends beyond forests to agriculture, livestock, and other resources, and that the petitioner had "stretched the provisions of the Act too far." The government argued that previous deployments of AFPF personnel for election duties had not compromised biodiversity protection. "It is completely wrong to say that protection of biological diversity is dependent only on these 1,600 AFPF personnel," the reply said, urging the tribunal to vacate its April 2 order.

Mizoram Governor attends 'Run For Soldiers' event in New Delhi

Aizawl, Apr 06: Mizoram Governor, General Vijay Kumar Singh (Retd) on Sunday flagged off the second edition of PNB Soldierathon 2026, organised by Punjab National Bank and the Indian Armed Forces to mark the bank's 132nd Foundation Day. The event, themed "Run For Soldiers", was held at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi to honour the heroes of Operation Sindoor and promote physical well-being under the Fit India Campaign. Over 27,000 people participated. Speaking at the event, General Singh warmly praised the Soldierathon, jointly organised by Punjab National Bank and the Indian Armed Forces, for promoting the vital importance of physical fitness and good health. He highlighted that the Soldierathon was launched under the Fit India Campaign. Through this inspiring initiative, the public is being educated about the need to build a strong and healthy body. He added that if this powerful message is spread far and wide, the entire society will reap the benefits. The marathon featured three race categories - 21.1 km Half Marathon, 10 km Run, and 5 km Run - with a total prize pool of Rs 19.5 lakh. The event aimed to honour soldiers while encouraging fitness across all levels.

Northeast Tourism Gets Push as NEITC, ABTO Sign Pact

Guwahati, Apr 06: The North East India Tourism Confederation (NEITC) on Monday announced the signing of a strategic memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Association of Buddhist Tour Operators (ABTO) to promote Buddhist cultural tourism in the Northeast.

NEITC, the apex body representing tourism organisations across the region, said the MoU was formalised during the National Tourism Convention and Familiarisation (FAM) Tour held in March at Namsai in Arunachal Pradesh.

According to NEITC, the partnership aims to facilitate international travel to Buddhist sites across the Northeast by providing structured information access and improving travel coordination for foreign visitors.

The collaboration is also expected to support the identification and promotion of lesser-known Buddhist heritage locations in the region.

Speaking at a media conference in Guwahati, Convention Chairman Tsering Wange said the initiative would help expand the scope of Bud-



dhist tourism beyond traditional destinations. "Till now, international visitors have largely travelled to Bodhi Gaya or Tibet for Buddhist cultural tourism. Through this collaboration, we aim to promote destinations in Arunachal Pradesh, parts of Assam and Sikkim, while also opening up

other areas of the Northeast," Wange said. ABTO has a presence across 25 countries, and NEITC said the partnership would help position the Northeast within the broader global Buddhist tourism circuit.

The organisation added that the MoU is expected to strengthen re-

gional cooperation and create tourism-linked opportunities across multiple states.

Alongside the announcement, NEITC also marked a leadership transition with the formal assumption of charge by its newly elected governing council and the introduction of its executive committee.

The new office bearers are: Tsering Wange – President (Arunachal Pradesh); Elina Satapathy – Vice President-I (Manipur); Jhantu Roy – Vice President-II (Tripura); Yangchen Tongden Lepcha – General Secretary (Sikkim); Joe RZ Thanga – Joint Secretary (Mizoram) and Rajkumar Das – Treasurer (Assam).

Addressing the media, the new office bearers said their focus would be to expand the visibility of Northeast India as a tourism destination at both national and international levels.

They said the developments mark a coordinated step towards strengthening institutional leadership, improving collaboration, and advancing long-term growth of the tourism sector in the region.

Indoor cricket facility inaugurated in Guwahati

Guwahati, Apr 06: BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia on Sunday inaugurated a private indoor cricket facility developed by Aakriida Centre of Excellence in Guwahati.

The inauguration ceremony saw the participation of several ex-state players. Devajit Saikia lauded the efforts of the family of the late Hirendra Kumar Dutta who offered the land parcel for setting up the facility thereby contributing in building a day and night facility for cricketers in the region. With 6-7 months of rainy season in this part of the region, Saikia mentioned that this facility is indeed a boost for cricketing region who can avail 24X7 training facilities irrespective of weather conditions. He also emphasised on the initiative of Aakriida towards focussing on counselling and mental health; he mentioned that players in the North East are very skilled but why they miss on being on the national platform is because of lack of exposure on mental aptitude, which is a necessity in today's competitive times. He hoped that with ACA's new facilities in Barpeta, Dhemaji, Bokakhat along with initiatives like that of Aakriida, there will be many more Rryan Parags and Uma Chetrys from the region.

Explosive Thrown at Home of BJP's Sarupathar Candidate Biswajit Phukan

Guwahati, Apr 06: In the run-up to Assam Assembly polls, unidentified miscreants hurled a grenade at the residence of BJP's Sarupathar candidate and incumbent MLA Biswajit Phukan at Changpool in Golaghat district today.

However, a major disaster was averted as the grenade failed to explode. Phukan was not at the house at the time of the incident.

Police reached the spot soon after and have launched an investigation into the incident.

Assam Investment Push: Governor Calls on Industry Leaders

Guwahati, Apr 06: Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya chaired an industrialists meet with a delegation from Indian Industries Association at Lok Bhavan in Guwahati on Monday.

During the meeting, the Governor highlighted Assam's strategic location, improved connectivity, policy support and investor-friendly environment as a preferred investment friendly destination.

The Governor informed about the pivotal role of the Central Government in accelerating the State's infrastructure and industrial development, including emerging industries like semiconductors.

Urging the industry leaders to explore Assam's vast potential, the Governor assured that the State Government remains committed to providing a conducive and investor-friendly environment to ensure sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

The Governor called upon industrialists to actively engage in Assam's growth story and assured that the State Government is fully committed in ensuring a transparent, business-friendly environment and facilitating sustainable economic development.

He further underscored the significant initiative like "Advantage Assam-2.0" in attracting investments and showcasing the State's strength across



sectors.

He stressed that MSME sector remains central to employment generation and inclusive growth and called for focused efforts to further strengthen the segment.

Earlier, Narendra Shah, Commissioner of Industries, Assam gave a comprehensive presentation on the theme of "Assam-India's fastest Growing State" where he elaborated on the State's competitive advantages, improving infrastructure and investor friendly ecosystem.

Dinesh Goyal, national president of Indian Industries Association also spoke on this occasion.

A documentary on "Industrial Scenario in Assam" showcasing the State's rapid economic transformation and growing industrial capabilities was screened.

Supreme Court Dismisses Case Against Doctor in Child Surgery Row

New Delhi, Apr 06: The Supreme Court on Monday quashed criminal proceedings against a doctor who had performed a surgery on a one-and-a-half-year-old child saying continuance of the case would be an abuse of the process of the court.

A bench of Justices Pamidigantam Sri Narasimha and Manoj Misra said criminal law has invariably placed medical professionals on a pedestal different from ordinary mortals. "In the instant case, no malice is attributed to the doctor and there is no dispute that the consent form was executed for undertaking a medical procedure. Further, the medical opinion is to the effect that the procedure adopted by the doctor was one of the alternatives recognised to meet such a medical exigency," the bench said. The top court said continuance of criminal proceedings against the appellant would be nothing but an abuse of the process of the court and, therefore, to secure the ends of justice, the same is liable to be quashed.

According to the case, the father of the child made a complaint alleging that his son, aged one-and-a-half years, was admitted to a hospital for a surgical procedure as one of his testicles had not descended into the scrotal sac. According to him, doctors had obtained his consent for Orchidopexy (i.e., the surgical procedure that moves an undescended testicle into the scrotum), but there was no consent for Orchiectomy (removal of the testicle).



Rabha National Council Withdraws Support from BJP

Guwahati, Apr 06: In a significant political development ahead of the elections in Assam, the Rabha National Council (RNC), representing the Rabha community, has withdrawn its support from the BJP-led alliance and extended backing to Congress candidate Ramen Singh Rabha in the Boko-Chaygaon constituency.

The announcement was made late on April 4 during a press conference attended by key RNC leaders, including Chief Secretary Govinda Rabha, Central Member and Auditor Aditya Rabha, Executive President Arun Diya, Kamrup District Member Manoj Rabha, and Ribhoi District President Pradip Rabha.

RNC leaders stated that although some members of the Rabha Joutho Mancha have aligned with BJP candi-

date Raju Meeh due to political compulsions, their ideological and emotional support remains with Ramen Singh Rabha, whom they described as a "national leader" of the community. They urged Rabha voters to consolidate their support behind the Congress candidate.

Highlighting his credentials, the Council noted Rabha's past roles as president (twice) and general secretary of the All Rabha Students' Union, along with his long-standing involvement in regional and community issues.

The RNC also criticised BJP candidate Raju Meeh, stating that his engagement with the constituency might not have occurred if it had not been reserved for Scheduled Tribes.

The Council further referred to Meeh's participation in a meeting supporting the United Bodo People's Organization decision to exclude 312 Bodo-majority villages from the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council. It asserted that Rabhas living in the BTAD region did not endorse such a move. Reiterating its appeal, the RNC called on voters to support Ramen Singh Rabha in the April 9 polls, citing his involvement in various public movements, including protests against the proposed Kulshi river dam at Ukiam, opposition to a satellite township in Rabha Hasong, and resistance to the transfer of Dorabil land to private entities.

With this shift, the RNC has positioned Ramen Singh Rabha as the preferred candidate of the Rabha community, a move that could significantly influence electoral dynamics in the Boko-Chaygaon constituency.

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India Will Have to Regain Its Glory

The nation that gave the world civilisation, philosophy and zero must now summon the will to reclaim its rightful place among nations.India was once the golden bird — Sone ki Chidiya — whose wealth, wisdom and cultural radiance drew traders, scholars and conquerors alike from across the globe. Millennia before the industrial age, it accounted for a quarter of the world’s GDP. Today, despite being the world’s fifth-largest economy and the most populous democracy, India punches below its weight in science, technology, human development and global diplomacy.The challenge is not merely economic. Millions of children still lack quality schooling; farmers battle debt and drought; air in our cities chokes lungs and ambitions alike. Communal fault-lines, once healed by the Constitution’s secular promise, are being prised open by electoral arithmetic. A democracy that cannot protect its minorities cannot claim moral leadership of the world.Yet India’s foundations remain formidable — a youthful population, a vibrant civil society, a free press and institutions, however strained, that still breathe. The road to glory runs not through chest-thumping nationalism but through classrooms, laboratories, courtrooms and voting booths. India must invest in education, honour science, protect its Constitution and embrace every citizen regardless of faith, caste or region.Reclaiming glory is not nostalgia — it is a covenant with the future. The world needs an India that leads by example, not by decibel. That hour can come, but only if the nation chooses reform over rhetoric, unity over division and truth over convenience.

The missing link in our renewable energy transition lies in quality assurance

Geopolitical crises have repeatedly exposed Bangladesh’s excessive dependence on imported fossil fuels, driving up energy prices and depleting foreign exchange reserves. The ongoing war in the Middle East has once again highlighted this structural vulnerability. To mitigate such external shocks, Bangladesh must urgently expand its domestic renewable energy capacity.

But to what extent does the government demonstrate genuine commitment to a renewable energy transition? And if such intent exists, are current policies and strategies being implemented effectively? The answer, unfortunately, appears to be no. While financing constraints, investment gaps, and taxation remain the primary barriers to renewable energy expansion in Bangladesh, another critical issue has received far less attention: barriers related to imported renewable energy components.

Renewable energy systems typically rely on high-quality components that can deliver efficient, stable, and durable performance under challenging environmental conditions. A robust solar components testing facility is, thereby, essential to ensuring that these products meet international safety and performance standards. Proper testing ensures optimal energy conversion and storage, and safe operation in challenging environmental conditions. It improves system efficiency, reduces failure risks, and ensures maximum return on investment



for end users. Bangladesh needs its own dedicated renewable energy components testing institute for a successful renewable energy transition. Countries currently leading in renewable energy transition—such as Germany, Italy, the US, China, and India—all have their own specialised testing institutes for renewable energy components. Even Pakistan, which has recently achieved a 46 percent share of renewable energy in its electricity generation mix as of September 2025, established a state-of-the-art solar panel testing facility in collaboration with South Korea in December 2025.

However, there is no single dedicated renewable energy components testing institute in Bangladesh. Neither does the country have its own comprehensive solar components testing facility, al-

though approximately 78 percent of the total renewable energy capacity comes from solar power in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) has performed a limited role in this area, but its capacity remains significantly constrained. For instance, its capabilities for testing solar inverters are negligible, and it does not offer testing services for other solar components.

Normally, solar panels are certified based on internationally recognised standards, which are enforced by national testing authorities. Unfortunately, Bangladesh has not developed its own certification framework for solar panels. Instead, it adapts different international standards such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Com-

mission (IEC), etc. Moreover, BSTI’s testing system is mainly documentation-based. It is not based on direct physical testing. Usually, a company imports solar components and submits the certificates to BSTI, and then BSTI reviews them to determine compliance with the required standards. If approved, the product is listed in BSTI’s database. Once a specific model is listed, subsequent imports of the same model do not require further testing. However, bureaucratic delays often complicate the process. Sometimes, even with BSTI certifications, the Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (SREDA) conducts unnecessary and lengthy documentation checks that may take three to four months. As a result, importing companies cannot install solar panels for the customers on

time, escalating project costs and diminishing efficiency.

Another major concern is that BSTI lacks adequate modern and advanced testing equipment for testing solar panels and solar inverters. Without proper testing infrastructures, imported solar panels and inverters often fail to meet their claimed quality and performance standards: for example, a solar panel advertised as having a capacity of 500 watts delivers only 300 watts. Therefore, the current government should urgently establish a separate testing institute for renewable energy components, if the funds for such a project are available.

