

Social activist urges CM to ensure safe movement of Meiteis across districts



Imphal, Mar 18: Social activist Malem Thongam has submitted a missive to Chief Minister Y Khemchand requesting the Chief Minister to inform the public within 15 days of the steps taken to ensure free and safe movement of Meiteis across all districts of the State. In the letter, Malem Thongam from Mai-bakhul Mayai Leikai, Imphal East district drew the attention to the ongoing crisis between communities in the state which has continued for nearly three years, stating that since the beginning of the ongoing conflict in the state, he has been continuously undertaking various democratic agitations and awareness activities both within and outside Manipur, appealing to the State Government and the Union Government to take necessary steps to restore peace and normalcy in the state. However, despite repeated appeals and efforts from concerned citizens, instead of witnessing lasting peace, the people of Manipur continue to witness recurring incidents of violence and unrest. Even after the imposition of President's Rule and the subsequent formation of a popular government, divisions between communities continue to persist in many parts of the state, he stated. With the idea of promoting peace and unity and the "Idea of Manipur", Malem Thongam stated that he undertook a 35 days Peace Awareness Solo Cycling Expedition beginning on March 12 last and scheduled to conclude on April 15, intending to travel across all 16 districts of the state to spread awareness for peace, harmony, coexistence among the people. However, during the course of this expedition, he stated that he was not allowed by the authorities to proceed beyond Chandel district, and even the peace awareness campaign was not permitted to continue further. The social activist requested the State Government to clarify the reasons for restricting this peaceful initiative and inform the people of Manipur about the steps being taken. In the interest of the people of Manipur and in pursuit of lasting peace and normalcy, Malem Thongam demanded that within 15 days, the State Government should inform the people of the State about the steps taken to ensure that the Meiteis can freely and safely travel across all districts of the state without any obstruction. In the interest of restoring public safety, necessary measures should be taken up within 15 days to facilitate the surrender of sophisticated weapons that are reportedly still in the possession of multiple organizations, he stated. The social activist expressed hope that the government will treat this matter with urgency and take necessary steps to restore peace, trust, and normal movement among all communities of the State.

CM Lalduhoma Chairs Second Mi-PRAGATI Meeting To Discuss Project Implementation

Aizawl, Mar 18 : The Chief Minister of Mizoram, Lalduhoma, today chaired the second meeting of the Mizoram Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (Mi-PRAGATI) at the Chief Minister's Conference Hall. Several members attended the meeting in person, while others joined via video conference. Online Newspaper Subscription Mi-PRAGATI has been constituted to monitor major development projects across the state, address implementation challenges, and strengthen inter-departmental coordination. The initiative aims to ensure faster, more efficient, and transparent delivery of public services to the people. During the meeting, key projects and initiatives were reviewed, including the Aizawl Western Side Bypass Road, works undertaken by NHIDCL, implementation of the PM SHRI Scheme, PMJKV projects, and Railway developments.

The Aizawl Western Side Bypass Road project has achieved 19.56% physical progress so far. Discussions covered issues related to land acquisition and resettlement of affected families, compensation demands from private quarry owners, crop damages caused during construction, forest clearance, and challenges in debris disposal. Regarding the Vairengte-Aizawl 4-lane road project,



it was noted that the issue of shifting electric power lines, raised in the previous meeting, has been resolved. Other ongoing challenges were also discussed along with their possible solutions. The total length of the project is 90.110 km, of which 60.295 km is planned under Greenfield alignment. Breaking Headlines Updates Under the PM SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India) Scheme, 35 government schools in Mizoram have been selected, to be implemented in six phases. In the first phase, work has commenced in 22 schools.

Under the PMJKV scheme, 104 projects have been approved in Mizoram. Of these, 84 have been completed, while 18 are currently under implementation. Additional

projects are also awaiting sanction. The meeting also discussed the survey for the proposed Sairang-Thenzawl railway line. Railway authorities informed that the alignment up to Thenzawl has been finalized at the preliminary stage. Mi-PRAGATI was established in August last year. The Chief Secretary serves as the Member Secretary, while members include Principal Secretaries, Secretaries, Deputy Commissioners, and heads of Central Government departments and agencies in the state. Emphasising the importance of preserving heritage, traditions, and identity, he described the capsule as a gift of memory and hope for future generations. He expressed confidence that when the capsule is opened in 2075, it will provide a vivid account of the values, lives, and achievements of the people of 2025, while inspiring future generations with Sikkim's progress over the past five decades. Breaking Headlines Updates Tamang recalled that the process of collecting items for the capsule was initiated during the Golden Jubilee of Sikkim's statehood at Paljor Stadium, in the presence of Governor Om Prakash Mathur. He noted that schools, colleges, state departments, and 534 individuals who submitted letters through email had contributed to the capsule.

Foundation stone laid for Aizawl city beautification project

Aizawl, Mar 18: The foundation stone for the Aizawl City Beautification Project under the Lammual Master Plan (Early Bird Project) was laid by Chief Minister Lalduhoma, at the former Assam Rifles located land at Heritage Court, Aizawl on Tuesday. The event was attended by UD & PA Minister K Sapdanga, along with the Speaker, Ministers, MLAs, and other dignitaries.

In his address, the Chief Minister stated that the Advisory Committee, responsible for planning the use of the land includes representatives from various sections of society. The decisions made are not merely those of the government but reflect the collective will of the people. Numerous suggestions were received regarding land utilization, and the present plan has been finalized after careful consideration. He further clarified that no additional proposals will be entertained, as the current plan stands as final and definitive.

The Chief Minister highlighted that the project aims to transform central Aizawl into a beautiful and vibrant space—one that will serve as a recreational area for children, a welcoming place for youth, and a comfortable environment for the



elderly. He urged all citizens to participate wholeheartedly in the initiative, keeping in mind that it is for the collective benefit of the people. He also called upon those involved in executing the project to work diligently with a sense of responsibility toward the state.

The programme was chaired by Lalduhoma, Commissioner & Secretary, UD & PA. Rev. R. Lalbiakliana, President of the Council of Churches in Mizoram, offered the invocation, and Jacob Lalawmpuia, Director, UD & PA and Member Secretary of the Joint Steering Committee, presented a brief report.

Key features of the Master Plan include construction of a new road at the east side from Saron Veng

(near BCM Church) connecting to Head Post Office and widening of the existing roads in city centre. Rs 23 crore already sanctioned for road development and improvement works, to be executed by PWD.

Development of Aizawl Square starting from Bazar Bungkawn, along with Police Outpost.

Establishment of a Power Substation near the Saron-Post Office new road to support the central area.

Construction of a new Vanapa Hall with a seating capacity of 2,000, along with additional halls, an auditorium, and ample parking facilities. The architectural design will be selected through a competitive process, with registration

open from today and results expected on May 29.

Development of a large water reservoir (Tuizem) and public seating areas at Baja Hill.

Creation of a beautiful park at Canteen Square and a public park between Vanapa Hall and the Baja Hill was also included in the plan.

Establishment of an open amphitheatre near Post Office along the new road, provision for multi-level car parking and scenic viewpoints along the roadway, designation of green zones and walking trails across the whole area, beautification and redevelopment of Heritage Court and surrounding areas, including renovation of existing buildings, demolition of some structures, and construction of new facilities are among other features of the beautification plan.

Rs. 13 crore has been allocated for this component, to be executed by PWD.

Preparatory works, including machinery mobilization, have already begun. It may be recalled that the Assam Rifles land was officially transferred to the Government of Mizoram on March 15, 2025. Within a year of this transfer, the groundwork for its redevelopment has now commenced.