If not, the existing capacities of BSTI should be strengthened, modernised, and upgraded. Also, BSTI must introduce direct physical testing-based methods for all renewable energy components, rather than a purely documentation-based system. Another solution could be to establish port-based testing facilities that could significantly decrease delays by enabling rapid testing of imported products upon arrival. Otherwise, several months are wasted in bringing these components to Dhaka and distributing them among the city’s few testing labs.As technology is changing rapidly around the world, BSTI’s testing equipment needs to be updated and modernised accordingly. In addition, the government should encourage the establishment of testing laboratories in the private sector to enhance capacity and encourage competition.

Zone-based school timings could ease Dhaka’s morning traffic nightmare

One of the main reasons for traffic congestion during school hours is that guardians in private cars drop off and pick up students directly in front of school gates. Since our road capacity is limited, the pressure spills onto the main roads. Therefore, as a first step, such cars should be prevented from reaching school gates directly. The footpaths around schools should be made hawker-free so that students can get off a little further away and walk safely to school.Secondly, all morning-shift schools start at the same time, creating immense simultaneous pressure on the roads. To reduce this, a zone-based staggered schedule can be introduced. For example, schools in Mohammadpur could start at one time and those in Motijheel at another. If this is staggered by 30 minutes to one hour, the pressure will no longer hit the main roads all at once. At the same time, office schedules also need adjustment. Many guardians drop their children at school, return home, and then go to office, which creates extra trips. If school and office timings are coordinated, guardians can drop their children and go straight to work, reducing one

trip on the road.The third and most important issue, which is not being discussed enough, is coaching centres. Our education system is now heavily coaching-dependent. Students often rush to coaching immediately after school, adding more trips and vehicles on the roads. If coaching centres are temporarily closed during the ongoing fuel crisis, traffic will fall and fuel will be saved. To make the prime minister’s initiative effective, this issue must be considered alongside school timing. There are a large number of schools in Dhaka city, and among them, most haven’t been built in a planned manner. To meet capacity shortages, many run morning and day shifts. A zone-based staggered schedule will certainly reduce road pressure, but heat must factor into such decisions now. When temperatures rise, electricity consumption in schools increases significantly. If the energy crisis is not managed strategically, load-shedding may become inevitable, and conducting classes in classrooms will be very difficult.I know the education ministry is considering an alternate-day method in light

of the energy crisis—one day online, one day offline. But in my opinion, this would be managerially difficult for both students and guardians. Instead, if the crisis becomes severe, educational activities could be moved fully online while examinations remain offline. However, if the government wants to keep schools partially open, then the alternate-day system should be coordinated with office schedules. On days when school is online, offices should also operate online. That would allow guardians to manage both their children and their own work. This is essentially a problem of flawed planning. In Dhaka, most schools were not established in a planned way; they have neither their own buses nor parking facilities, yet approvals were given without proper analysis. At the same time, we have still not created school zones. In developed cities, the concept of a school catchment area is common—only those living within about one and a half to two kilometres of a school usually attend that school. But in Dhaka, guardians often send children from Motijheel to Uttara in pursuit of re-

puted schools. That is where the main problem lies.

This also makes the idea of school buses less effective. Because the distances are so long, routes become lengthy. The student living furthest away must board the bus two to three hours before school and returns home last. But if a catchment area is determined, the situation changes. Students remain within a limited zone, it becomes possible to run circular transport services effectively, and many can also walk if footpaths are connected and hawker-free. Then repeated guardian drop-offs and pick-ups would decline, and so would extra trips on the road. Another benefit is educational quality. If students mainly attend nearby schools, there will be pressure on schools in general to improve their standards. This is a major opportunity for our overall education system. I have not seen any precedent in developed countries for admission tests at the school level. The main principle there is simple: if someone lives within the catchment area and wants to admit their child to that school, the school gives them priority. Education is a funda-

mental right, so there should be no discrimination based on financial ability. If only affluent children study in good schools while low-income children are pushed into weaker institutions, deep inequality is created.

If the zone or catchment area plan is implemented, many problems will be solved at once. If the school is within two kilometres, students can walk and vehicle dependence will fall. School-based traffic congestion will decrease, fuel will be saved, and each school will have to focus more on improving quality in light of the evolving social needs. But I do not agree with admission tests. Merit is not properly verified in this way; there is already a system of national examinations for that purpose. This is an important issue. Our research shows that the main purpose of building the metro was to shift private car users off the roads. Private cars occupy about 60 percent of road space, but carry only six percent of passengers. The original idea was that if a section of private car passengers moved to the metro, the roads below would become less congested, making way

for a more disciplined public transport system. But in reality, the opposite has happened: about 60 percent of daily metro passengers have been found to have travelled by bus previously, while only around five percent came from private cars.

The reason is a fundamental flaw in planning. The metro has been seen only as a fast transport mode, whereas in developed countries it is used as an urban planning tool. They improve roads below, build proper footpaths, and develop buses as feeder services before or alongside metro systems. The metro acts as a backbone. But we did not think sufficiently about the connection system to stations. Private car users enjoy door-to-door service, and to be attracted to the metro, they need an easy and comfortable path to the station. If there were effective footpath networks within 500 metres to one kilometre of metro stations, many more people would walk. That planning failure is costing us. Before building more metro lines, investment should be made in public transport and footpath management on the roads below. Compared to metro projects, this

requires far less investment, but the impact can be much greater. The government is repeatedly saying there is no fuel shortage—that oil exists in depots, distribution systems, filling stations. But it must clearly explain where the crisis actually lies, because people are standing in long queues, not getting oil, and many stations are closed. In this situation, some are even storing thousands of litres.To prevent confusion and hoarding, the government must send a strict message and strengthen monitoring. If the fuel card system is properly implemented, it will be possible to reduce excess purchases and black marketing. Those whose livelihoods depend on fuel, especially ride-sharing drivers, are suffering the most.At the same time, alongside changing schooling schedules and methods, it is necessary to introduce online-offline systems in offices to reduce trips on the road. In the long term, the plans we already have for public transport development must be implemented seriously so that small fuel-dependent vehicles can gradually be removed from the roads.

Joe Rogan and the influencers who built Maga are revolting over Iran. Was this an alliance doomed to fail

If you spend enough time swiping online, you may have seen skits by the American comedian and influencer Druski (real name Drew Desbordes), in which he parodies everything from Republican patriots to flashy mega churches. Once again, he has exploded on social media channels with a skit satirising “conservative women in America”, a nakedly targeted roast of Erika Kirk, now the CEO of Turning Point USA (TPUSA) after her husband, Charlie Kirk, was assassinated last year.Predictably, it has drawn conservative backlash, with Ted Cruz calling the video “beneath contempt”. But Desbordes is far from the only one mocking Erika Kirk. Her entrances to the Charlie Kirk memorial and TPUSA’s AmericaFest have widely memed online for their surreal, WrestleMania-like production and pyrotechnics. In fact, much of the opprobrium comes from her own side. Far-right live streamer Nick Fuentes has disparaged Kirk’s public appearances after her husband’s death (“she looks like she’s over the moon”), and commentator and conspiracy theorist Candace Owens, a former darling of TPUSA, repeatedly takes aim at her (Owens

describes Druski’s skit as “hilarious”).What this brings to the fore is the succession crisis that has plagued the Maga movement since Charlie Kirk’s death. Erika Kirk was swiftly appointed the CEO of TPUSA as a mark of continuity. But it is evident that her appointment has only deepened divisions within Maga, and she has failed to establish the same authoritative leadership as her husband. And so, outside the White House, the Maga movement lacks something crucial: disciplined institutional influence.This matters beyond an assessment of TPUSA – it speaks to the lack of an institutional structure to absorb the fragmentations and diversity of thought among the US political right. That void aligns with a very modern form of politics, where political projects are hinged on influencers, podcasters and radio hosts. Like Fuentes and Owens, figures such as Joe Rogan, Alex Jones, Megyn Kelly and Matt Walsh were instrumental to the election of Trump 2.0. They hold the Maga movement together. That had always been Maga’s strength and a sign of its modernity – a decentralised influencer ecosystem, viewed as authentic, anti-establishment, voice-driven and better able

to connect with ordinary people.The problem is that it is exactly this decentralisation that prevents Maga from functioning effectively as a governing coalition. These figures may have championed Maga, but they are personalities with their own brands who refused to allow their platforms to be absorbed by the project. Indeed, they have developed followings based on a core set of principles, and like most influencers, their loyalty is primarily to the audience that keeps them on air. As such, the US-Israel war on Iran has functioned as a stress test of this kind of personality-driven politics, particularly as the war is viewed as an abandonment of the isolationist, “America first” principles that influencers cheered on while putting Maga back into office. These personalities have quickly shown where their true loyalties lie, and it’s not lining up behind Trump or his war of aggression. As Rogan said on his podcast: “A lot of people feel betrayed ... he ran on ‘No more wars,’ ‘End these stupid, senseless wars,’ and then we have one that we can’t even really clearly define why we did it.” Now that such key figures have turned on Trump, we are left with a political movement that has a

clear image crisis. They are embroiled in a “Maga civil war” – not just over Iran but a range of issues, including the administration’s approach to Israel and immigration. Political infighting in itself is unremarkable – we are well familiar with factionalism, media briefings and open challenges to leaders from their own side. But that is usually mediated through political parties, their bureaucracies and memberships. What we have here instead is in effect a series of personality contests, taking place between people whose priority is their own sphere of influence, rather than a political engine larger than themselves. This new reality reflects the design of the online, algorithmic universe that they serve, in which outrage, conflict and novelty are rewarded and thus economically incentivised. That is why Owens can openly laugh at a skit mocking Erika Kirk, discussing it on her show and promoting conspiracy theories about her takeover of TPUSA. And so we’re left with a question: can any modern political movement survive the logic of the platforms that now sustain them?Those old, scorned traditional party structures that emphasised a clear hierarchy, message discipline,

compromise and collective responsibility look far more suitable for office. When disagreement occurs within traditional party structures and bases, containment is smoother and it is more difficult to smear individuals.It is a warning, too, that politicians who consider themselves left-of-centre may want to think twice about copying the Maga model. The Democratic governor of California, Gavin Newsom, in perhaps the earliest starting campaign to become the presidential nominee in my lifetime, has won praise for mimicking the Maga social media strategy. The X account for his press office regularly posts memes and mockery that trade in the language of the terminally online, and last year he launched his own podcast, This is Gavin Newsom. Yet when he walked back his own criticism of Israel, the leftwing influencer Hasan Piker, who had previously been open to supporting Newsom’s candidacy and invited him on his podcast, was quick to denounce him. The takeaway for any political project is simple: hitch yourself to personalities whose voices you cannot discipline, and the coalition you build will implode on contact with the realities of office.

Aurobindo Pharma plans Rs 800 crore buyback: Know price, record date

Mumbai: Aurobindo Pharma plans to buy back up to 54,23,728 shares, which is about 0.93% of its total shares. It will buy these shares at Rs 1,475 each, taking the total buyback size to Rs 800 crore. This is equal to about 3.93% of its standalone net worth and 2.62% of its consolidated net worth as of March 31, 2025.Aurobindo Pharma in its regulatory filing on Monday said that the buyback will be done in cash and the Rs 800 crore does not include extra costs like taxes, brokerage, and other related expenses.Aurobindo Pharma share buyback: Record date

Aurobindo Pharma has fixed April 17 as the record date to determine the eligibility of shareholders who can participate in the buyback. US Tariff concerns: Jefferies explains why Sun Pharma could face the biggest hit—But not the worst outcome

The company will conduct the buyback through the tender offer route. All eligible shareholders, including promoters, can participate in the process. The company

will accept shares on a proportionate basis.The board has also constituted a buyback committee and delegated powers to it to take necessary decisions and complete the process. Aurobindo Pharma plans to buy back up to 54,23,728 shares, which is about 0.93% of its total shares. It will buy these shares at Rs 1,475 each, taking the total buyback size to Rs 800 crore. This is equal to about 3.93% of its standalone net worth and 2.62% of its consolidated net worth as of March 31, 2025Aurobindo Pharma in its regulatory filing on Monday said that the buyback will be done in cash and the Rs 800 crore does not include extra costs like taxes, brokerage, and other related expenses. Aurobindo Pharma share buyback: Record date

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The company said it may revise the buyback price upward and reduce the number of shares to be

bought back, provided the overall buyback size remains unchanged at Rs 800 crore. The company will conduct the buyback through the tender offer route. All eligible shareholders, including promoters, can participate in the process. The company will accept shares on a proportionate basis.The board has also constituted a buyback committee and delegated powers to it to take necessary decisions and complete the process.

IEX hits record 141 billion units in FY26power rices

Mumbai: Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) reported its highest-ever electricity traded volume of 141 billion units (BU) in FY26, marking a 17% year-on-year (YoY) rise.IEX states that it also recorded its highest-ever yearly trade of renewable energy certificates (RECs), with 187.20 lakh RECs traded during FY26, up 5% YoY.Power prices fall despite demand growth

India's power demand grew modestly by 1.1% YoY during FY26. However, higher generation from wind, hydro, solar, and coal-based sources improved supply liquidity on the exchange, leading to a sharp decline in power prices.

Explainer: How market coupling could reshape power trading in India

The average market clearing price in the day-ahead market (DAM) fell 13.7% YoY to Rs 3.86 per unit, while the real-time market (RTM) price declined 16% YoY to Rs 3.59 per unit. The exchange also saw strong traction in the REC segment, with 71.70 lakh RECs traded during the quarter, registering a 6.1% YoY increase. REC trading surged sharply during the month, with 28.94 lakh RECs traded, marking a 119.9% YoY jump.Government data showed that India's energy consumption rose 1.8% YoY to 149.56 BU in March. Despite this increase, power prices remained lower due to ample supply.The DAM price for March stood



at Rs 4.20 per unit, down 6% YoY, while RTM prices fell 10.5% YoY to Rs 3.71 per unit. Real-time market leads growthThe real-time market (RTM) emerged as the fastest-growing segment for IEX during FY26, with volumes rising 41% YoY to 54.85 BURT.M volumes grew 48.2% YoY in Q4FY26 to 14.30 BU and increased 41.7% YoY to 5.28 BU in March. The day-ahead market (DAM) posted a modest 2.4% YoY growth in FY26 at 62.78 BU, while volumes rose 15.7% YoY in Q4 and 23.1% YoY in March.The exchange also saw strong traction in the REC segment, with 71.70 lakh RECs traded during the quarter, registering a 6.1% YoY increase.Q4 sees sharp jump in volumesIn the March quarter (Q4FY26), IEX recorded its highest-ever quarterly electricity traded volume at 39.4 BU, up 24.3% YoY.

DA hike: How much will your salary and pension increase

Mumbai: Central government employees and pensioners have been waiting for the January 2026 dearness allowance (DA) and dearness relief (DR) hike. With April now underway and no official word yet, many are wondering if the announcement is just around the corner. Pratik Vaidya, Managing Director and Chief Vision Officer at Karma Management Global Consulting Solutions Pvt. Ltd., explains that the process follows a set timeline. Apart from routine approvals, the broader economic situation may also play a role in the timing.“And then, with the wider economic landscape, the government would tend to space out announcements rather than move them quickly,” Vaidya noted.This suggests that the government may be pacing its decisions rather than rushing them, even if the calculations are already in place.



As for the likely increase, early estimates point to a modest rise “The estimated increase would likely be around 3% to 4%, which will put DA marginally above the 50% mark, so DA probably will hit 53% or 54%,” Vaidya said.The expected hike is based on inflation trends over the past year, especially as reflected in the All India Consumer Price Index (AICPI).“That’s largely a function of past year’s relative inflation run-through process. It has not been wild — but it has been sticky, still, at least in staples such as food and fuel,” he added.“Typically DA

announcements for January are cleared around March, when the final set of inflation data is available and internal approvals complete. So in terms of timing, this isn’t really deviating,” he said.

He adds that what many are calling a delay is more about expectations than an actual slowdown.

“The delay that is being viewed as a ‘delay’ is much more about expectations than reality. It depends on the full-year AICPI numbers until December and after that there’s a process — file movement, financial vetting, Cabinet approval,” Vaidya said

DMart and Nestle are Axis Securities’ top two stock choices; view goals

Mumbai: As tensions between the US and Iran escalate, the consumption sector is feeling the heat with rising oil prices and tightening LPG availability now spilling over into everyday consumption. However, Axis Securities has identified two top stock picks: Nestle India Ltd and Avenue Supermarts Ltd (DMart).

Nestle India: With a ‘Buy’ rating and a target price of Rs 1,500, the FMCG giant remains a sturdy bet. The brokerage notes that the company faces a ‘mild’ impact from the crisis because of its lower crude linkage and strong pricing power cushions margins DMart: Axis has given a ‘Buy’ rating and a target price of Rs 4,450. The retail operator is considered the best-positioned in Indian retail for an inflationary environment, giving it a ‘mild’ impact profile.“Owns most stores (no rental pressure). The EDLP model could attract trade-down shoppers from premium formats. Continued expansion — 481 stores as of Mar’26. Inflation-era beneficiary,” the brokerage said.

Paint and QSRTThe paint sector is currently staring down the barrel of



high crude sensitivity. Axis pointed out that this industry is the most vulnerable, as around 40-60% of input costs are tied directly to crude derivatives. According to a recent sector update by Axis Securities, this geopolitical tension is sparking broad-based inflation across input costs. The brokerage warned that the heavy reliance on crude derivatives for raw materials, packaging, and logistics is expected to compress margins, delay demand recovery, and disrupt supply chains. Asian Paints Ltd: The brokerage slapped with

a ‘highly negative’ impact outlook and a ‘Hold’ rating (target price: Rs 2,700). Meanwhile, the Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) sector is facing a messy dual shock of cost inflation and operational disruptions. Axis said that QSRs have a massive 60-65% dependence on LPG for cooking, making supply shortages a massive operational hurdle.Westlife Foodworld Ltd: Despite this, Westlife has a ‘Buy’ call, with a target of Rs 600 with only a ‘mild’ anticipated impact. Axis attributed this to having a better supply chain and relative-

ly resilient operations.FMCGFor fast-moving consumer goods, the brokerage noted that the crude crisis isn’t just about fuel; it’s about the packaging that wraps everyday items. With key materials like PET and HDPE inflating significantly, Axis Securities predicts a 100-200 bps near-term margin compression for the sector. Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL): Axis has a ‘Hold’ rating on the stock with a target of Rs 2,540, while Dabur India Ltd shares has a ‘Buy’ rating (target: Rs 596). “Hindustan Unilever and Dabur India face margin pressure,” Axis said.RetailFinally, for broader retail space Axis said the “sector is witnessing an inflation-led demand slowdown, as higher fuel and product prices compress consumer purchasing power.”Trent Ltd: Carrying a ‘Buy’ rating (target price: Rs 4,430), brokerage expects a ‘moderately negative’ impact on the company. Because synthetic fabrics like polyester are derived from crude, the apparel maker faces severe cost headwinds, though its value brand Zudio offers a partial demand buffer, it added.

Axis Securities’ top 5 April selections, which could increase by up to 46%

New Delhi: The public sector lender remains a key beneficiary of domestic growth trends, especially in infrastructure-linked lending. Kotak Mahindra Bank is among the preferred private sector names, with a target price of Rs 515, implying an upside of 46% from Rs 353. Axis Securities expects the bank to maintain steady growth backed by its strong liability profile and conservative risk approach. The lender’s focus on high-quality assets and calibrated expansion is seen as a key advantage in a volatile macro environment. “Quality businesses, market leaders and domestically oriented sectors remain our preferred areas,” Axis Securities explains. Max Healthcare Institute carries a target price of Rs 1,250, suggesting an upside of 30% from Rs 962. Axis Securities remains positive on the hospital chain, citing strong demand trends, improving occupancy levels and expansion into new facilities. The company’s focus on high-end treatments and operational efficiency is expected to support margins and profitability. The brokerage also sees scope for margin improvement as operating leverage kicks in, although energy costs remain a key monitorable. It believes the company’s focus on efficiency and cost control should help cushion the impact of higher input prices. Over the medium term, Dalmia Bharat is expected to gain from its strategic positioning in key markets and continued investment in capacity.Axis Securities in its latest calls,

shows a tilt toward businesses that can keep earnings steady even when costs rise and liquidity tightens. Financials form the core of its strategy, backed by telecom, healthcare and selective cyclical exposure. The brokerage is effectively using the recent correction to lean into companies where growth visibility remains intact, even as global risks continue to weigh on sentiment.The broker also points to the long-term demand for quality healthcare services, which remains resilient regardless of economic cycles. With capacity additions underway and a favourable case mix, Max Healthcare is expected to deliver steady revenue growth. Improved operating metrics and disciplined cost management are likely to support earnings going ahead

“Healthcare remains a preferred segment given stable demand and long-term growth visibility,” Axis Securities addsAxis Securities on Dalmia Bharat: ‘Buy’

Dalmia Bharat features among the mid-cap ideas with a target price of Rs 2,520, implying a 42% upside from Rs 1,779. Axis Securities expects the cement maker to benefit from sustained infrastructure activity and a pickup in construction demand. Volume growth is likely to remain healthy, supported by capacity expansions and improving regional demand trendsAxis Securities on Bharti Airtel: ‘Buy’ Axis Securities has a ‘Buy’ rating on Bharti Airtel with a target price of Rs 2,530, indicating a 42% upside from the

current price of Rs 1,782. The brokerage sees continued strength in the telecom sector, driven by rising data usage and improving monetisation. Airtel’s focus on premium customers and its strong spectrum position are expected to support revenue growth in the coming quarters.The report also highlights the company’s expanding digital ecosystem and enterprise offerings as additional growth drivers. With tariff increases expected to sustain average revenue per user growth, margins are likely to improve further. Axis Securities expects Airtel to maintain its leadership position while benefiting from industry consolidation and steady subscriber additions.“Earnings visibility, valuation comfort and sustainable growth are likely to drive markets going forward,” the report stateThe picks lean heavily on businesses with steady earnings visibility, strong balance sheets and exposure to domestic demand. Financials dominate the list, alongside telecom, healthcare and select cyclical plays where growth visibility remains intact.Axis Securities on Bajaj Finance: ‘Buy’ Axis Securities has maintained a ‘Buy’ call on Bajaj Finance with a target price of Rs 1,150, implying an upside of 43% from the current level of Rs 802. The brokerage continues to back the lender for its consistent execution, granular retail lending model and ability to deliver growth across cycles. It expects loan growth to remain healthy, driven by demand

across consumer durables, personal loans and small business segments, while asset quality is likely to stay stable given its underwriting discipline. The report also points to Bajaj Finance’s diversified portfolio as a key strength, helping it absorb shocks from macro volatility. Even as borrowing costs move up and liquidity tightens, the company’s strong liability franchise and pricing power are expected to support margins. Axis Securities believes that operating leverage, coupled with steady customer additions, should keep earnings momentum intact over the medium term. The brokerage has reiterated its ‘Buy’ stance on State Bank of India with a target price of Rs 1,350, suggesting a potential upside of 38% over the current price of Rs 979. It expects the bank to benefit from strong credit demand across retail and corporate segments, supported by government-led capital expenditure and improving economic activity. Asset quality trends have been improving steadily, which in turn supports profitability and reduces the risk of earnings volatility.Indian benchmark indices have tumbled sharply amid the ongoing West Asia crisis, rising crude oil prices, a depreciating Indian rupee, and persistent FII outflows. To recall, the BSE Sensex and Nifty50 have declined 13–14 per cent each in 2026 so far, while the fear gauge India VIX has nearly tripled on a year-to-date basis.

Top choices: Tata Steel, Airtel, and ICICI Bank

Mumbai: Artificial intelligence emerged as a significant force influencing global market returns, particularly benefiting sectors linked to the AI ecosystem, it said. B&K Securities emphasised that policy decisions are more challenging under these conditions. Balancing growth support with inflation and external account management narrows policy options. Supplier diversification offers some relief but does not significantly reduce India’s dependence on imported energy, leaving it vulnerable to global price changes. These areas may receive ongoing policy support and investor interest, even if immediate conflict-related risks ease, according to B&K Securities. The situation highlights structural challenges extending beyond short-term disruptions. It views the West Asia conflict as a catalyst for deeper global economic shifts..B&K Securities has picked ICICI Bank, Coal India, Max Financial, and Ashok Leyland from the large-cap space, while it has selected Aurobindo Pharma, GSK Pharma, Radico Khaitan, Navin Fluorine, Ramco Cements, Shyam Metalics, Welspun Corp, Chalet Hotels, Usha Martin, Neuland Labs, Graphite India, BlackBuck, CarTrade Tech, Avalon Technologies, and Hindustan Foods as top broader market picks.Motilal Oswal pointed out that while these policy measures have yet to fully impact market sentiment, they are expected to deliver benefits in FY27. Domestic politics remained relatively calm in FY26, with only the Bihar state elections resulting in a record victory for the NDA coalition, signalling policy continuity. Looking ahead, B&K Securities suggested that while markets have priced in many risks, medium-term investment themes such as energy security, bioenergy, fuel substitution, supply-chain resilience, and increased inventories of critical materials will remain

important. Defence spending is also expected to continue attracting attention beyond the conflict period

Motilal Oswal expects FY27 to present a more favourable base for Indian equities, despite ongoing geopolitical risks. Valuations have corrected, with the Nifty trading at a discount to long-term averages, offering a strong entry point amid expectations of double-digit earnings growth over the medium term.Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India (SBI), ICICI Bank, M&M, Titan, Bharat Electronics (BEL), Eternal, Tata Steel, Infosys, and InterGlobe Aviation (IndiGo) are the top picks of MOSFL from the Nifty50 basket, while it has picked TVS Motors, Groww, Indian Hotels, AU Small Finance Bank, Dixon Tech, Premier Energies, Coforge, Radico Khaitan, Delhivery, Lenskart, and ACME Solar as top non-Nifty ideas.The ongoing conflict in West Asia is likely to deepen global divisions rather than remain a short-term disruption, believes B&K Securities. This points to a more fragmented and uncertain international environment ahead. It highlighted that the energy shock from the conflict is still developing.

The RBI cut the cash reserve ratio and repo rate, alongside liquidity injections, while the government introduced tax reforms and bilateral trade agreements with the UK, EU, and US.For India, B&K Securities pointed out that higher energy costs affect the current account, inflation, and growth, tightening macroeconomic balance and limiting policy flexibility. Markets have moved away from expecting multiple rate cuts, facing a less predictable path with the possibility of prolonged higher rates if energy prices remain elevated, B&K Securities noted. Commodity prices follow a typical cycle—gold, base metals, then oil—indicating that reflatory pressures are still emerging.