Career counselling session conducted at JNV Churachandpur

Imphal, Mar 18: Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Churachandpur witnessed an inspiring initiative on Monday when Khuga Battalion Assam Rifles organised a career counselling session for its students. The programme was designed to motivate and guide the youth towards meaningful career choices, with a special focus on opportunities in the Indian Army. An officer from Khuga Battalion delivered an engaging talk on the theme "Indian Army: A Way of Life", acquainting students with the diverse avenues available in the armed forces. The session highlighted why the Indian Army remains a rewarding career option, emphasising its values of discipline, leadership, courage and commitment. Students were introduced to various entry schemes such as the National Defence Academy (NDA), Combined Defence Services (CDS), Short Service Commission (SSC), Technical Entry Scheme (TES) and other pathways that open doors to serving the nation. The interaction was attended by 60 students from classes VIII to XII, including 37 boys and 23 girls, along with the School Counsellor and the Principal, said a press release of IG-AR(S).

Assam District Carries Out Initial EVM-VVPAT Randomisation for Assembly Elections

Barpeta, Mar 18: In a significant step towards ensuring the integrity of the upcoming electoral process, the first level of randomisation of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) units was successfully conducted at the Office of the District Commissioner, Barpeta on Wednesday. The exercise was conducted under the supervision of the District Commissioner-cum-District Election Officer, Rohan Kumar Jha, who reaffirmed the district administration's commitment to ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections in a systematic and time-bound manner.

The randomisation exercise was carried out in the presence of Additional District Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, and representatives of recognised national and regional political parties, in keeping with established guidelines to ensure transparency and accountability.



The use of robust technological procedures for the random allocation of EVMs and VVPATs underscores the district administration's efforts to ensure fairness and integrity in the deployment of polling equipment for the ensuing electoral process. Meanwhile, the Election Commission of

India has appointed IRS officer Meregu Suresh as Expenditure Observer, and IPS officer Annes Ahmed Ansari as Police Observer for Barpeta Election District. Members of the public may meet the Observers between 11am and 12 noon at the New Circuit House building, located near the Office of the District Commissioner, Barpeta, to submit any election-related complaints or grievances.

Month-long 46th Realisation Month observance starts

Imphal, Mar 18: The All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU) has started observing the 46th Realisation Month, from March 17 under the theme "Realize to Save the Indigenous People of Manipur." The observance will continue till April 17. The month-long observance aims to raise awareness on issues related to the protection of indigenous identity, demographic changes, and the influx of outsiders into the state. AMSU stated that various programmes including seminars, public meetings, campaigns, competitions, and rallies will be organised across Manipur. Speaking at the launch, AMSU President Lukram Malangba recalled the historic movements of 1980 and 1994, when the union spearheaded agitations against the influx of outsiders in Manipur and across India. He noted that the continued presence and influx of such populations remain a serious concern today. He also paid tribute to two student leaders, Potshangbam Premananda (Lukhoi) and Huidrom Lokendra, who lost their lives during the "Go Back Foreigners" movement. In their memory, AMSU has been observing April 17 every year as "Realisation Day." The observance will conclude on April 17 with a public gathering and commemorative events, reaffirming the collective commitment to safeguard the rights and identity of the indigenous people of Manipur.

Bridge design survey conducted in Noney



Imphal, Mar 18: A comprehensive RCC Bridge Design Survey was successfully conducted today at the Agah (Ijei) River bank in Noney, where the proposed bridge will link NH-37 through Makhuam village. The survey was carried out by a bridge design expert from Guwahati. The design team was accompanied by Gailiangpou Gomnei, Social Worker, and representatives of the Makhuam Village Authority. Notably, the new RCC bridge will bring substantial benefits not only to Makhuam Villages but also to the broader population of Noney District. By improving connectivity across the river, the bridge is expected to enhance commercial activity and support the livelihoods of local residents. According to Gailiangpou Gomnei Social Worker, the foundation stone laying and inauguration are expected scheduled for April 2026, with construction work also anticipated to commence in April this year. The project marks a significant step toward strengthening infrastructure and fostering economic growth in Noney District.

Mizoram Announces Schedule For Aizawl Municipal Elections 2026



Aizawl, March 18: The State Election Commission, Mizoram, has released the schedule for the General Election to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation, 2026. The announcement was made under the powers conferred by Section 350 of the Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007, read with Rule 31 and Rule 50 of the Mizoram Municipalities (Election of Councillors) Rules, 2007. Online Newspaper Subscription Scrutiny of Nominations & Allotment of Symbols:

March 27, 2026 (Friday) from 11:00 AM onwards
Last Date for Withdrawal of Candidature: March 30, 2026 (Monday) up to 3:00 PM
Breaking Headlines Updates Date of Poll: April 21, 2026 (Tuesday) from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Date of Re-Poll (if necessary): April 23, 2026 (Thursday) from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Counting of Votes: April 27, 2026 (Monday) from 8:00 AM onwards
Completion of Election Process: April 30, 2026 (Thursday).

Census protests intensify amid NRC and immigrant identification demands

Imphal, Mar 18: Hundreds of protesters, predominantly women, marched through the Porompat area of Imphal East on Tuesday to demand the deferment of Manipur’s upcoming census. Surrounded by a large police presence, the demonstrators converged on the Census office to reiterate that no headcount should occur until the state addresses concerns over illegal immigration. The protest highlights a growing friction between the government’s scheduled census timeline and sections of the public who fear the results could have long-term implications for the state’s security and demographic balance.

The march was organized by the Campaign for Just and Fair Delimitation (CJFD). The group is calling for the implementation of a National Register of Citizens (NRC) or a similar mechanism to identify and



repatriate illegal immigrants before any official census data is gathered. Protesters carried placards with slogans such as “No NRC–No Census,” “No free movement–No Census,” and “No IDP settlement–No Census,” reflecting widespread anxiety over demographic changes and the displacement of local resi-

dents. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the march, CJFD leader Sunil Karam noted that while the census is scheduled to begin on April 1, 2026, the organization remains opposed to the exercise in its current form. “The people of Manipur have no objection to a census if it is conducted in a just

and fair manner,” Karam said. He argued that no operation should be undertaken until all individuals who entered Manipur after 1951 are identified and a verification system is established. Karam also urged the Chief Minister, state Ministers, and all political parties to adopt a united stand in asking the Central Government to delay the exercise until the issue of illegal immigration is resolved. Additionally, the CJFD leader expressed dissatisfaction with recent statements from Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh and Home Minister Govindas Konhoujam in the state Assembly. While both leaders recently cited the sensitive nature of the census given the state’s current law and order situation and the displacement of citizens, Karam suggested their remarks did not go far enough to address the public’s demands.

Gauhati HC calls APSC probe report recommendatory

Agartala, Mar 18: The Gauhati High Court has reiterated that courts cannot compel the government to act on the findings of a Commission of Inquiry, observing that such reports are recommendatory in nature and not legally enforceable. A division bench of Chief Justice Ashutosh Kumar and Justice Arun Dev Choudhury made the observation while disposing of a public interest litigation (PIL) concerning the APSC cash-for-job scam. The bench noted that a Commission of Inquiry functions primarily as a fact-finding body and its recommendations do not carry binding force. Consequently, the government is within its rights to accept, reject or partially implement the findings of such a commission. “The report of a Commission of Inquiry is recommendatory in nature. Such recommendations are not binding on the government and, therefore, courts cannot compel their implementation,” the court observed. The PIL, filed by Pritom Hazarika and Jon Jyoti Sarma, had sought timely action by the state authorities on the report submitted by the Justice (retired) B.K. Sharma Commission of Inquiry. In its or-

der, the High Court also took note of developments in the functioning of the Assam Public Service Commission (APSC), observing that since 2014, the Commission has been conducting examinations annually without any reported irregularities that would cast doubt on the integrity of the process. At the same time, the court underlined that judicial oversight is not entirely excluded. It said courts can ensure that such reports are duly placed before the legislature, considered by the government, and examined to ascertain whether any decision to reject them is arbitrary or mala fide. The court said this suggests that corrective measures may have already been put in place, even if it has not been explicitly stated that these were undertaken in pursuance of the commission’s recommendations. Clarifying the scope of a Commission of Inquiry, the bench pointed out that such bodies neither adjudicate legal rights nor determine the guilt of individuals. As such, their reports are “judicially non-enforceable” and remain subject to the policy choices and administrative priorities of the government.