The PM of Hungary is accused of raising a “false flag” when Serbia claims explosives were discovered close to a pipeline



Hungary: The top opposition candidate in Hungary has accused Serbia of conducting a “false flag” operation to sway the country’s elections after Serbia claimed to have discovered “explosives of devastating power” close to a pipeline that transports Russian natural gas to Hungary and other countries.The discovery near an extension of the Turk-Stream pipeline, which carries Russian gas through the Balkans to central and eastern Europe, was reported by Serbia’s president, Aleksandar Vučić, according to Hungary’s prime minister, Viktor Orbán, on Sunday.Orbán said on social media that “an investigation is underway” and that he had called an emergency meeting of the nation’s defense council. The incident comes one week before Hungarians are due to cast their votes in a pivotal parliamentary election, in which Orbán’s 16-year hold on power is facing an unprecedented challenge from Péter Magyar, a former top member of the ruling Fidesz party. Orbán and Fidesz are trying to persuade voters that the war in Ukraine is a serious threat to Hungary and that Orbán is best suited to manage this risk. Meanwhile, Magyar and his Tisza party are urging voters to concentrate on economic stagnation, deteriorating social services, and corruption.In the northern Serbian municipality of Kanjiža, “a few hundred meters from the gas pipeline,” two backpacks holding “two large packages of explosives with detonators” were discovered by the Serbian army and police, according to Vučić on Sunday. He said he had informed Orbán of the initial results of the investigation into what he described as a “threat to the critical gas infrastructure”. The explosives could have “endangered many lives” and

caused significant damage to the pipeline, Vučić added.He did not detail the origins of the explosives, saying instead that there were “certain traces” he could not disclose. “Our intelligence services did a good job,” he said. The incident, coming as Orbán trails in the polls, prompted political scrutiny across Hungary. On Sunday, Magyar said on social media that he and the Tisza party had been warned by multiple sources that something might happen in Serbia around Easter, “possibly involving a gas pipeline”, and allegedly carried out with Serbian and Russian assistance. “And now it has,” he said.He called on Orbán’s government to stop spreading panic and causing disruption. “Hungarians have every reason to fear that the outgoing prime minister, following the advice of Russian agents, is attempting to instil fear in his own people through false-flag operations,” he said. “I also want to make it clear that he will not be able to prevent next Sunday’s election.” The scepticism was echoed by Mujtaba Rahman, the managing director for Europe at Eurasia Group, a political risk consultancy. “Looks like a seemingly convenient threat of terrorist action,” he said on social media. “Designed to whip up further fear of military action against Hungary, for which Ukraine will no doubt be blamed.”The campaign heated up in February after Orbán claimed, without providing evidence, that Ukraine was plotting to disrupt Hungary’s energy system and said he had dispatched troops to safeguard the country’s energy infrastructure.Orbán has also repeatedly accused Ukraine of intentionally delaying repairs to the Soviet-era Druzhba pipeline, which brings Russian oil to Hungary and Slovakia via Ukraine, and blocked

EU approval of a €90bn loan to Ukraine over the feud.Rahman said Brussels and EU capitals “have been expecting a false-flag operation by Orbán – citing a national security risk – as grounds to postpone next Sunday’s elections that he looks set to lose. Could this be it?”

On Sunday, Hungary’s foreign minister, Péter Szijjártó, singled out Ukraine but stopped short of blaming them outright for the latest incident. “In the past few days and weeks, the Ukrainians organised an oil blockade against us, and then tried to put us under a total energy blockade ... And now we have today’s incident,” he said in a post on Facebook. Orbán, posting on social media after the defence council meeting, said that what was so far known of the incident pointed to a prepared “act of sabotage”. While he did not directly blame Ukraine for the incident, he said: “Ukraine has been for years trying to cut off Europe from Russian energy.”Ukraine’s foreign ministry said on Sunday that it rejected any attempt to link Kyiv to the incident. “Ukraine has nothing to do with this,” it said on social media, adding that it had most probably been “a Russian false-flag operation as part of Moscow’s heavy interference in Hungarian elections”.Akos Hadházy, a Hungarian independent MP and longtime critic of Orbán, cast doubt on the news from Serbia. “This is completely transparent and pathetic,” he wrote on social media. “But let’s not forget that propaganda still works,” he added. “Nor should we forget that next week, quite brutal things could come from the struggling regime.”Szabolcs Panyi, one of the country’s most prominent investigative journalists, also urged people to treat Sunday’s revelations with caution. Weeks earlier, he and other journalists had been told by sources in Hungarian government circles of a “Russia-backed false flag attack in Serbia targeting the gas pipeline to Hungary”, Panyi said on social media.The Serbian claims could rock the final days of the campaign, just as the White House gears up to have JD and Usha Vance visit the country in an apparent effort by the US vice-president to bolster Orbán in the polls. The US administration has long rallied behind Orbán, with Donald Trump repeatedly endorsing him and describing him as a “fantastic guy” and a “strong, powerful leader.”In recent weeks, questions have swirled about the US effort to keep Orbán in power, particularly as Russia appears to also be working to sway the election in Orbán’s favour.The Washington Post reported recently that Russian intelligence operatives had proposed staging an assassination attempt on Orbán to boost his chances of winning, while the Guardian found that disinformation networks with links to Russia were publishing content aimed at undermining Orbán’s main opponent.

President of Iran is charged with “threatening possible war crimes” after



Iran: After threatening to destroy Iran’s power facilities and bridges in an obscene social media post on Sunday, Donald Trump has come under heavy fire.“Open the Fuckin’ Strait, you crazy bastards, or you’ll be living in Hell,” the US president said to Iran. On Monday, he told US media that talks were underway and hinted that there was a “good chance” of a deal to end the five-week conflict.Capitol Hill expressed disapproval of Trump’s post. “The president of the United States is ranting like an unhinged madman on social media,” stated senior Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer. He is alienating allies and making threats of potential war

crimes. He is like this, but we are not like this. Our nation is deserving of much better. Trump threatens “hell” if Iran doesn’t reopen the Strait of Hormuz by TuesdayOn Sunday, Donald Trump threatened to destroy Iran’s power plants and bridges if Tehran didn’t reopen the Strait of Hormuz by Tuesday night. In response, the speaker of Iran’s parliament warned that “our whole region is going to burn” as a result of the US president’s “reckless moves.” “Unhinged madman”: US lawmakers respond to Trump’s threats against IranFollowing Trump’s warning to Iran, some US senators expressed con-

cern and questioned the president’s mental health. Former Trump supporter turned critic Marjorie Taylor Greene said that anyone claiming to be a Christian in the Trump administration should “beg forgiveness from God” and stop the president’s “madness.” Trump praises the second crew member who was rescued from the crashed fighter jet. Donald Trump declared that no “single American” had been killed or injured during a mission to save the second crew member of a crashed US fighter jet, calling it “one of the most daring search-and-rescue operations in US history.”After the warplane crashed in southwest Iran,

a two-day search was concluded when US commandos rescued the second crew member of the F-15E fighter jet from an Iranian mountain. Officials appear to tone down vaccine criticism before midtermsUS health officials appear to be shying away from voicing negative views of vaccines in public as November’s midterm elections loom and key polling indicates anti-vaccine views are a liability. US former soft power czar on Trump’s damageTrump’s venal persona and his war on Iran will do untold damage to the US’s ability to make a positive difference in the world, writes Richard Stengel in the Guardian’s featured essay this week.

Before the midterms, US health officials seem to avoid discussing vaccines



Washington: As the midterm elections in November approach and important polls suggests that anti-vaccine opinions are a liability, US health professionals seem to be reluctant to publicly express their disapproval of vaccines.In the last year, health officials have drastically altered routine vaccination recommendations, eliminating one-third of the US pediatric schedule, including the hepatitis B vaccination advice at birth. However, despite Donald Trump’s pollsters suggested shifting away from anti-vaccine beliefs ahead of the elections, officials have not supported these significant revisions, even before a federal judge effectively invalidated them. US health officials appear to be very focused on the midterms. Marty Makary, commissioner of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), mentioned support from the “Make America healthy again” (Maha) movement in the 2024 election during a conference on women’s health in March that was hosted by the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).He stated, “Mothers turned out to vote for the Maha agenda.” During his 30-minute “fireside chat”

with Mercedes Schlapp, one of the conference organizers, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the HHS secretary and lifelong opponent of vaccines, made no mention of vaccines during the conservative CPAC conference at the end of March. Kennedy did not resort to his twenty years of rhetoric about immunizations and toxic exposures when Schlapp asked him what counsel he would provide to “Maha moms” or “Maha parents.” Rather, he stated: “Cell phones and social media are the biggest threats that we’re facing now.”Kennedy discussed bringing back and flipping the food pyramid as well as eliminating nine artificial food dyes when asked about his accomplishments in the previous year and future goals. Health organizations have not done much to update baby formula, despite the fact that it is a declared priority.Katelyn Jetelina, creator of Your Local Epidemiologist, claimed that the administration had only achieved “headline wins” rather than addressing the “root cause” of health problems. Trump’s executive order on glyphosate, a herbicide marketed as Roundup that the Maha movement opposes, earlier this year also caused cha-

os among the health secretary’s Maha supporters. According to Jetelina, environmental and nutritional concerns are more important to the Maha grassroots than vaccinations. “Obviously it’s something that’s really personal to RFK, who’s built a career and history around that,” she said. Yet for the average Maha voter, “it sure seems like they’re moving away” from opposition to vaccines, she added.Among voters surveyed in the 35 most competitive congressional districts, there was “strong bipartisan support for routine childhood vaccines”, Tony Fabrizio and Bob Ward wrote in December – and that holds across the Maha movement, they found, with most Maha voters rejecting changes to childhood immunizations. These “high levels of trust in vaccines” mean “skepticism toward vaccine requirements is politically risky for both parties”, they concluded.“My perception is absolutely that messaging has gone out to downplay anti-vaccine messaging,” said Elizabeth Jacobs, an epidemiology professor at the University of Arizona and a founding member of Defend Public Health. “It seems like somebody has advised him to stop doing anti-vaccine stuff.”But Kennedy did make quiet references to his long-held anti-vaccine ideologies. He “had been watching this deterioration in the health of our children, the rise of chronic disease, since 2005”, he said. That’s the year Kennedy penned an explosive article for Rolling Stone and Salon – later retracted by Salon – claiming vaccines cause autism.The reference is “a major glaring

sign that he is talking about vaccines, for sure”, said Jacobs. Kennedy has blamed higher recognized rates of autism – widely believed to be the result of improvements in diagnoses – upon vaccines, despite dozens of studies finding no link.“I never knew anybody with autism,” Kennedy said at CPAC. “Suddenly they’re everywhere.”He did not mention the changes in how autistic people receive support, with a greater emphasis on providing care within the community instead of institutionalizing them out of sight, as was common during Kennedy’s childhood.“And when I started talking about it, I got censored. And I prayed every day for 19 years that God would put me in a position to change this,” he said. Under Kennedy, the US ended full recommendations on shots to protect against the flu, rotavirus, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and others.Kennedy in the past year “was a bull in the china shop. They just broke everything,” Jacobs said. The head of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Jay Bhattacharya, only brought up vaccinations once during CPAC, to emphasize how shingles immunization may help prevent Alzheimer’s. He stated, “Researchers are looking into whether a shingles vaccine, which I received a while back, might actually lower the risk of Alzheimer’s disease.” However, he also frequently reiterated Kennedy’s statements about “chronic disease,” a term Kennedy regularly employs to describe autism. “I know we are in the middle of a chronic disease crisis despite all our scientific progress,” he declared.

German outcry over a rule forcing males to obtain military permission before spending extended periods of time overseas

Europe: The law requires men up to 45 years old to obtain authorization from the armed forces before any significant stay abroad, even during peacetime. This little-known provision in comprehensive reforms to Germany’s military service policy has sparked controversy.Aiming to strengthen the military, the law, which went into effect on January 1st, requires all 18-year-old men to complete a questionnaire to determine whether they are qualified to serve in the armed forces. However, it does not impose conscription.As the legislation passed the lower house of the Bundestag in December, defense minister Boris Pistorius stated that if the “modernized” model fails to attract enough recruits, parliament will be forced to examine the reinstatement of compulsory service. Men between the ages of 17 and 45 would need to ask for permission to leave Germany for longer than three months, according to the fine print, which was mostly ignored until a media article brought it to light this week.Millions of German nationals who are starting anything from a new job or sabbatical to a gap year or study abroad could be impacted by the clause.In a nation where schoolchildren subject to the new requirements of the law have already staged street protests in response to the changes to the military service policy, it sparked heated media coverage.The requirement was initially published by the Frankfurter Rundschau newspaper, and it was ver-



ified by the defense ministry. According to a ministry official, the new law was created to create a framework for conscription if necessary, necessitating the whereabouts of prospective conscripts in the event of an emergency.“Males 17 years of age and older are required by the law’s wording to obtain prior approval from the relevant Bundeswehr career center for stays abroad lasting longer than three months,” they stated. According to the law, the requirement expires at age 45.The policy revives a decades-old norm that requires authorization to stay overseas for an extended period of time, even outside of times of crisis. The ministry claimed that the guys in question were primarily unaffected. “The regulation already applied during the cold war and had no practical relevance; in particular, it is not subject to sanctions,”

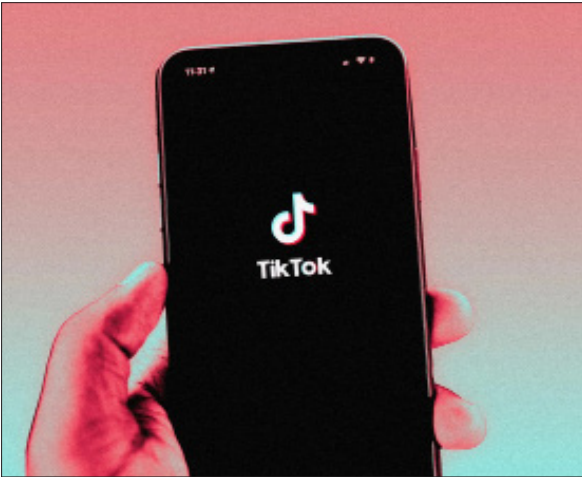
the spokesperson said.The ministry did not say how many people had made a request for permission this year.The spokesperson indicated that approval for periods abroad would be routine as long as conscription was not in force and Germany was not facing a security emergency.“We will clarify through administrative regulations that authorisation is deemed to have been granted as long as military service is voluntary,” they said, adding: “As military service under current law is based exclusively on voluntary participation, such authorisations must, in principle, be granted.”The spokesperson said there would be a wide berth for exceptions to the authorisation requirement “partly to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy”. It remained unclear, however, what procedure men would need to use to gain permission before the eased regulations take effect or

how long it would take.The policy is intended to find enough volunteers to increase the ranks of the military to 460,000, consisting of 260,000 active soldiers and 200,000 reservists, by 2035. The country has 182,000 active soldiers and just under 50,000 reservists. Compulsory military service was suspended in 2011 under the then chancellor, Angela Merkel.The German chancellor, Friedrich Merz, wants to create the strongest conventional army in Europe amid the increased threat from Russia, since the Kremlin’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and doubts about the US commitment to European security under Donald Trump.Last year, Germany exempted most defence expenditures from the country’s constitutional “debt brake”. It also earmarked more than €500bn (£436bn) for defence between 2025 and 2029.