Tripura ADC polls on April 13, counting on 17

Agartala, Mar 18: To facilitate voter participation, arrangements such as ramps and sheds for elderly voters and persons with disabilities will be ensured by returning officers. The Commission also confirmed that the entire election process will be videographed to maintain transparency. Earlier, the TTAADC Election Commission had published the final electoral rolls for its 28 constituencies. The State Election Commission on Tuesday announced the schedule for elections to the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), with polling set to be held on April 13. Around 11,000 personnel drawn from Tripura Police, Tripura State Rifles and Central Armed Police Forces will be deployed for election duty. In addition, mobile patrolling teams will be activated, sector officers appointed, and area domination exercises conducted throughout the election period. All candidates will be provided personal security, while police arrangements for public meetings will be made subject to prior permission. Authorities also confirmed that prosecution will be initiated against anti-social elements to ensure free and fair polling. Addressing concerns over cross-border threats, the DGP asserted that Tripura has been declared an insurgency-free state and that no underground groups are currently active. He added that the Border Security Force has strengthened vigil along the international border, supported by 15 additional camps set up by the state police as a second line of defence. According to State Election Commissioner Manoj Kumar, the official notification will be issued

on March 18, while the last date for filing nominations has been fixed as March 25. Scrutiny of nominations will take place on March 26, followed by the withdrawal deadline on March 28. Counting of votes is scheduled for April 17, and in case of re-poll, it will be conducted on April 16. The entire election process is expected to conclude by April 18. A total of 9,62,697 voters have been declared eligible to participate in the elections, making it a politically significant exercise in the state. Of these, 4,82,025 are male voters, 4,80,666 are female, and six belong to the third gender category. With the announcement of the poll schedule, the Model Code of Conduct has come into immediate effect. Kumar stated that detailed guidelines have been issued, directing political parties, government authorities and other stakeholders to strictly comply. He added that any government decision that could influence voters in TTAADC areas will require prior approval from the Commission. Meanwhile, Director General of Police Anurag said elaborate security arrangements have been put in place to ensure peaceful polling. A total of 1,257 polling stations have been identified and categorised based on vulnerability assessment. Of these, 311 polling stations fall under the ‘A’ category, indicating high criticality, 693 under the ‘B’ category, reflecting security concerns, and 253 are classified as normal.

“Security deployment will be proportional to the sensitivity of each polling station, with increased force presence in critical areas,” he said.

The IT department will examine black money in the elections in Assam

Guwahati, Mar 18: The Income Tax department has set up a round-the-clock control room in Assam to check use of black money in the ensuing Assembly elections, an official statement said on Tuesday.

It urged citizens to contact the control room with any credible information regarding suspicious movement or distribution of cash, precious metals or other valuables in connection with the elections, adding that the identity of the informant will remain confidential.

Elections for the 126-member state Assembly will be held on April 9, and votes will be counted on May 4. The statement said the control room has been set up in a bid to assist the Election Commission in “curbing the role of black money in elections.” “During the period of the Model Code of Conduct, the Directorate of Income Tax (Investigation), North Eastern Region, Guwahati will maintain strict vigil on the movement of unaccounted cash, bullion, precious metals and other valuables that are likely or suspected to be used for electoral purposes within the state,” it said.

As part of these measures, a 24×7 Control Room has been established at the Aayakar Bhawan in Guwahati. Mobile number/WhatsApp 9401085214, mobile number/



WhatsApp 9181324184, landline number 0361-2340396 and email: ssamelections26[at]gmail[dot]com have been made operational for the public to “report credible information regarding suspicious movement or distribution of cash,

bullion, precious metals or other valuables in connection with the elections,” it said.

Urging the public to reach out through the communication channels, the statement added, “Informants are not required to disclose

personal details such as name or identity. However, it is essential that the information shared is credible and actionable.”

The control room will be functional until the completion of the election process, it said.

Mizoram assembly session, ten government bills were passed

Aizawl, Mar 18: A total of 10 government Bills, including one that sought to ban polygamy and increase women’s rights, were passed during the 28-day Budget session of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly. The Budget session was adjourned sine die late on Monday. Speaker Lalbiakzama, while announcing the sine die adjournment, gave a brief report on the proceedings of the session, which began on February 17. During the session, the assembly passed the state’s annual Budget for the financial year 2026-27 amounting to Rs 17,469.91 crore and supplementary demands for grants for the fiscal 2025-26 amounting to Rs 3,724.25 crore. The assembly also unanimously passed 10 government Bills, including ‘The Mizo Marriage and Inheritance of Property (Amendment) Bill, 2026,’ which sought to ban polygamy and increase women’s property rights, ‘The Mizoram (Prevention of Public Land Encroachment) Bill, 2026,’ and ‘The Mizoram State University (Amendment) Bill, 2026,’ which sought to shift the base of the proposed state university from Aizawl to Lunglei. According to the Speaker, the assembly received 1,248 starred questions and 396 unstarred questions for the session. Of the 1,248 starred questions, 1,231 were admitted while 27 questions were rejected, seven withdrawn by



members and 300 placed in the business list, he said. Among the unstarred questions, 376 were admitted, 17 rejected and three withdrawn by members. The assembly also adopted a resolution seeking inclusion of Mizo language in the Eighth Schedule of Constitution. Lalbiakzama lauded the members for maintaining a friendly environment and decorum in the House.

UNC requests that the Manipur census be postponed

Imphal, Mar 18: The United Naga Council (UNC), the apex body representing Naga tribes in Manipur, has formally petitioned chief minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh to defer the upcoming census operations in the state, citing multiple concerns over fairness and feasibility. In a letter dated March 16, 2026, UNC president NG Lorho emphasized that the census exercise should be postponed until key issues are resolved to ensure credibility. The UNC highlighted three ma-

ajor reasons for its demand. Firstly, the council pointed to the “looming issue of illegal immigrants,” stressing that citizenship verification through a National Register of Citizens (NRC) must precede any census. It warned that failure to identify non-citizens beforehand could distort demographic records and undermine the purpose of the exercise. Secondly, the UNC underscored the fragile law and order situation in Manipur, marked by ongoing ethnic conflict and displacement. It argued that

conducting a census amid such volatility would not yield reliable data and could further inflame tensions among communities already living in mistrust and insecurity. Thirdly, the council raised the unresolved district rollback issue, which it described as a matter of deep public sentiment for the Nagas. It cautioned that census operations in disputed jurisdictions could entrench contested boundaries and trigger social upheaval. “Given these circumstances, proceeding with the census would be

Sine die adjournment of Manipur Assembly Budget Session

Guwahati, Mar 18: Proceedings of the Manipur Legislative Assembly’s budget session on Tuesday were briefly disrupted when a mild earthquake struck the region. The tremor, measuring 4.3 on the Richter scale, had its epicenter in Kamjong district at a depth of 45 km. It occurred around 12:08 pm and was felt inside the Assembly hall, prompting Speaker Thokchom Satyabrata Singh to adjourn the session for five minutes. Fortunately, there were no casualties or damage, and the Assembly Secretariat confirmed that all MLAs and staff were safe. The session resumed shortly after and continued without further disruption. The earthquake occurred while opposition Congress leader K Meghachandra Singh was speaking on issues related to the public health engineering department, including the Jal Jeevan Mission. The session, which was the last day of the ongoing budget discussions, concluded with significant legislative business. Chief Minister Y Khemchand tabled key fiscal documents, including the Medium Term Fiscal Policy Statement, Fiscal Policy Strategy Statement, and Macro Economic Framework Statement. The Assem-



bly passed a budget allocation of Rs. 1,25,886,94,000 for seven departments for the financial year 2026-27.