Go play this secret game in your TikTok DMs

TikTok has quietly added a secret emoji game that you can access in your DMs. The goal of the game is simple: use your finger to bounce as high as you can by hopping across alligators. Avoid the skeleton alligators, and be careful — broken alligators disappear after just one landing, so you need to quickly bounce to the one above.

If you guide your jump to a floating emoji, you'll get a speed boost that helps you climb faster. The same happens when you land on an alligator with a propeller on it. If you fail to land on an alligator or land on a skeleton, it's game over. The object of the game is to bounce higher than your opponent. As you play, you'll see both your score and your opponent's high score displayed in the top-right corner. TikTok told TechCrunch on Tuesday that the game is available globally and can be accessed in both one-on-one DMs and in group chats. You can access the game by sending an emoji



in any chat and then clicking on it to enter the game. The emoji you click on is the same one that will float across the screen to give you a boost. You can use any emoji you want, but you can only access the game by sending a single emoji at a time. TikTok says it launched this Easter egg to make messaging more fun and to add a playful element of competition to DMs on the platform.

With this launch, TikTok is taking a page out of Instagram's book. Instagram introduced its own hidden emoji DM game two years

ago, and TikTok's version follows a similar concept. Instagram's version has players using their finger to move a paddle to keep an emoji bouncing, with the game ending once the emoji falls.

TikTok isn't the only social media platform experimenting with DM games. Meta confirmed to TechCrunch in January that Threads is exploring games in chats. The company is internally prototyping a basketball game that appears to let users virtually shoot hoops by swiping their finger.

Whoop's valuation just tripled to \$10 billion

Whoop, the fitness and health tracking wearable company, has closed a \$575 million Series G funding round at a \$10.1 billion valuation — nearly triple its last reported valuation of \$3.6 billion — in a deal that brings together sovereign wealth funds, major health institutions, and some of the world's most recognizable athletes. The round was led by Collaborative Fund and includes participation from Mubadala Investment Company, Qatar Investment Authority, 2PointZero Group, Abbott, Mayo Clinic, Macquarie Capital, IVP, Foundry Group, Accomplix, Affinity Partners, Glade Brook, B-Flexion, Promus Ventures, and Bullhound Capital. Individual investors include Cristiano Ronaldo, LeBron James, Rory McIlroy, Reggie Miller, and Niall Horan, among other prominent athletes and celebrities. The company has now raised roughly \$900 million in total since its founding. One notable addition to the cap table is Abbott, the medical device giant. Whoop founder and CEO Will Ahmed told me the partnership signals a broader



push into health and medical capabilities, though he noted there is "more to come" on that specific announcement. The funding arrives as Whoop hits some major business milestones, by Ahmed's telling. The company exited last year at a \$1.1 billion bookings run rate, up 103% year over

year. Talking with TechCrunch last week, Ahmed made a point of explaining why bookings is the right metric to focus on: When you're shipping millions of hardware units around the world while running a subscription business, investors need to understand the cash dynamics of man-

aging all of that simultaneously — inventory, hardware costs, and recurring revenue at once. It's a more complex picture than a pure software company, and bookings captures it best. As for what comes next with all that capital, Ahmed pointed to talent and hiring, marketing and brand

awareness, and continued R&D investment, along with accelerating international expansion. The obvious question looming over a round of this size at this valuation: Is an IPO coming? (Rival company Oura is reportedly talking with bankers about staging its own this year.) Ahmed said the company is doing "a lot of the no-regrets work to be a public company" but stopped short of signaling any imminent plans to list. Given that Whoop is a consumer brand with major name recognition among health-conscious and performance-oriented users, it's the kind of company that could generate real retail investor enthusiasm whenever it does decide to make that move. In the meantime, Whoop has much more runway, and a much bigger number next to its name. You can listen to our full conversation with Ahmed, where we also talked about the company's earliest days, its massive hiring plans right now, and how Whoop is incorporating AI into its business. Alternatively, you can read about Whoop's big push into healthcare and what it means for the brand here.

FedEx chooses partnerships over proprietary tech for its automation strategy

Automation is coming to warehouses — fast. While some companies like Amazon are developing their own robotic fleets in-house, others have turned to outside players for their automation tech.

FedEx has dabbled with both strategies. And the \$84 billion company has landed on partnerships with robotics companies as the best approach to keep up with its peers in the race toward automation. FedEx's recent multi-year partnership with SoftBank-owned robotics company Berkshire Grey illustrates its strategy: turn to the experts to develop robots that can take on repetitive, dangerous jobs for humans. Under the non-exclusive partnership, the companies developed Scoop, a bot designed for bulk package unloading, or removing large bundles of multiple parcels from a truck at once. FedEx will start rolling out these robots to its warehouses through a pilot program later this year. While these robots won't work with every single one of FedEx's thousands of unloading doors, the company hopes to be able to scale the bot if all goes well. Stephanie Cook, director of advanced technology and innovation, robotics at FedEx, told TechCrunch that bulk unloading is one of the most physically demanding and unpredictable jobs in the FedEx warehouse. This isn't the company's first attempt to automate bulk unloading, Cook said, adding they had trouble finding the right robot for the job.

"There's nothing that is off-the-shelf that we recognize will work for our needs," Cook said. "We worked with Berkshire Grey in the past and felt this was a good fit for us in terms of a collaboration. We knew

it wasn't something that we could just develop in a matter of months. It was going to take a multi-year journey to get here." Bulk unloading is also a perfect role for a robot, O.P. Skaakrud, vice president of advanced technology and innovation at FedEx, told TechCrunch. While bulk unloading does require these bots to make decisions, they aren't as granular as if the bot was picking or searching for specific packages, which makes it a less complicated task to automate. "Because we have such variety of package mix, to specialize individual picking, it's just not gonna be fast enough," Skaakrud said. "That was one of the other tradeoffs that we went with here, because there are package unloaders out there that do single picks. They're not fast enough and not able to do this type of mix." Cook said the company is looking to automate the most

physically

ically demanding jobs at its warehouses first.

These tend to be better for automation in general because



The Memphis

level," Skaakrud said. "It's much better and faster to partner with other companies in the field to move faster. That is the way we look at it. We see these partnerships as really benefiting both FedEx and the companies we work with." Berkshire Grey isn't FedEx's only automation-focused partnership. The company has locked in several partnerships (and conducted pilots) in recent years as it works toward automating more of its process in and outside the warehouse. Within the warehouse, the company works with Dexterity, a robotics startup with the billion-dollar valuation unicorn status that specializes in robots with a "human-like" touch. It also has a deal with another unicorn startup called Nimble that builds fully autonomous warehouses. Autonomous deliveries, both last-mile and long duration, are also an area of focus. The company

signed a pilot deal with autonomous trucking startup Aurora Innovation back in 2021 to have the self-driving truck company haul packages for the shipper on defined routes in Texas. The companies expanded their ongoing partnership in 2022 and have since completed more than 3,200 autonomous loads. FedEx also partnered with Nuro, an autonomous last-mile delivery robotic company, in 2021. At the time, FedEx said it was a long-term commitment and that it had plans to scale the last-mile delivery option. Nuro shifted from delivery to licensing autonomous tech in 2025 and FedEx no longer works with the company. Last-mile delivery is another area the company has tried to tackle in-house with mixed success. FedEx did develop and release the SameDay Bot in 2019 to help with last-mile delivery, but the bots didn't receive a warm recep-

tion — even getting kicked out of NYC by former mayor Bill de Blasio. The company moved on from them a few years later but reiterated that's still an area they are focused on. While the company is focused on not getting left behind in the broader automation race, Skaakrud and Cook said that doesn't mean FedEx is going to get ahead of itself either. The company is not just grabbing the next shiny robot or tech each time it gets replaced.

"Don't be too focused only on the technology, because then we're going to fail," Skaakrud said. "This is really 3D chess that you're playing here. You have to solve for all these different, often not so glamorous and interesting components, that are part of the overall solution. We are definitely doing what is required to not only have interesting technology, but interesting productive technology that's going to solve business problems." The company isn't concerned that its partnership strategy won't result in a lot of proprietary tech either. Skaakrud said that the hardware itself is just that — hardware. He argued that FedEx trucks are just trucks and the network and brain behind the company's delivery web is what makes them FedEx. While headlines could make it seem that every company is trying their hardest to automate everything, FedEx said it plans to stay calculated as they roll out these new technologies. For Cook, the main strategies is still the people who work within these warehouses, which means technology has to be designed to work alongside these people, making their jobs easier, while still keeping them safe. Because of that, and because the company is focused first on areas with a clear ROI, one area they are not interested in is humanoids. "The orchestration aspects of multiple humanoids in a limited space that is highly dynamic, you know how hard it is," Skaakrud said. "I think that humanoids are very interesting, and we're definitely paying attention, but it's this fit for purpose. You got to figure that out because the hype is just really high, but there's a lot of potential there long-term. But you have to understand the limitations and set your expectations accordingly."

phus-based company does develop tech in-house, like the FedEx SenseAware and SenseAware ID sensor systems, both of which help track packages. But developing sensors and developing robotics are not one in the same, Skaakrud said. "The entire package and developing sensor hardware is complicated, but developing robotics capabilities is next

they're often repetitive, allowing employees to work less dangerous and more higher-skilled jobs.

Ranveer Allahbadia was urged to calm down by Ashish Chanchlani during India’s Got Latent



New Delhi: A videotape from an episode of Samay Raina’s show India’s Got Latent went viral last year, causing a great deal of outrage against Ashish Chanchlani, Apoorva Mukhija, and Ranveer Allahbadia. Ashish has now admitted that he had warned Ranveer against going too far. Ashish recently appeared on Prakhhar Gupta’s podcast and stated that the indignation has been building for a while and wasn’t limited to their broadcast. The show was taped in November and released in February, according to Ashish, who also said he didn’t think the response would get that bad. “Many disgusting things had already occurred on that show before any of us who were on it. I think the rage that was building against Latent erupted during our episode.

There had previously been controversy and things had been going on earlier. I was filming for Ekaki. My brother informed me that a latent clip had exploded on X when I was done that evening. At first, I didn’t pay much attention. I didn’t anticipate this; I assumed Ranveer would be the objective. Regarding Ran-

veer Allahbadia, “Even when we were there, Ranveer was trying to be cool, saying he’d have fun,” Ashish revealed. He made lighthearted remarks. “Ranveer, tone it down a bit, this isn’t the time,” I even urged him during the intermission. However, he claimed that everyone arrives there insane and in a good mood. I informed my colleagues that day that Ranveer’s remarks had taken things a little too far.

However, I didn’t give it much thought because Latent’s framework allows for crazy conversations. Ashish acknowledged that he even warned Ranveer over the phone the following day that things might become dangerous. After that, Ranveer had reassured Ashish that they had gone there for fun and to joke. He wasn’t totally at ease with his own presence in the episode, though. Since he didn’t contribute anything, Ashish acknowledged that he wasn’t all that pleased with the episode. He revealed that he had only gone because of Samay and that, despite his enjoyment of the event, he thought he was too reserved and hadn’t given it his

all. At one point, he even thought it might have been better if his part hadn’t been included in the final cut. He went on to say that he never thought things would become as bad as they did and that he was relieved that he had mostly kept quiet when the controversy started. Ashish was involved in controversy last year following his participation in Samay Raina’s India’s Got Latent. “Would you rather watch your parents have sex every day for the rest of your life or join in once to make it stop forever?” Ranveer Allahbadia asked a candidate on Samay Raina’s India’s Got Latent. Some lawmakers and social media users took offense at the statement, even though everyone on the show laughed it off and treated it lightly. Following criticism, several formal complaints were filed against Ranveer, Samay, Ashish Chanchlani, a panelist, and Apoorva Mukhija. Ashish recorded his statement when he appeared before the Assam Police in February.

In relation to the controversy, he, Ranveer, and Apoorva Mukhija also appeared before the National Commission for Women in March. Ashish asked his followers to pray for him and his family in a video message posted on Instagram in March. “Hello friends, how are you all?” the YouTuber said, breaking down in tears. I am aware that things are happening; I have read your texts.

I considered telling you a story, but I’m at a loss for words. We will overcome this obstacle since we have experienced similar hardships in the past and will also gain new insights. With his YouTube series Ekaki, which he has written, directed, produced, and acted in, content producer and actor Ashish has ventured into the science fiction genre

Rajpal Yadav reprises his greatest lines in Akshay Kumar and Priyadarshan’s nostalgic film



Mumbai: On April 16, Priyadarshan and Akshay Kumar will reunite for the horror comedy Bhooth Bangla. The movie’s teaser, which debuted on Monday, depicts Akshay’s character living in a haunted mansion and attempting to get married despite Vadhusur, an evil force, trying to prevent him. The reunion and humor in the teaser are referred to by fans as “pure nostalgia.”

In the Bhooth Bangla

teaser, Akshay’s character inherits Pisaach Van, a bungalow with a haunting jungle behind it, and he refuses to give it up simply because it is haunted. Akshay comically attempts to discredit Mithila Palkar’s character while Paresb Rawal’s character tries to alert her to the several dangers in the house. He is attempting to be married at the same time that no one in the Mangalpur hamlet is getting married due to a malevolent

force known as Vadhusur. Even though Vadhusur is still trying to minimize everything to Mithila, the trailer concludes with Akshay unavoidably waking him from his sleep.