During discussions on the forest, environment, and climate change department, Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho reported that action had been taken against landowners permitting poppy cultivation. He revealed that 81 individuals, including 16 village chiefs, one landowner, and 64 cultivators, had been arrested across 10 districts, with 44 FIRs registered. On water supply infrastructure, Dikho assured proactive measures to bridge gaps across the state. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Khemchand acknowledged manpower shortages in the vigilance and anti-corruption department due to

police personnel being engaged in law and order duties. He noted that 222 cases had been taken up in the past five years, with 23 FIRs filed, 149 disposed of, and 11 under trial.

Later in the day, the Manipur Appropriation (No. 2) Bill, 2026, was passed unanimously after discussions involving opposition members, including former Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh. The Chief Minister assured immediate assistance to hailstorm-affected people through district deputy commissioners, who were instructed to use available funds with government reimbursement to follow. He also announced seven new water resource programmes for Thoubal district and clarified that funds allocated for

women’s self-help groups were intended for economically weaker sections, not election-related purposes.

After completing the scheduled business, the Speaker adjourned the 7th Session of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly sine die. Despite the brief disruption caused by the earthquake, the Assembly successfully concluded its budget session, passing crucial fiscal measures and addressing pressing issues such as poppy cultivation, water supply, vigilance, and disaster relief.

This summary captures the key developments: the earthquake interruption, fiscal policy discussions, budget passage, law enforcement actions against poppy cultivation, infrastructure

Governor pays tribute to Maj Bob Khathing



Imphal, Mar 18: Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, today released the second edition of the coffee table book ‘The Life of the Unsung Hero – Maj. Ralengnao ‘Bob’ Khathing’ during a ceremony held at Valley View, Imphal. Prior to the release, the Governor laid a wreath at the memorial of Maj. Ralengnao ‘Bob’ Khathing at the venue. The ceremony was attended by John S. R. Khathing, IRS (Retd.); Major General Gaurav Sharma, IGAR (S); Major General Subhankar Basu, GOC, 57th Mountain Division; along with other senior officers and family members of Major Khathing. As part of the event, the Maj. Ralengnao ‘Bob’ Khathing Meritorious Awards was distributed to meritorious students who have excelled in the class X and XII examinations. Addressing at the ceremony, Governor Bhalla stated that the second edition of the coffee table book on

Maj. Ralengnao ‘Bob’ Khathing goes beyond recounting the life of an extraordinary son of the state, serving as a reflection of the enduring values of courage, integrity and selfless service that underpin nation-building. He highlighted Maj. Khathing’s distinguished journey as a soldier, administrator and diplomat. The Governor further emphasised that Maj. Khathing’s life carries a profound message for the younger generation, urging them to draw inspiration from his discipline, humility and commitment to the greater good.

He underscored that the nation’s future depends on youth dedicated to unity, constructive dialogue and peace, noting that lasting progress is built on collective effort and mutual understanding, and expressing hope that the book will inspire them to contribute to a peaceful, united and prosperous society.

Aizawl municipal polls on April 21

Aizawl, Mar 18: The Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) will go to polls on April 21, the Mizoram State Election Commission (SEC) announced today.State Election Commissioner H Lalthlangliana said that polling for the 19-member civic body will be held across 19 wards from 7 am to 5 pm.Repolling, if necessary, will be held on April 23, and counting of votes will take place on April 27, he said.The last date for filing nomination papers is March 25, while nominees can withdraw their candidatures latest by March 30, Lalthlangliana said.Scrutiny of nomination papers will take place on March 27.The main opposition party, the Mizo National Front (MNF), has released its full list of candidates, while the Congress has announced 13 contenders for the 19 seats.The ruling Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM) will name its candidates on March 23.According to official data, there are over 2.39 lakh electors across 19 wards, including 1.26 lakh female voters.In the last AMC polls held in February 2021, the MNF secured a majority with 11 seats, followed by the ZPM with six, and the Congress with two.

Bordoloi’s BJP Switch Sparks Focus on Son Parteek’s Political Path

Guwahati, Mar 18: The formal induction of Pradyut Bordoloi, the Nagaon MP, into the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has sparked speculation about the political future of his son, Parteek Bordoloi, who remains associated with the Indian National Congress in Assam.

Parteek currently serves as Co-Chairman of the Social Media Department of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee and has been fielded by the party from Margherita, widely regarded as his father’s political stronghold.

Reacting to the developments, Pradyut Bordoloi emphasized that political decisions within his family are independent.“I have taken every decision in my life on my own. I had no godfather in the Congress. This morning, I spoke to my son and told him that he is an adult and the decision rests with him to decide what is right or wrong,” he said.

He further clarified that his switch to the BJP would not affect his son’s political path.

“I have made my own decision and, to ensure that there is no influence on his political life, I will respect whatever choice he makes,” Bordoloi added.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma also downplayed speculation, cautioning against linking individual political choices with family relationships.

“It is not appropriate to talk about children. If we start discussing children, there will be many issues. We should not mix individuals with their children. Tomorrow, my son may also choose a different path,” Sarma said during the joining programme in New Delhi.

He clarified that the BJP’s engagement is limited to Pradyut Bordoloi alone.“I have not spoken to his son, and it would not be appropriate to



comment on his political stand. Our discussions are only with Pradyut Bordoloi,” he added.

Earlier in the day, Bordoloi formally joined the BJP in New Delhi in the presence of Sarma, Assam BJP president Dilip Saikia, and

Union Minister Pabitra Margherita.

Describing his move as “emotionally difficult,” the two-time MP and former minister in the Tarun Gogoi-led Congress government said he had felt “suffocated and sidelined” within the party and was seeking a

platform where he could work with dignity.

The BJP leadership also hinted at further political realignments in Assam, with Sarma asserting that efforts to bring leaders from other parties into the BJP would continue.

1st foundation day of Daichiro Professional Skill Academy celebrated



Imphal, Mar 18: The 1st Foundation Day of Daichiro Professional Skill Academy was celebrated at Public Library Hall, Uripok Sorbon Thingel in Imphal West with the launch of a new initiative, “SkillNest After-School Club.” Founder-cum-Director Potshangbam Sachipriya stated that the academy has been actively providing skill-based training to children from a young age, focusing on life skills, confidence building, manners, and discipline. She highlighted growing concerns among working parents, noting that children often lack proper guidance after school hours and are increasingly exposed to excessive mobile phone usage at home. To address these challenges, the newly introduced SkillNest After-School Club aims to provide a structured and supportive environment where children can receive academic assistance along with training in essential life skills, positive habits, and overall personality development. The event was attended by parents, students, and well-wishers, marking a significant milestone in the academy’s commitment to holistic child development.

81 arrested, 44 FIRs registered against poppy cultivation: Dy CM Dikho

Imphal, Mar 18: Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho has disclosed that across 10 districts, a total of 81 individuals has been arrested, including 16 village chiefs, one landowner, and 64 poppy cultivators and in addition, 44 FIRs have been registered in connection with such cases. On the last day of the 7th Session of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly, “Medium Term Fiscal Policy Statement, Fiscal Policy Strategy Statement & Macro Economic Framework Statement and Disclosures” was laid on the Table of the House by Chief Minister and Leader of the House Yumnam Khemchand Singh. Also, a total sum of Rs. 1,258,86,94,000 for seven departments for the financial year 2026-27 was passed at the House. These include a sum of Rs. 439,80,32,000/- for Demand No. 12- Municipal Administration, Housing and Urban Development; a sum of Rs. 711,16,32,000/- for Demand No. 22- Public Health Engineering; a sum of Rs. 7,02,01,000/- for Demand No. 24- Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Department; a sum of Rs. 13,70,49,000/- for Demand No. 28- State Excise; a sum of Rs. 6,75,60,000/- for Demand No. 29- Sales Tax, other Taxes/Duties on Commodities and Services; a sum of Rs. 26,35,50,000/- for Demand No. 31- Fire Protection and Control and a sum of Rs. 54,06,70,000/- for Demand No. 33- Home Guards. Answering to a Starred Question raised by Th. Lokeshwar Singh, Khundrakpam A/C MLA, Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh, stated that the work under Pukhro Gram Panchayat is being undertaken with assistance from NABARD under RIDF-XXX. The project has a sanctioned amount of Rs. 8 crore, with a work order issued for Rs. 7.84 crore. The sanction order, work order and agreement copies were later tabled in the House.