The Bhooth Bangla teaser was deemed hilarious by some online users, while others said it was a recurrence of previous horror-comedies. “Abbe kuch to original bnao vhi same bhul bhulaiya ki script, same dialogues phle ki movies ke

like (why don’t you make something original instead of using the same script and dialogues of Bhool Bhulaiyaa),” wrote one commenter on X (formerly Twitter). “Bhoot bangla is like bhool bhulaiya 2 with pridarshan,” said another. After working on films like Hera Pheri (2000), Garam Masala (2005), Bhagam Bhag (2006), Bhool Bhulaiyaa (2007), De Dana Dan (2009), and Khatta Meetha (2010), Priyadarshan is back with Akshay in Bhooth Bangla.

Wamiqa Gabbi, Tabu, Rajpal Yadav, and Jisshu Sengupta are also featured in the movie. Greetings from Bhooth Bangla. Yahan na toh log normal hain. Upar se Bangla bhi paranormal hai. (In addition to the fact that the bungalow is paranormal, normal folks don’t stay here). Enter at your own peril. The movie’s paid trailers will start at 9 p.m. on April 16. Akshay posted the movie’s trailer on X, writing,

Mona Singh’s journey was determined by her reluctance to conform to stereotypes

Mumbai: You may recall Mona Singh as the brace-wearing girl who revolutionized Indian television if you grew up with Jassi Jaissi Koi Nahin. However, she didn’t end there. Mona Singh’s career is characterized by her reluctance to be stereotyped, from playing the terrifying “Babli Didi” in the sand mafia drama Subedar to holding her own against Aamir Khan and Kareena Kapoor in Laal Singh Chaddha to portraying a steely, emotionally conflicted officer in Kohrra. Mona Singh has spent the past 20 years perfecting the ability of switching across media, whereas many television celebrities have found it difficult to make the shift to the big screen.

From living-room television to the big screen and now streaming platforms, her work has expanded in tandem with audiences. Growing up as the daughter of a 1971 Indo-Pakistani War soldier, Mona spent her early years traveling from city to city long before she entered the entertainment industry.

The starlet disclosed that her father, Jasbir Singh, had lost his foot during the conflict while promoting Border 2. Before deciding to pursue acting as a career, Mona was actually on the edge of becoming an air hostess. At her family’s recommendation, she had passed interviews and even obtained a visa for a Singapore-based airline, but in the end, she decided to follow her gut and pursue an acting career in Mumbai. Long



commutes from Pune to Mumbai and a series of unrelenting auditions characterized the slog that followed. With Jassi Jaissi Koi Nahin, Mona finally had her breakthrough after almost fifty attempts; the part launched her into the public eye and permanently altered her life. Jassi Jaissi Koi Nahin, starring Apurva Agnihotri and Gaurav Gera, marked Mona’s small-screen debut. Jassi Jaissi Koi Nahi, which was loosely modeled on the Colombian television series Yo soy Betty, la fea, followed the life of Jasmeet Waliah, also known as Jassi (Mona), and challenged conventional notions of beauty.

Additionally, it was recreated as the American television series Ugly Betty. “All of this was not intended by me. I envisioned myself as a well-known,

adored actress. as was my greatest dream prior to moving to Mumbai, and now as I think back on Jassi... I can’t remember Jassi, how it went, what I did throughout the show, or what transpired. I’ve moved on. Mona once said to Hindustan Times, “I have never looked back after the show.” She later appeared in other TV series, including Kavach... Kaali Shaktiyon Se, Itna Karo Na Mujhe Pyaar, Pyaar Ko Ho Jaane Do, and Kya Huaa Tera Vaada. Mona made it apparent throughout her early ascent to stardom that she didn’t want to be confined to a single persona, preferring to use a variety of roles to explore the many aspects of show business. She hosted Femina Miss India and Entertainment Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega 1 after participating in the reality show Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa 1.

Paresh Rawal believes he ought to have participated in Aditya Dhar’s Dhurandhar

Mumbai: Dhurandhar, directed by Aditya Dhar, has been making waves and breaking box office records. Actor Paresh Rawal, who has previously collaborated with Aditya, told PTI that he wished he had been a part of the franchise amid the film’s enormous success. He referred to the movie as a “saga” and gave it high praise. Paresh remarked, “Dekhi, Dhurandhar 1 and 2 dekhi, part 1 do baar dekhi, dusri ek baar dekhi, vapas dekhne jaana hai,” on the success of Dhurandhar and Dhurandhar: The Revenge. Mujhe hona chahiye tha ismein (I’ve seen both parts—part 1 twice and part 2 once—and I’d want to see it again). I ought to have appeared in the movie. In Uri: The Surgical Strike, Paresh played NSA Govind Bhardwaj, a character based on Ajit Doval. R Madhavan portrayed an Ajit Doval-inspired role in Dhurandhar. “I liked Dhurandhar a lot; it’s not just a film but a saga,” Paresh continued, adding that it was intriguing to watch two distinct versions of a similar character. I felt like I ought to have been involved for the first time. For the first time in my life, I thought it would have been enjoyable to be in it. Zindagi main pehli baar mujhe laga main hota ismein toh maza aata. Ranveer Singh plays an Indian spy who infiltrates the Lyari gangs in order to destroy the terror network and power structure endangering India in this two-part spy thriller. Sanjay Dutt, R Madhavan, Arjun Rampal, Rakesh Bedi, Sara Arjun, and Akshaye



Khanna all play significant roles in the movies. Dhurandhar made ₹1,300 crore worldwide, whereas Dhurandhar: The Revenge made almost ₹1,500 crore in just three weeks. As a result, the movie has outperformed a number of blockbusters, such as RRR, KGF: Chapter 2, Kalki 2898 AD, Jawan, and Pathaan. In just three weeks, the movie has made over ₹1,000 crore at the Indian box office, continuing its incredible run in theaters.

Ranveer Singh said that he enjoys song performed by Shreya Ghoshal

Mumbai: Bollywood star Ranveer Singh was one of the main attractions at the NMACC’s recent third anniversary celebration. Since then, a number of footage of the actor from the star-studded event have appeared online. Singer Shreya Ghoshal, who attended the event as well, has now posted a humorous video in which she praises Ranveer’s taste in music while the two perform their “favorite song,” Latoo from Ghajini, together. Fans are obsessed with Ranveer’s “chatpati side” after Dhurandhar: The Revenge’s huge success. Ranveer was seen discussing one of Shreya’s songs, which he believes to be his guilty pleasure, in a video that she posted on Saturday. “There’s a song that never makes it to her playlist but is my personal guilty pleasure,” he remarked. When I first told her about it, she responded, “You know what, even I love that song.” Then, praising Ranveer’s musical taste, Shreya remarked, “And it’s a very rare song, not many people know it, but he does.” He is familiar with every song. What do you consist of?

Shreya posted another video of herself and Ranveer performing Latoo from Ghajini, a song they both adore, on Sunday. When Ranveer started singing the song live and dancing to it, Shreya appeared pleasantly delighted. Soon after, she joined in, and the two sang together before laughing uncontrollably. Latoo from the movie Ghajini is the song that Shreya and Ranveer were spotted enjoying. AR Rahman composed the song, which was written by Prasoon Joshi and performed by Shreya Ghoshal and Pravin Mani. The late actor Jiah Khan was featured in the song. Due to the success of his most recent film, Dhurandhar: The Revenge, Ranveer is currently riding high. In just three weeks, the movie has made over ₹1,000 crore net in India in addition to having a huge opening. It has made over ₹1,500 crore internationally and has been doing well elsewhere as well. The spy thriller, directed by Aditya Dhar, is still having an incredible run at the box office. Sanjay Dutt, R Madhavan, Rakesh Bedi, Sara Arjun, and Arjun Rampal all play significant roles in the movie.

Starting on April 7, the West Bengal Motion Artists Forum has declared a strike

New Delhi: The Bengali entertainment industry has been rocked by the unexpected death of actor Rahul Arunoday Banerjee on March 29. The 43-year-old actor drowned while filming Bholebaba Paar Karega, a Bengali soap opera. In order to demand safety and security measures on the sets of films, television shows, and online series, the Bengali entertainment industry, or Tollywood, has now called for an indefinite strike that will begin on Tuesday, April 7. Following a meeting attended by Prosenjit Chatterjee, Rituparna Sengupta, Shantilal Mukherjee, Swaroop Biswas, and a number of directors, producers, and channel officials, the West Bengal Motion Pictures Artists Forum released an official statement on Facebook. “Dear members, all of us are aware that on March 29, during the shoot of Bengali soap opera Bholebaba Paar Karega, our friend and forum member Rahul Arunoday Banerjee died,” the statement said in Bengali. The causes of his unexpected death are still unknown to us.” Taking that into consideration, we had organized an emergency meeting on April 5,” the statement went on. Members of the Federation, the Artists Forum, television producers, and directors were present.

We, the artists and technologists, have chosen to embark on an indefinite strike starting at 7 AM on April 7, 2026. The strike will continue until action is made to guarantee the safety and security of technicians and artists throughout a shoot (both indoors and outdoors). Another meeting is scheduled for April 7, the statement continued. Those who are now shooting outside of the state or from Kolkata, however, are exempt from this. Rahul was filming with co-

star Sweta Mishra. The two were apparently executing a dance routine in knee-deep water when they unexpectedly fell into a ditch, according to officials. Rahul could not be saved, despite the fact that both were sent to Digha Hospital. Rahul’s wife Priyanka Sarkar stated, “This is a time of immense grief and deep despair for us,” in response to the news of his passing. We humbly ask for privacy and space during this trying time. A woman, a child, a family, and loved ones are all attempting to cope with this loss. We respectfully ask our friends and media colleagues to respect our boundaries, avoid interfering, and give us the dignity to grieve in peace. Right now, your support and understanding are more important than ever. In addition to participating in the protest march, Priyanka reported the producers to the police. ‘Justice for Rahul’ signs were carried by a number of Bengali film industry members as they marched from Technicians’ Studio to Radha Studio, a distance of about one kilometer. Actor-director Aparna Sen, Anjan Dutt, director Srijit Mukherjee, Kaushik Ganguly, actor-director Parambrata Chatterjee, actor Rudranil Ghosh, actor Riddhi Sen, and actor-theater personality Kaushik Sen were among the prominent figures in the industry who led the gathering. In the Bengali entertainment sector, Rahul was a well-known figure. His performance in the 2008 hit film Chirodini Tumi Je Amar catapulted him to stardom. After that, he appeared in a number of movies, including Jackpot, Love Circus, and Shono Mon Boli Tomay. Additionally, he appeared in a number of television programs, including Tumi Ashbe Bole, Desher Maati, Horogouri Pice Hotel, and Geeta LLB.

Janhvi Kapoor says that following the release of her first movie, Dhadak, she was despondent



Mumbai: Actor Janhvi Kapoor entered Bollywood in a sad situation when her first movie, Dhadak, came out a few months after her mother, Sridevi, passed away. Janhvi has since acknowledged that she experienced sadness following the movie’s premiere because she believed that people detested her. Janhvi recently made an appearance on Raj Shamani’s podcast, where she reflected on her early years and her Bollywood debut while taking a sentimental trip down memory lane. In 2018, Janhvi debuted in Dhadak with Ishaan Khatter. “You know, every time someone talks to me about my first film, Dhadak, they are like, ‘she was so good in it’ or that ‘we loved Dhadak’ and ‘you earned a lot of money,’” Janhvi recalled. However, my recollection of Dhadak was rather different. After Dhadak, I was depressed. Ho gaya and packup hogaya (I’m done) were my thoughts. People despise me.” My mother provided me with all of my life’s validation. She left. I thought, “Okay, I’ll shift that to the audience.” Additionally, I

was anticipating widespread acceptance, which I was unaware did not exist. I was just thinking about the bad. I failed to focus or even see that it was a really Up until Saiyaara, I believe it was the most commercially successful movie starring fresh actors. I didn’t even realize it was a hit. I was aware that I was awful and that I was despised by others. Because all I could see was the bad, and that became my reality. Janhvi talked about how receiving her first movie, Dhadak, made her feel unworthy and useless. “During Dhadak and Gunjan Saxena, I have been made to feel that I got everything on a platter and I got things I don’t deserve, which means that I am technically worthless and I am getting opportunities because of the work my parents have done,” she said. I also felt a great deal of love and respect for my parents at the same time, and as a result, I am receiving affection and work. In actuality, though, I’m passionate about acting and live for it.

A remake of the 2016 Marathi film Sairat, Dhadak was directed by Shashank Khaitan and supported by Karan Johar. It made about ₹110.11 crore at the box office. Janhvi later worked on a variety of movies, including Good Lucky Jerry, Ghost Stories, Gunjan Saxena, and Roohi. She most recently starred with Varun Dhawan, Sanya Malhotra, and Rohit Saraf in Shashank Khaitan’s romance comedy Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari. With a production budget of ₹80 crore, the 2025 release was a minor box office success, earning ₹100 crore globally. Janhvi will next star alongside Ram Charan in the Telugu film Peddi, which is scheduled for release later this year.

In 14 days, a UP woman became the first Indian woman to ride a bicycle to Everest Base Camp



New Delhi, Apr 06: Divya Singh, a 28-year-old teacher from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, has achieved history by being the second woman in the world and the first Indian woman to ride a bicycle to the Mount Everest Base Camp (EBC). After a demanding 14-day adventure that

began in Kathmandu, she successfully arrived at the base camp at an elevation of 17,560 feet. She had to contend with high-speed winds, diminishing oxygen levels, and cold temperatures as low as -12°C during the trip. Singh rode his bike for ten twelve hours every day on difficult

mountain routes that included uneven tracks and high hills. Instead of turning around in places where the terrain was inaccessible, she carried her bicycle on her shoulders. Before arriving at the base camp, she had to travel difficult distances from Kathmandu through Saleri, Surke, Phakding, Namche Bazaar, Lobuche, and ultimately Gorakhshep.

Uma Singh posted a video on Instagram showing her arrival at the base camp. In the video, Divya is seen clutching the Indian tricolor while standing next to her bicycle against a dramatic mountain backdrop. Congratulations, Divya Singh! You are the first Indian woman to ride a bicycle to Everest Base Camp. The Instagram description for the video read, “It’s a proud moment for our Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, India.” Many people have praised her

achievement and posted congratulations on social media. In addition to making her hometown of Gorakhpur proud, the accomplishment is motivating young athletes and adventure seekers across. “Congratulations to you,” a user commented. This is the reason I adore strong-willed women. Continue to develop and create history in this way.”“This is so inspiring,” said someone else. I’m grateful for something like this. Such things are always inspiring.

Notably, despite having few resources, Singh trained hard on his own and practiced locally to prepare for this record-breaking accomplishment. Gorakhpur district officials launched her journey from Vikas Bhavan, and they later hailed her accomplishment as a major step forward for women’s empowerment in India.

An elderly shopkeeper was slapped by a Delhi Police officer over a parking disagreement; a FIR was filed

New Delhi, Apr 06: According to authorities, a Delhi Police lady sub-inspector was charged with assault after reportedly slapping a 78-year-old shopkeeper for protesting to her parking a car in front of his establishment. According to a police source on Sunday, the incident occurred in Rohini Sector 7 when the elderly shopkeeper protested to the car parked right in front of his establishment. He stated that the pregnant woman claimed to have traveled to the area with her spouse for a check-up. She informed the police that she planned to move the car after her visit and that she had asked the shopkeeper to let her park it for a little while. An altercation resulted from the shopkeeper’s refusal. The woman slapped him as the situation worsened, according



to the source. As a gathering gathered at the location, witnesses reported that the woman acted aggressively and urged passersby to move aside, pretending to be a police officer. Police from neighboring police stations raced to the scene after a PCR call was made. An FIR has been filed against the female officer and her spouse after she was returned to a local police station. The issue is being looked at.

Sarfraz Khan sparked CSK's brief comeback With his half-century

New Delhi: Sarfraz Khan once again proved to be a rare bright spot in another otherwise poor Chennai Super Kings game. In Sunday’s IPL 2026 match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, the Indian batsman unleashed a carnage, slamming eight boundaries and two sixes in a 25-ball half-century after a brilliant 12-ball 32 against Punjab Kings last week in Chennai. Virat Kohli was even drawn to his knock at the Chinnaswamy Stadium. The visitors fell to 30 for 3 in the first three overs due to yet another subpar performance by Chennai’s top order. But Sarfraz alone brought the innings back to life, leading CSK to 77 at the conclusion of the powerplay and providing much-needed relief. Jitesh Sharma stumped Sarfraz off Krunal Pandya on the first ball following the powerplay. Amid the cacophony of the Chinnaswamy crowd, Kohli was spotted yelling at him as he made his way back. Sarfraz turned and acknowledged the spectacular knock with a thumbs-up and applause from the RCB star. The hosts scored a huge 251 runs thanks to RCB’s outstanding batting performance. In a breathtaking display of power-hitting in the last overs, Tim David hit an undefeated 70 off just 25 balls, while Devdutt Padikkal scored a half-century. With 48 not out of 19, captain Rajat Patidar offered solid assistance. In response, CSK’s chase collapsed with just 30 points on the board as Ruturaj Gaikwad, Sanju Samson, and Ayush Mhatre fell early. With his half-century, Sarfraz spearheaded a brief comeback, while Prashant Veer (43) and Jamie Overton (37) put up a 57-run partnership. But the steep target turned out to be much out of reach. Chennai dropped to the bottom of the points table after suffering their third straight loss of the year.

The Sabarimala review bench of the Supreme Court is diverse in terms of gender, location, and religion

New Delhi, Apr 06: The Supreme Court’s choice to form a nine-judge panel for the Sabarimala review is more than just a formal move to bring a long-pending constitutional reference back to life. Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant’s decision to bring together a carefully balanced cross-section of the court in terms of gender, religion, caste, and regional representation to decide a very delicate dispute at the nexus of faith and fundamental rights is also a telling administrative signal. The bench, which is led by the CJI and consists of justices BV Nagarathna, MM Sundresh, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, AG Masih, R Mahadevan, Prasanna B. Varale, and Joymalya Bagchi, was informed on Saturday that it will begin hearing the case on April 7. On one level, institutional inclusion is reflected in the makeup. At another, it seems designed to give broader credibility to a decision that will unavoidably



cross contentious territory, such as women’s access to mosques and temples, fundamental religious rituals, and the boundaries of judicial scrutiny over issues of faith. Before being promoted to the Supreme Court in 2019, CJI Kant, who is in charge of the bench, had a lengthy and varied judicial career that included time as a judge at the Punjab and Haryana High Court and as chief justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court. In a case involving conflicting constitutional and religious claims, his administrative choice to form a socially and regionally diverse bench has additional signif-

icance. He is well-known for his practical approach and emphasis on striking a balance between individual rights and institutional stability. Given that one of the main concerns in the Sabarimala case is the exclusion of women of menstrual age from the temple, Justice Nagarathna’s appointment as the only female judge on the Supreme Court’s present bench is very noteworthy. Elevated from the Karnataka High Court, Justice Nagarathna has served on multiple constitution benches and is scheduled to become India’s first female Chief Justice in 2027. Her presence on the

bench weighs both substantively and symbolically when deciding cases involving religious autonomy vs gender equality.

The nine-judge bench will further examine whether a Parsi woman retains her religious identity after marrying a person of another faith under the Special Marriage Act, another dispute engaging the boundaries between personal faith and constitutional guarantees.

The Sabarimala reference is also tied to a parallel challenge concerning the entry of Muslim women into mosques and dargahs, where petitioners have argued that practices restricting women from accessing the main prayer area violate their fundamental rights. The challenge contends that such exclusions, much like those questioned in Sabarimala, are not essential to the practice of Islam and must be tested against constitutional guarantees of equality, dignity and freedom of religion.

Sangram Singh is the first Indian to prevail in an MMA match held in Argentina

New Delhi: Sangram Singh, the legendary MMA fighter from India, made history in Buenos Aires by being the first Indian to prevail in an MMA match in Argentina. According to a press release, he destroyed 16-year-old French fighter Florian Couderic in just one minute and forty-five seconds at the crowded Tigre Sports Club stadium in Buenos Aires.

After winning in Tbilisi, Georgia, and Amsterdam, the Netherlands, he also accomplished a hat-trick of MMA victories. He definitely benefited from wrestling techniques in this fight. Following his victory, double Commonwealth heavyweight champion Sangram Singh declared, “Win or lose doesn’t matter to me.” Either I succeed or I gain knowledge. I often remark that passion is ageless. As the prime minister frequently advises, have big dreams and work to make them a reality. My victory in the battle in Argentina fulfilled my aim of being the first Indian. In addition to his coach, Bhupesh, who has been with him for the past 25 years, he thanked the organizers. He also put in endless effort to ensure my success. He claimed that following his triumph, he was inundated with congratulations from both India and overseas. He spent the entire day working diligently with his coach. sweated a lot. Throughout the day, sip on half a glass of water. In the 83 kg weight class, Sangram Singh received a two kg deduction. Sangram added, “I also didn’t understand why everyone in the crowd was supporting me during my struggle. Early in the battle, Florian prevented Sanram’s punch from striking him in the face.

His shoulder was struck by the blow Florian kicked him in



the ribs in return. Sangram also saw a kick-based counterattack. Sangram claimed that although Florian appeared muscular, his hands and feet moved quickly. Sangram claimed that in the end, his wrestling background was useful. He was struck down after catching Florian’s kick. To put it another way, he benefited from the leg attack used in wrestling. Then, as he descended, he attempted to break Sandi (a wrestling technique) and then choked him for an extended period of time. The referee asked three times before Florian finally gave up.

Sangram easily prevailed in his third mixed martial arts match. He won the second battle in the second round and dispatched the Pakistani fighter in ninety seconds.

Amit Jogi was given a life sentence for killing the NCP leader in 2003



New Delhi, Apr 06: Amit Jogi, the son of former chief minister Ajit Jogi, was given a life sentence by the Chhattisgarh High Court for the 2003 murder of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) politician Ramavatar Jaggi. In 2007, the trial court cleared Amit Jogi. The Supreme Court’s decision to excuse the Central Bureau of Investigation’s (CBI) delay in submitting an appeal led the bench to reopen the case one month prior to the high court’s ruling. In an order dated April 2, a bench consisting of Chief Justice Ramesh Sinha and Justice Arvind Kumar Verma stated, “We are of the considered opinion that the judgment passed by the learned trial judge acquitting the accused Amit Jogi is palpably illegal, wrong, perverse, contrary to the evidence available on record and without any concrete basis.” On Monday, the supreme court’s website published the ruling that overturned the acquittal and imposed a life sentence. The panel found Amit Jogi guilty under sections 302 (murder) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code and sentenced him to life in prison, overturning the trial court’s 2007 decision. On June 4, 2003, Jaggi, a Nationalist Congress Party leader, was assassinated while Amit’s father, Ajit Jogi, was the chief minister of the state. The prosecution claims that the defendants shot

and killed Jaggi, the treasurer of the NCP’s Chhattisgarh chapter, as part of a plot to sabotage a party event. The Central Bureau of Investigation issued a chargesheet against several defendants, including Amit Jogi, after taking over the investigation from the state police.

A Raipur trial court found 28 defendants guilty in 2007 after concluding that the prosecution had proven its case; however, Amit Jogi was found not guilty. Due to the CBI’s prosecution of the case, the Chhattisgarh government challenged the decision. The CBI later contested the acquittal, but the high court rejected its case in 2011 due to delay. Satish Jaggi, Jaggi’s son, and the state government each sought separate appeals, but they were unsuccessful. The case took a new turn in November of last year when a three-judge Supreme Court bench ordered the high court to consider the CBI’s plea. The bench noted that although there was a delay in filing the appeal, the charges against Amit Jogi were “very grave,” involving a conspiracy to murder a political rival, and warranted consideration on merits. Amit Jogi responded to the April 2 high court ruling by saying that it was unfair and that he hoped the Supreme Court will provide justice. “Dear friends and well-wishers, without giving me a chance to be heard, the Hon’ble High Court today approved the CBI’s appeal against me in barely forty minutes. I regret that someone who had been found not guilty by a court has now been found guilty without even being given the opportunity to be heard. He wrote, “This has never happened before,” in an April 2 post on X. The April 2 ruling was applauded by Satish Jaggi, son of Ramavatar Jaggi, who had also appealed Jogi’s acquittal. He declared, “Truth has triumphed.”

Delhi Prohibits Godown Sales of LPG Cylinders, Conducts 17 Citywide Raids



New Delhi, Apr 06: The sale of LPG cylinders directly from godowns is prohibited in Delhi, and authorities have warned of severe consequences as enforcement picks up speed around the city. Distributors have received instructions from Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) stating unequivocally that it is unlawful to sell cylinders from storage locations. The goal

of the action is to encourage customers to use the official booking-and-delivery system while reducing irregular sales, hoarding, and black marketing. It has been recommended that locals avoid going to gas stations or storage facilities to pick up cylinders. In an attempt to expedite distribution and prevent crowding, officials stated that all reserved LPG cylinders are

being delivered straight to households within the allotted period. Simultaneously, smaller 5-kg LPG cylinders have become increasingly accessible. These can now be bought from gas stations with a legitimate ID and no evidence of address, which is anticipated to help migrant workers and people without permanent documentation. Additionally, eleven help desks have been installed at a few Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) locations to assist customers in finding local distributors. According to officials, the capital’s LPG supply is unchanged. According to data from April 4, 131,335 cylinders were delivered despite 114,679 bookings, suggesting that outstanding demand is being met. At the moment, the average delivery time is 4.24 days.

The Mumbai Indians are looking for a reset against the Rajasthan Royals

New Delhi: When the Mumbai Indians take on a confident Rajasthan Royals team on Tuesday in their IPL match in Guwahati, they will be hoping that captain Hardik Pandya has fully recovered. The Royals are eager to continue their early-season momentum. Due to illness, Pandya, a vital member of the team, was unable to play in MI’s previous match. His absence was important in their six-wicket loss to Delhi Capitals on Saturday. MI missed Pandya’s all-around skills on a tacky track, but India T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav took over to lead and maintain continuity. Additionally, the combination had to be adjusted due to his absence. The decision to replace seasoned left-arm pacer Trent Boult with pace all-rounder Corbin Bosch backfired, as the South African leaked runs despite Deepak Chahar’s neat spell. Since then, Pandya has returned to the nets and traveled with the team, providing optimism for a recovery as MI attempts to adjust their strategy following the defeat. While the dependable Jasprit Bumrah has been economical but has not yet opened his account this season, Shardul Thakur, who excelled with the ball in their initial game, was pricey in their most recent match. Mitchell Santner, who is expected to keep his spot in the spin department, made a strong case for being chosen ahead of Afghan mystery spinner Allah Ghazanfar. However, the Rajasthan top order has been playing really well thus far, so the MI bowlers will need to step it up. Teenage phenom Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and opener Yashasvi Jaiswal both got off to blazing starts, and Dhruv Jurel built on the



momentum. Although he hasn’t yet made a big impact with the bat, new captain Rryan Parag will gain confidence from his leadership, especially after his late-game tactical choices that led the Royals to an exciting victory over Gujarat Titans. Ravi Bishnoi and Tushar Deshpande have been outstanding bowlers. After a difficult 2025 season during which he worked on several parts of his game, Bishnoi has emerged as the joint leading wicket-taker with five wickets from two games.

In the last over against the Titans, Deshpande demonstrated his death-bowling prowess by successfully protecting 10 runs while giving up just four thanks to a string of accurate yorkers. The outcome of the match may depend on how well MI’s bowlers manage the Royals’ potent top order, with Mumbai, presently sixth on the points table, looking to recover, and Rajasthan, in second place, riding a wave of confidence.

Struggling Kolkata Knight Riders Face Added Rain Threat In IPL Clash Against Punjab Kings

New Delhi: Kolkata Knight Riders have made a horror start to their IPL 2026 campaign, losing their first two matches. They will therefore have their task cut out when they take on Punjab Kings at Eden Gardens on Monday. Back in 2012, KKR had also begun with back-to-back defeats before going on to win the title. But that 2012 side, featuring Jacques Kallis, Shakib Al Hasan and Gautam Gambhir, had a very different level of pedigree and experience.