Lunglei Joint Control Room Set Up To Monitor Supplies

Lunglei, 18 March 2026: The Deputy Commissioner of Lunglei District, Pi Navneet Mann, has issued a notification designating the District Emergency Operation Centre (DEOC) as the Joint Control Room to monitor the availability and distribution of essential commodities, particularly Petroleum, Oil & Lubricants (POL) and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), across the district.Online Newspaper Subscription The decision has been taken in compliance with directives from the Government of Mizoram, aimed at ensuring the uninterrupted supply of essential commodities and



curbing misinformation in view of potential disruptions in international energy supply chains. The Joint Control Room, which has become operational with immediate effect, will monitor supply related conditions, address necessary measures to prevent hoarding, black marketing, and the

spread of misinformation that could lead to public panic. Citizens may contact the DEOC at 9862653478 for assistance or information.

MP Pradyut Bordoloi joins BJP in New Delhi

New Delhi, Mar 18: A day after quitting the Congress, Nagaon MP Pradyut Bordoloi joined the BJP in New Delhi in the presence of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam BJP president Dilip Saikia and other leaders of the saffron party.

Welcoming him to the BJP fold, CM Sarma said the BJP workers will now have to take the responsibility of making Bordoloi victorious in the upcoming Assembly polls.

The Chief Minister said that Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) Nabajyoti Talukdar, who also quit Congress yesterday, and others will also join the BJP in Guwahati in the next 2-3 days.

“No leader with self-respect can remain in the Congress and many such leaders want to join the BJP,” he said, adding that Leader of Opposition in Assam Assembly Debabrata Saikia and Ripun Bora would also leave the Congress after the elections.

Sarma, however, evaded a direct reply on whether Bordoloi will get a ministerial berth if he wins the elec-



tion.Bordoloi said that quitting the Congress and joining the BJP was one of the most difficult decisions of his life.“I had to go through a lot in the Congress and felt suffocated. I was sidelined and humiliated in the Con-

gress,” he said, while heaping praise on CM Sarma.On the Congress giving ticket to Bordoloi’s son, Prateek, from the Margherita Assembly seat, he said that his son is free to take his own decisions.

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The Role of Discipline in Success

Discipline is often regarded as one of the most important factors in achieving success. It refers to the ability to remain focused, consistent, and committed to one’s goals despite challenges or distractions. In a world filled with constant interruptions, maintaining discipline has become increasingly difficult. Social media, entertainment, and other distractions can easily divert attention from important tasks. Without discipline, even the most ambitious goals may remain unfulfilled. In education, discipline plays a key role in academic achievement. Students who follow structured routines, complete assignments on time, and dedicate consistent effort are more likely to succeed. Discipline helps transform potential into actual performance. Professional life also demands discipline. Meeting deadlines, maintaining quality standards, and continuously improving skills require consistent effort. Successful individuals often attribute their achievements to disciplined habits rather than talent alone. Discipline is equally important in personal development. Healthy habits such as regular exercise, balanced diets, and proper time management all depend on self-control and consistency. Families and educational institutions play a crucial role in cultivating discipline from an early age. Encouraging responsibility and rewarding consistent effort help individuals develop this quality. Importantly, discipline should not be seen as restriction but as a tool for freedom. It allows individuals to take control of their actions and move steadily toward their goals. A disciplined society is more organised, productive, and resilient. By fostering discipline, individuals can overcome obstacles and achieve lasting success.

As Israel prepares to implement the ‘Gaza model’ in Lebanon, where is the international reaction

Anyone following Israeli media discourse in recent days may be experiencing a severe case of déjà vu. Alongside euphoric reactions to the US-Israeli pummelling of Iran (backed by 93% of the Jewish-Israeli population), politicians and prominent commentators are now clamouring for an escalation in Lebanon – hoping to see a repeat of the devastation Israel has wreaked in Gaza.

Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon have already killed close to 1,000 people in the past two weeks, after Hezbollah resumed its rocket fire into northern Israel in support of Iran. The Israeli army has issued blanket evacuation orders covering a vast area in the country’s south, displacing over a million people from their homes. On Monday, it announced the launch of a “targeted” ground invasion, and officials have briefed the media that they are preparing to mobilise hundreds of thousands of reservists in order to implement “the Gaza model, but in Lebanon”.

Israel’s leaders are not hiding what comes next. “Very soon, Dahiyeh will resemble Khan Younis,” warned Israel’s finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, earlier in March, referring respectively to a Hezbollah stronghold in Beirut and a city in southern Gaza that the Israeli army has almost completely razed to the ground. Zvi Sukkot, a member of the government



from Smotrich’s party, urged: “We must conquer territory in southern Lebanon, destroy the villages there and annex the territory to the state of Israel.”

Amit Halevi, a member of Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud party, vowed that the Litani river – located 30km from Israel’s border with Lebanon – “must become the north’s new yellow line”, alluding to the boundary marking the current occupation by Israeli forces of more than half of Gaza’s territory.

The defence minister, Israel Katz, announced on Monday that he and Netanyahu had “instructed the IDF to destroy the terrorist infrastructure in the villages near the border in Lebanon, just as was done against Hamas in Rafah [and] Beit Hanoun”, referring again to cities in Gaza that no longer exist. Under his command, the Israeli army is also engag-

ing in psychological warfare against the Lebanese people, dropping leaflets over Beirut last week with the mocking text: “In light of the remarkable success in Gaza, the newspaper ‘The New Reality’ arrives in Lebanon. Where is your country heading?”

Leading opposition figures are joining in, too. Gadi Eisenkot, a former chief of staff of the Israeli army who aspires to replace Netanyahu as prime minister in the forthcoming election, tweeted: “The Dahiyeh doctrine has never been more relevant than right now, and it must be implemented.” This doctrine refers to an Israeli military strategy of deliberately inflicting disproportionate force on civilians as a form of collective punishment designed to deter future attacks, which originated in Israel’s 2006 war on Lebanon. And it’s not just

politicians. Similar rhetoric from political commentators is flooding Israeli TV and radio stations, as it did in the early days of the war on Gaza, laying the ideological groundwork for what follows.

The prominent Channel 12 journalist Amit Segal, considered a Netanyahu mouthpiece in the media, has called on Israeli forces to “advance to the Litani river, and announce: We will not leave until Hezbollah is disarmed [and until then] not a single resident returns”. Another Netanyahu mouthpiece, Channel 14’s Yinon Magal, weighed in: “I suggest by the morning, there will be no more Dahiyeh at all.” The chorus keeps growing. Eager to see a repeat of the war crimes in Gaza that earned him an arrest warrant from the international criminal court, Israel’s former defence minister, Yoav Gallant, has urged

the army “to strike and eliminate everything that’s in Dahiyeh, Baalbek, Tyre, Sidon, Nabatieh, everywhere”. And Itamar Fleischmann, a commentator on Channel 14, implored: “We need to destroy Dahiyeh ... We need to destroy the country in terms of infrastructure. There’s no more civilian infrastructure in Lebanon.” Statements like these form a central part of South Africa’s ongoing genocide case against Israel at the international court of justice, offering proof of genocidal intent in Gaza. It is therefore no surprise that the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security has issued a “red flag alert” for Israel in Lebanon.

There are, of course, important differences between Gaza and Lebanon. Israel does not control all of Lebanon’s borders, so unlike Gaza, the population cannot be caged in. This also means the world’s media can enter Lebanon; international networks should be rushing there now in advance of Israel’s ground invasion to support the work of local journalists. But the past two and a half years in Gaza have provided ample evidence of what Israel, drunk on impunity, will do in Lebanon. First, the army will seek to seize control of the country’s southern region, recreating – or perhaps exceeding – the “security zone” Israel occupied between 1982 and 2000, after invading during the Leb-

anese civil war. While the air force decimates Beirut from above, proceeding through an AI-generated list of targets, troops on the ground will move from village to village in the south, destroying everything in their path as warplanes shower residential areas with white phosphorus.

Many residents will refuse to leave – either because they have nowhere to go, or because they fear, with good reason, that they will never see their homes again if they do. Israel will declare anyone who remains a terrorist, authorising soldiers and drone operators to shoot on sight. Thanks to the success of the Israeli-US crusade to undermine fundamental tenets of international law over recent years, attacks on all manner of civilian infrastructure will be legitimised with the claim that it is being used by Hezbollah. Indeed, this has already begun in recent days with attacks on bridges and health facilities. The fate that awaits Lebanon is clear. So where is the international community? As the Gaza case should have made abundantly clear, negotiations – which French president Emmanuel Macron is now pushing for – will only provide Israel with a smokescreen for stalling a ceasefire while seeking to “finish the job”. This is not a time for empty condemnations, but for sanctions and arms embargos that will impede Israel’s ability to keep escalating its aggression.

Why China is persistently raising tensions with Japan: “Kill the chicken to scare the monkey”

‘Kill the chicken to scare the monkey’ is a Chinese idiom that, depending on the context, may roughly translate to making an example of someone through punishment or offensive action to intimidate or deter someone else. It may also mean taking punitive measures to ensure compliance and establish a rule of fear. We are watching a version of it unfold before our eyes as China’s relationship with Japan undergoes a spectacular implosion. From the very outset it seemed the crisis that was triggered by Japanese prime minister Sanae Takaichi’s comments that Japan could respond militarily to a Chinese attack on Taiwan – that lies just over 100 km from Japanese territory – had an element of theatre to it. China doth protest too much. The intensity of its escalation, fiery rhetoric, personal attacks on Takaichi and punitive measures in response to a statement of fact by the Japanese PM – that a cross-strait war is existential for Japan – suggested that the outrage is manipulative and cosmetic. China is simply laying a marker on Taiwan. It is setting the bar with an explicit message that crossing that bar would carry steep and sustained real-world costs. Beijing is simultaneously prepping up its domestic audience for a ‘struggle’ on the Taiwan issue, trying to shape the external environment to reduce international support for Taiwan, lower the threshold for its ‘gray zone’ activities and compel reunification. Attaching Taiwan without a military takeover is still a priority for the Chinese Communist Party, and it chose for maximum effect a comment by a Japanese prime minister known for

her hawkish stance on China who didn’t really signal a tectonic shift in Japan’s Taiwan policy but took off the veil of ambiguity in linking cross-strait conflict with Japan’s defence commitments. It helps the CCP that the two countries share a contentious and tormented past, and the underlying bitterness especially on the Chinese side can be rapidly harnessed to shape the conflict. Japan’s imperial expansion into China, painful memories of atrocities, especially the Nanjing Massacre of 1937 where historians estimate hundreds of thousands of Chinese civilians were killed and women were subjected to widespread sexual violence, are deeply etched into Chinese collective consciousness. These are reinforced through textbooks, museums, and state media content that emphasize Japanese aggression and portray China’s suffering at the hands of foreign invaders as central to its national identity. Even though Japan has repeatedly apologized for its wartime atrocities, the belief festers in China that Japan has not fully owned up to its brutalities or apologised enough. Takaichi, widely regarded in China as a ‘revisionist’ on imperial Japan, was derided as “anti-China” and “extreme right-winger” on Chinese social media during her elevation as the prime minister. “Chinese critics accuse her of smearing China, denying the Nanjing Massacre, exaggerating the so-called ‘China threat,’ and stoking controversy over Taiwan,” while her “ultra-conservative views”, assertiveness on defence, hawkish stance on China and plan to bolster Japan’s role in the Indo-Pacific is regarded with suspicion by



Beijing, as Rahul Mishra pointed out in The Diplomat. Takaichi’s repeated visits of the Yasukuni Shrine, that honours Japan’s war dead, align with the views of a faction of conservatives who argue that Japan has already sufficiently apologized for its conduct and that further contrition is politically motivated. Her comments on Taiwan, therefore, presented China with the perfect opportunity to frame the issue not as Japan discussing its defence options but as potential interference in Chinese sovereignty. As I mentioned earlier, Takaichi didn’t really move the needle of Japan’s security policy when in answer to a question on November 7 by Katsuya Okada of main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan what she considered to be a ‘survival-threatening situation’, she said, “a judgment

must be made after comprehensively assessing all information in line with the individual and specific circumstances of what has actually occurred.” Asked to elaborate, the Japanese PM said “a line of private ships from China surrounding Taiwan would not constitute such a situation. However, if China conducted the naval blockade while military fighting was taking place, that would constitute a survival-threatening situation, and the Self-Defense Forces would be sent to provide support.” Takaichi’s use of the phrase ‘survival-threatening situation’ invoked the precise legal threshold that would authorize Japan’s military to act without being directly attacked. Japan’s pacifist, post-war Constitution makes launching offensive military operations difficult, but a 2015 law – passed when Takaichi’s

mentor Shinzo Abe was the prime minister – allows Japan to exercise collective self-defence in certain situations, even if the country is not directly under attack. Called ‘Legislation for Peace and Security’, the reinterpretation of Article 9 of Japan’s Constitution effectively redefined and expanded the country’s right to self-defence, and it became a major turning point in Japan’s post-war security policy. Other Japanese politicians have taken positions similar to Takaichi’s in the past, although they may not have done so while in office. As The Asahi Shimbun observes in a report, “after stepping down as prime minister, Abe said a military contingency in Taiwan was one directed at Japan and Taro Aso, a former prime minister, has said Japan should be prepared to fight if a military contingency occurs in the

Taiwan Strait.” In 2015, when he was no longer the PM, Abe, who was assassinated in 2022, had said, “a Taiwan emergency is a Japanese emergency, and therefore an emergency for the Japan-US alliance. People in Beijing, President Xi Jinping in particular, should never have a misunderstanding in recognising this...” So, when China says that Takaichi must retract her statement and nothing else will do – a demand rejected by the Japanese PM – Beijing is indicating that its goal is not merely managing the current dispute but forcing Japan to abandon its established security posture toward Taiwan. This is not achievable through diplomatic overtures or face-saving formulas—it requires sustained coercive pressure that makes clear the costs of Japan’s trajectory. Beijing is aware that