This KKR side, by contrast, has been riddled with concerns. As if injury issues were not enough, they are also struggling with their combination, with Cameron Green's inability to bowl hurting the balance of the XI. To make matters worse, there is also a rain threat looming over the contest, with weather potentially affecting play just as it



Did last year in Kolkata when these two teams met. Punjab Kings, meanwhile, have made a completely contrasting start. Last season's runners-up have won both their matches and will be eyeing a third straight win to go top of the table. Shreyas Iyer's familiarity with KKR could also work in Punjab's favour. After the defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad, Ajinkya Rahane admitted that Kolkata Knight Riders may have to consider playing an extra batter—and it is easy to see why. KKR were bowled out for 161

in just 16 overs. Even Sunil Gavaskar pointed out that they need to add another batter, especially with Cameron Green currently unable to bowl.

Green may be the big-money signing, but if he is not contributing with the ball, KKR need someone who can strengthen the lower order and improve the balance of the XI. So, who could they turn to? An exciting, if slightly risky, option is Delhi Premier League import Tejasvi Singh. In the 2025 DPL, he scored 339 runs in just 10 innings at a strike rate

of over 190, finishing as the tournament's second-highest six-hitter with 29 maximums. His standout moment came in a rain-hit chase, when he smashed 69 off just 21 balls, including a record-breaking 12-ball fifty — the fastest in DPL history. Rahul Tripathi and Manish Pandey also bring valuable experience and could be considered, especially given their familiarity with the franchise. Once Green starts bowling, KKR will have far more breathing space. But until then, if he continues as a specialist batter, the Knight Riders must find the right balance between strengthening their batting and not weakening their bowling attack. Cameron Green has bowled in the nets for the Kolkata Knight Riders, but is yet to bowl in the two matches they have played so far. KKR bowling coach Tim Southee provided eyeing Another strong total.

Virat Kohli Applauds As Dravid And Kumble Receive New Chinnaswamy Stadium Stand

Chinnaswamy Stadium Honours Rahul Dravid Anil Kumble

Bengaluru: Virat Kohli was part of a special and emotional evening at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Sunday as the iconic Bengaluru venue honoured two of India's greatest cricketers, Rahul Dravid and Anil Kumble, by naming ends after them. The Rahul Dravid End and Anil Kumble End were officially unveiled in a ceremony attended by their family members, former teammates and Karnataka State Cricket Association officials.

Kohli, who has built a strong bond with the Chinnaswamy over the years as Royal Challengers Bengaluru's talisman, was present at the venue, adding a modern-day connection to an event rooted in legacy. KSCA president Venkatesh Prasad, a long-time teammate of both Dravid and Kumble,



Along with vice-president Sujith Somasundar, oversaw the unveiling ceremony. The decision to honour the two legends was first announced on February 14, recognising their immense contributions to Indian and Karnataka Cricket.

The former BEML End at the stadium has now been renamed after Dravid, who scored 24,177 international runs and is widely regarded as one of India's finest batters. The pavilion end has been rechristened after Kumble,

Who finished with 956 international wickets and remains one of the country's greatest match-winners. Speaking at the event, Dravid described the Chinnaswamy as a "second home", reflecting on the countless hours evening team.

Barcelona Go Seven Points Clear Following Late Lewandowski Winner Against Atletico



Chandigarh: At the Metropolitan, FC Barcelona edged past Atletico Madrid 2-1 in a tense and incident-filled LaLiga clash, with Robert Lewandowski scoring a late winner to push his side seven points clear at the top after Matchday 30. The match had a bit of everything — goals, red cards, VAR drama and shifting momentum. Atletico struck first in the 39th minute when Giuliano Simeone finished neatly to give the hosts the lead. But the advantage did not last long. Just three minutes later, Mar-

Cus Rashford brought Barcelona level, squeezing his shot through the legs of goalkeeper Juan Musso. The turning point came just before half-time. Nico Gonzalez was shown a straight red card for denying Lamine Yamal a clear goalscoring opportunity, leaving Atletico to play the entire second half with 10 men. Even then, the game did not settle. Barcelona thought they had another advantage early in the second half when Gerard Martin was shown a red card for a heavy challenge, but after a VAR re-

view, the decision was downgraded to a yellow, adding to Atletico's frustration on the night. With the extra man, Barcelona pushed forward continuously. Ferran Torres came close, forcing a strong save from Musso, while substitute Marc Bernal missed a big chance late in the first half stoppage time. The pressure finally paid off in the 87th minute.

A shot from Joao Cancelo was not held cleanly by Musso, and the loose ball deflected off Lewandowski's shoulder into the net to complete the comeback. Beyond the match, the result carries major significance in the title race. Earlier in the day, Real Madrid had suffered a 2-1 defeat to RCD Mallorca, with Vedat Muriqi scoring late to seal the result. That slip allowed Barcelona to open up a seven-point gap at the top, with eight matches remaining. For Atletico, the frustration will be around the red card and key decisions that followed. For Barcelona, it was about finding a way to win in difficult conditions. It was not their cleanest performance, but it was an important one. With the title race entering its final phase and a direct clash against Real Madrid still to come, Barcelona are now

firmly in control. Their focus, however, quickly shifts to Europe, where they will face Atletico Madrid again in the Champions League quarterfinal in the coming days. German giants FC Bayern Munich continued their dominance with a comfortable 4-1 win over Atalanta BC, sealing a massive 10-2 aggregate triumph. In a high-scoring encounter at Camp Nou, Barcelona produced a stunning attacking display to dismantle Newcastle United 7-2 in the second leg, completing an emphatic 8-3 aggregate win. The Spanish side ran riot at home, showcasing their attacking depth and confirming their place among the last eight. For Barcelona, Raphinha (sixth and 72nd minute) and Robert Lewandowski (56th minute and 61st minute) scored a brace. Marc Bernal (68th minute), Lamine Yamal (45+7 minute), and Fermin Lopez (51st minute). Meanwhile, Liverpool FC overturned a first-leg deficit in style, hammering Galatasaray SK 4-0 to progress 4-1 on aggregate. The Reds delivered a dominant all-round performance, with multiple goal scorers stepping up in a clinical display at home stadium Anfield.

Mohammed Shami Rips Through SRH Line-up In Hyderabad As Fans Troll Agarkar And Gambhir



Hyderabad: Lucknow Super Giants fast bowler Mohammed Shami ripped through SunRisers Hyderabad on Sunday, April 5, delivering a fiery spell against his former team. Shami dismantled SRH's powerful top order, leaving them reeling at 22/3 inside the powerplay. He removed both openers, Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head, setting the tone early and putting LSG firmly in control in their second match of the season. Shami was exceptional with the new ball,

Finishing with figures of 4-0-9-2, one of his best returns in the IPL. His opening burst quickly lit up social media, with fans taking to X to praise the veteran pacer while also questioning his prolonged absence from the Indian team setup. Many fans directed their criticism towards India head coach Gautam Gambhir and chief selector Ajit Agarkar, questioning why a bowler of Shami's calibre has been out of the national side for over A year. Shami last played

For India during the victorious Champions Trophy campaign, where he led the pace attack in the absence of Jasprit Bumrah. Since then, he has continued to impress in domestic cricket as well. Turning out for Bengal in the Ranji Trophy, Shami picked up 37 wickets in the season. His standout performance came in the semi-final, where he claimed 8 wickets for 90 runs in the first innings against Jammu and Kashmir. However, despite Shami's heroics, Bengal fell bowler.

Candidates Chess 2026: Vaishali Becomes Contender While Praggnanandhaa Trails The Leader Sindarov

New Delhi: Seven rounds of the Candidates 2026 tournament are done. We are now at the halfway stage of the marathon that will determine who challenges Gukesh for the World Chess Championship. Two clear trends have emerged in this edition. Unlike the 2024 Candidates in Canada, the script has flipped. In 2024, the women's category was one-sided, with Tan Zhongyi running away from the field. The Open category, meanwhile, went down to the wire, with Gukesh needing the Fabiano Caruana-Ian Nepomniachtchi game to end in a draw to clinch the title. In 2026, it's the opposite. The Open category looks all but settled, with Javokhir Sindarov building a gap over the rest of the field. The women's section, however, is wide open, with Vaishali Rameshbabu's two consecutive wins pushing her to within half a point of Anna Muzychuk. So what should Indian fans realistically expect from Candidates 2026? In the Open category, Praggnanandhaa now finds himself in a position where he likely needs five or six wins from the remaining seven games to stay in contention. Even that may not be enough. Those wins would have to coincide with a dip in Sindarov's form in the second half of the tournament.

That makes the situation fairly clear. India's hopes in the Open section are fading, and a Sindarov vs Gukesh World Championship clash at the end of 2026 is increasingly looking likely. The women's section, however, offers real promise. Vaishali's back-to-back wins, following her loss to Zhu Jiner in Round 5, have firmly placed her in the title race. Much like the India vs China narrative of 2024 between Gukesh and Ding Liren, the possibility



Of Vaishali facing Ju Wenjun is beginning to take shape. On the other hand, Divya Deshmukh's missed opportunity against Kateryna Lagno could prove costly. Across the tournament so far, Vaishali has looked solid in both preparation and tactical awareness. In her first four rounds, she held her ground with composed draws. However, Round 5 against Zhu Jiner exposed a crack. A single inaccuracy - King e6 - complicated the endgame, and from there, things unravelled. With Zhu holding an extra pawn and a more active king, Vaishali was always on the back foot, eventually resigning after 62 moves. But that loss seems to have triggered a reset. In Round 6, Vaishali's King's Pawn opening, combined with the Berlin Defence, gave her a stable position early.

Lagno, under time pressure, began to falter. Although Vaishali also had a moment of inaccuracy with her Queen to f6, Lagno's rook move to c1 opened the floodgates. Three blunders in 11 moves allowed Vaishali to capitalise and secure the win. Round 7 followed a similar pattern. Once again, the

King's Pawn opening gave Vaishali a foothold. She was under pressure at one stage, but Tan Zhongyi's rook move to a1 proved to be a decisive mistake. Vaishali seized the moment to register back-to-back victories. Divya Deshmukh, too, had begun to build momentum after a slow start. Her win against Bibisara Assaubayeva was a statement, as she capitalised on a major blunder (Queen d3) to finish in style. The result was important, especially after a loss to Zhu Jiner in Round 4 and a draw against Tan Zhongyi. The Candidates, however, has once again highlighted how quickly fortunes can shift in chess. Just months ago, at the World Cup, Divya was consistently defeating top Chinese players like Tan and Zhu. In this tournament, she has struggled to replicate that form. What has hurt her the most is the 135-move marathon against Lagno.

For much of that game, Divya held the advantage. But converting that edge required patience and precision. Instead, a single king move to c1 allowed the position to slip. What could Have been a defining win draw.

Tim David Smashes Eight Sixes Against CSK Wowing Virat Kohli And Anushka Sharma



Bengaluru: Tim David lit up the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Sunday with a breathtaking display of power-hitting. Smashing eight sixes in his unbeaten 70 off just 25 balls, the Australian finisher produced one of the most destructive cameos of IPL 2026 against Chennai Super Kings. He took apart both spin and pace, powering the defending champions to 250 in 20 overs, their highest total against CSK in IPL history.

RCB were already well placed at 207 for 3 when David and captain Rajat Patidar shifted gears in the death overs. David then took it to another level, dismantling Jamie Overton, who had bowled two tight overs before returning for his third. The Singapore-born

hitter smashed four sixes in that over alone, including a 109-metre monster that sailed over the roof of the iconic venue. Watching the onslaught, Anushka Sharma could hardly believe what she was seeing.

The Bollywood actor, in attendance to cheer RCB, was left in awe as David launched ball after ball into the stands. Virat Kohli, dismissed earlier for 28 off 18, stepped out of the dressing room to take in the carnage. He mirrored Anushka's reaction, standing open-mouthed as David ran riot. Interestingly, David was bowled on 28 in the 18th over by Anshul Kamboj. However, Kamboj had overstepped, and David earned a reprieve as it was called a no-ball. Together, David and Patidar added 99 runs

for the fourth wicket in just 35 balls, putting the game firmly beyond CSK's reach in Bengaluru. No bowler was spared. Noor Ahmad, Anshul Kamboj and Overton all came under heavy fire as RCB exploded in the final 10 overs, plundering 159 runs in that phase. It marked a dramatic shift after a relatively subdued first half. RCB were 91 for 1 at the halfway stage, with Kohli falling after a couple of audacious no-look sixes, while Phil Salt was only just beginning to find his range. CSK, who came into the match on the back of two defeats, were left shell-shocked by the end of the innings. When captain Ruturaj Gaikwad opted to bowl and removed Kohli in the powerplay, they would have expected a far more controlled

effort on a surface that did not initially appear suited for such relentless hitting. However, CSK's bowling has struggled, particularly in the absence of Nathan Ellis. In their opening game, Rajasthan Royals chased down 128 in just 12.1 overs in Guwahati. More recently, Punjab Kings overhauled 210 with 10 balls to spare, extending CSK's losing run. The problems continued with the bat. The top order of Sanju Samson, Gaikwad and youngster Ayush Mhatre, who had struck a rapid fifty in the previous game, managed just 9, 7 and 1 respectively as CSK slumped to 30 for 3 inside three overs. Jacob Duffy and Bhuvneshwar Kumar ran riot with the new ball, dismantling CSK's top order and effectively ending any hopes of a record chase in Bengaluru.

Without MS Dhoni and Dewald Brevis, both sidelined through injury, CSK have also lacked spark with the bat. Senior players such as Gaikwad and Samson have struggled to find form in the opening matches of the season. The Chennai Super Kings (CSK) have faced a difficult start to IPL 2026, characterized by tactical confusion, a series of injuries to key personnel, and the underperformance of their high-value investments.