Japan’s first female prime minister is keen to strengthen the country’s military capabilities and plans to lift Japan’s defence spending to two percent of GDP by next fiscal. Therefore, Beijing interprets Takaichi’s statement in Japanese Parliament as part of a broader trajectory of constitutional revision, higher defence spending, and a clearer legal basis for collective self-defence that could see Japan fighting alongside the US over Taiwan. This is intolerable to China that seeks to establish itself as the undisputed hegemonic power in Asia. If China sees itself as America’s true peer, then it must flex muscle in its periphery and on an issue that Beijing defines as its core interest. Japan, with its strong security alliance with the US, its policy of gaining offensive capabilities of its own and militarily hardening up to face the “most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II” (refer to Japan’s 2022 National Security Strategy), is seen by China as its primary regional obstacle. China’s escalation of tension, incendiary rhetoric, threats of gruesome personal attacks against Japanese PM, military sabre-rattling and implementation of a string of measures to deal a body blow to Japan’s economy, are all geared towards pushing back against Japan’s enhanced security posture. A Nikkei Asia report quotes Lowy Institute’s Asia Power Index that shows Japan is ranked fifth in the region in defence outlays last year, at over \$54 billion, which means Tokyo is no slouch when it comes to military spending. On Sunday, while visiting a military base close to Taiwan, Ja-

pan’s defence minister said plans to deploy missiles to the post were on track. So, when Chinese state media says “Takaichi’s refusal to retract her erroneous remarks stems from a political self-interest in catering to Japan’s right-wing forces, as she knew exactly what she was saying and doing. If this is truly the course Japan chooses to take, Takaichi will not only risk her own political career, but will also push Japan once again onto a road of no return...”, or when Beijing opts for social media war mongering or takes the spat to the UN, it is on the one hand mobilizing Chinese nationalism and portraying the CCP as the defender against a resurgent Japanese threat, and on the other shoring up internal legitimacy on a core issue of national rejuvenation. Beijing’s, however, isn’t stopping at trying to create a veto on Taiwan by raising the stakes. It sees in Donald Trump a fickle ally, and in his obsessive focus on striking a trade deal with China an opportunity to challenge and test the resolve of this key US alliance in the region. Beijing seeks to check whether the US will keep its treaty commitment if the pressure is cranked up, or leave Tokyo to its fate. So far, the vocal support to Japan in the slaughter has come solely from the US ambassador to Tokyo, George Glass. Trump has not uttered one word despite America’s staunchest Asian ally facing a barrage of military threats and economic sanctions from Beijing. The trajectory of China-Japan friction, therefore, will shape the power balance of this volatile region decisively in one way or another. The dice is still up in the air.

Air India passengers stranded in Shannon for over 34 hours Here’s what happened

New Delhi: Air India is planning to operate a special flight to bring back stranded passengers from Shannon to Delhi after one of its flight was diverted to the Irish town over a technical problem, according to PTI. The development comes after Flight AI102, operating from New York’s JFK airport to Delhi, was forced to make a precautionary diversion and remained grounded there. Air India had earlier said the aircraft was diverted as a precaution. In a statement cited by PTI, the airline said, “Flight AI102, operating from New York (JFK) to Delhi on 15 March, made a precautionary diversion to Shannon, Ireland, following a suspected technical issue.” It added that the aircraft was undergoing detailed checks before being cleared for further operations.

The delay has extended beyond a day, with passengers remaining stranded in Shannon following the diversion. While unofficial reports



suggested that a replacement aircraft could be sent from Zurich, the airline’s official plan, as cited by PTI, is to operate a special flight on Wednesday. The aircraft involved is an A350 that joined the Air India fleet in April 2024.

The airline also said, “Consistent with Air India’s high safety standards, the aircraft is currently sub-

ject to extensive technical evaluations, which will require extra time to complete.” Sources cited by PTI said the aircraft experienced vibrations and noise, prompting the diversion after it had already been airborne for nearly six hours.

A PTI report, citing an official on Tuesday, said the airline is looking to run the special flight from

Zurich on Wednesday to ferry affected passengers onward to Delhi. The disruption has drawn attention online as passengers remained stuck for over a day following the diversion. AviationAll stated in an X post, “Air India Flight AI102, from New York to Delhi which diverted to Shannon yesterday is still stranded after 34+ hours.” The account also noted that while reports suggested a replacement aircraft was being sent from Zurich, tracking data did not appear to support that at the time. Air India’s statement

Sources from Air India told Financial Express that an alternate flight will take the stranded passengers onward to Delhi from Shannon today, and they are expected to reach home by tonight. The official added that customers were taken care of with hotel accommodation and were also assisted in observing immigration and customs protocols.

Renewable energy generation boom stymied by grid constraints India’s renewable energy boom

New Delhi: (GW) of renewable capacity likely to face power curtailment risk by FY27 as transmission expansion struggles to keep pace with rapid solar and wind additions. The vulnerability is the highest for projects operating under TGNA. Unlike long-term general network access (LTGNA), which offers dedicated transmission infrastructure and stronger scheduling rights, TGNA provides only time-bound access to the inter-state transmission system. As a result, when transmission capacity is constrained, projects with LTGNA are prioritised for evacuation, while TGNA projects face a higher likelihood of curtailment. A Crisil Ratings assessment has flagged that the widening mismatch between generation capacity and grid evacuation infrastructure could leave 35-37 GW of renewable energy projects exposed to curtailment, particularly those without long-term grid access. Crisil projects that approximately 20 GW of renewable capacity to be commissioned and start on temporary general network access (TGNA) in FY27. “This, with existing capacity with TGNA of approximately 17 GW as on February 2026... may result in RE capacity exposed to the risk of curtailment



reaching 35-37 GW in FY27,” said Ankit Hakhu, director, Crisil Ratings. India’s renewable sector has expanded rapidly over the past few years, with installed solar and wind capacity touching around 200 GW as of February 2026. However, the pace of transmission infrastructure development has lagged behind the surge in project commissioning, raising

the risk that surplus generation — particularly solar power during daytime — may not find adequate grid evacuation capacity. The trend is already visible in the sector. According to the analysis, TGNA-based projects accounted for nearly 80% of total renewable curtailment in India between April and December 2025, while about 39% of TGNA capacity was curtailed between November 2025 and February 2026. The problem has been particularly pronounced in Rajasthan and Gujarat, which together account for around 45% of India’s renewable generation capacity. In these states, 13-14 GW of TGNA-based projects experienced curtailment levels of up to 50%, reflecting the growing mismatch between renewable generation growth and transmission availability.

Sustained curtailment could weigh on project economics and credit metrics. The report estimates that an average curtailment of 50% for a period of 12 months could reduce project debt service coverage ratios (DSCR) by up to 10 basis points and equity internal rate of return (IRR) by up to 150 basis points.

Standard Chartered Bank Sebi reach a settlement



New Delhi: Standard Chartered Bank has settled a case with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) on alleged violation of foreign portfolio investor (FPI) norms. The bank paid ₹57.2 lakh without admission or denial of findings of the regulator. The matter is related to various allegations raised by Sebi, where the lender had acted as a designated depository participant and failed to make timely disclosures about material changes in beneficial ownership of certain FPIs. The order was passed without prejudice to Sebi’s rights to initiate appropriate actions against the bank if it is found that the lender had not made full and true disclosure, violated undertakings or waivers, or there was a discrepancy while arriving at the settlement terms.

Standard Chartered Bank also delayed processing investor grouping changes to the National Securities Depository, in

certain cases 19-20 days, even after receiving complete documents from FPIs, as per Sebi’s settlement order released on Tuesday. Allegations against Standard Chartered Bank The regulator also alleged that the bank exempted granular disclosure requirements to certain beneficial owners of FPIs, failing to comply with regulatory frameworks. A series of norms were violated under the FPI Regulations 2019, Depositories and Participants Regulations 2018, and certain clauses of Sebi’s master circular. The regulator had initiated the settlement proceedings after the bank submitted an application for the same. This proposal was accepted by Sebi’s high-powered advisory committee in December and then by a panel of whole-time members in January. The markets regulator disposed of the adjudication proceedings after Standard Chartered Bank remitted the settlement in early March.

Saudi reroutes 16 mn barrels to India via Red Sea; Russian oil gains traction

New Delhi: Saudi Arabia has begun rerouting crude shipments to India via its Red Sea export hub at Yanbu as disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz force Gulf producers to redraw supply routes, with several tankers already heading to Indian ports. The shift reflects contingency planning by the world’s largest oil exporter as tensions in West Asia threaten maritime traffic through the strategic Hormuz chokepoint, through which a significant portion of global oil trade typically passes.

According to Kpler ship-tracking data, four Saudi crude tankers carrying about 6 million barrels of oil are currently on their way to India, with more cargoes expected later this month. Analysts expect volumes to rebound as stranded cargoes seek buyers and policy conditions ease. “Russian barrels bound for India. Post-US waiver, Indian refiners are ramping up fast, about 20 million barrels already delivered, with another around 25–30 million on the way,” Dubey said. For India, the world’s third-largest oil importer, the reconfiguration of supply routes underscores how refiners are adjusting procurement strategies as geopolitical tensions reshape global crude flows.

With shipments from the Gulf being rerouted and Russian cargoes re-entering the market, analysts say Indian refiners are likely to remain key buyers in a rapidly shifting global oil trade landscape. What do analysts say? “Saudi crude loading from ports on the Kingdom’s west coast has increased in recent weeks. Currently, four crude tankers bound for India, carrying approximately 6 million barrels



of crude, are en route and are expected to discharge their cargo at Indian ports in the coming week. Additionally, another 9–10 million barrels are expected to arrive in India over the remainder of the month,” said Nikhil Dubey, senior refining analyst at Kpler. The change in shipping routes comes after disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz, prompting Saudi Arabia to rely more heavily on infrastructure that bypasses the waterway. “Following the disruption around the Strait of Hormuz, Saudi Arabia has been loading more cargoes from its west coast ports, rerouting crude through the East-West Pipeline across the kingdom.

Traditionally, Saudi crude exports to India were shipped from the east coast terminals, passing through the Strait of Hormuz before reaching Indian refiners,” Dubey said. The East-West pipeline allows Saudi Arabia to move crude from its eastern oil fields to the Red Sea coast, enabling exports through Yanbu without transiting the Strait of Hormuz. India could potentially absorb a significant share of these cargoes, analysts say. At its peak in mid-2024, India’s imports of Russian crude exceeded 2 million barrels per day, making Moscow the country’s largest supplier. However, purchases had fallen to around 1.06 million barrels per day by

February 2026, according to analytics firm Kpler, after India moderated buying under pressure from Washington. Evolving trade flows: The evolving trade flows come as Indian refiners also weigh opportunities to absorb additional Russian crude that is currently stranded at sea. According to the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), about 6.9 million tonnes of Russian oil — equivalent to 50.57 million barrels and valued at €2.3 billion (\$2.99 billion) — is currently floating on the water, creating opportunities for buyers as supply chains shift following the Hormuz disruption and a temporary US waiver for Russian barrels.

Adani’s investment push to continue despite



New Delhi: Adani Group will invest over Rs 2 lakh crore each year till 2030 across renewable energy, baseload power and transmission, forming the backbone of a broader infrastructure push spanning ports, airports, roads, cement and data centres despite the raging war in West Asia, top officials said. Adani Energy Solutions is planning investments of Rs 1.57 lakh crore by FY30, supported by an upcoming bidding pipeline of Rs 1 lakh crore and a large untapped market opportunity. The focus is on building transmission infrastructure capable of supporting rising generation capacity across regions. Adani Ports & SEZ plans to double its port capacity from 600 million tonne (MMT) to 1,200 MMT by 2030. Its network of ports, logistics parks and rail connectivity currently handles about a quarter of India’s cargo, positioning it as a central player in the country’s trade flows. The group’s cement business plans to increase capacity from 115 million tonne per annum (MTPA) to 155 MTPA by March 2028, supporting infrastructure and real estate demand of the group companies and Indian industries. Through AdaniConex, a subsidiary of Group flagship, Adani Enterprises, the group plans to build 1 GW of data centre capacity by 2030, aligned with the needs of India’s growing digital economy.

Across sectors, the expansion reflects a coordinated effort to build scale in domestic, revenues generating infrastructure. From energy and transmission to logistics, mobility and data, the investments are aimed at strengthening India’s resilience

in an increasingly uncertain global environment, the officials added. Adani Airport Holdings plans to increase passenger handling capacity from 100 million to 200 million by 2030, reflecting rising demand for both passenger and cargo movement. In the roads vertical, Adani Road Transport has completed the Ganga Expressway, described as India’s longest high-speed greenfield corridor, with inauguration expected by this month end. The group plans to expand its operational road assets from nine to 17. Karan Adani, managing director of Adani Ports & SEZ, said India needs a highly diversified mix: solar, wind, advanced battery storage, green hydrogen and cleaner coal, and hence, to supply steady, round-the-clock electricity, the group is investing another Rs 2 lakh crore to build 42 GW of reliable baseload power by 2030. Revised strategy The revised strategy to be rolled out from the new financial year is in response to a volatile global environment where supply chain disruptions and energy price spikes are exposing structural vulnerabilities due to ongoing Iran war, officials said. India is targeting 500 gigawatt (GW) of renewable energy capacity. Of this, Adani Green Energy plans to build 50 GW by 2030, up from 17 GW today, with investments of Rs 1.94 lakh crore by FY30, officials said. In a presentation to investors, the group said it is also developing an integrated green hydrogen value chain, targeting 2.1 million tonne green hydrogen by 2034, along with solar manufacturing capacity of 10 GW and wind turbine capacity of 4 GW by 2027.

EU pushes for a fast restart in negotiations with the UK to prevent the reset deal from collapsing



Europe: The EU hopes to restart discussions on a “reset” of ties with the UK as soon as possible, since negotiations are on the verge of failing before a planned meeting in July. At a public meeting of the EU-UK parliamentary partnership assembly in Brussels, European Commission vice-president and trade commissioner, Maroš Šefčovič, stated that both parties needed to “change gears” to complete the deal. Deadlock over the tuition fees EU citizens would pay under a proposed youth mobility scheme is a major challenge, he said, while the UK’s trade minister, Chris Bryant, said talks on a sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) agreement were difficult due to the amount of legislation required in the British parliament. On Monday, Šefčovič stated that reaching an agreement before the next conference in early July is a “very ambitious” goal. He did say: “We need to change gears and work through complexities.” He repeatedly urged for a tuition fee compromise, marking the first time he has spoken publicly on the subject since a so-called “common understanding” or official framework for a reset between the EU and the UK

was signed off at Lancaster House in May. The prime minister, Keir Starmer, has made striking a new deal with Brussels the centerpiece of his economic and foreign strategy, and he hopes to unveil a number of accords at the summit this summer. While talks on SPS and on emissions trading rules are well advanced, the two sides are deadlocked over whether EU students should be charged the same fees as British ones rather than the higher international ones, which they currently have to pay. “To come to an agreement on the youth experience scheme, we will need a solution of tuition fees,” said Šefčovič. The disagreement threatens to scupper not only the planned summit but also the broader plans to realign with the EU, which the chancellor, Rachel Reeves, will highlight in a speech on Tuesday as central to her growth agenda. Officials have told the Guardian that Nick Thomas-Symonds, the Cabinet Office minister in charge of negotiations with Brussels, is already working on which other parts of the economy would benefit from following EU regulations. Thomas-Symonds has instructed officials to conduct

a “scoping exercise” to find out where companies are already complying with EU rules and so it no longer makes sense to apply separate UK ones. In return the two countries could then remove border checks on those goods. It is understood that the government believes all sectors apart from financial services and some hi-tech industries such as artificial intelligence might benefit from this approach. According to Brussels insiders, the UK is preparing an agenda for the 2026 and 2027 reset, with an agreement on touring artists, mutual recognition of professional degrees, and the abolition of expensive dual regulation of chemicals among its top goals. During the parliamentary assembly, Šefčovič highlighted that the 2020 trade and cooperation agreement, signed by David Frost, failed to include a provision for up to 180-day work permits for those maintaining equipment and machinery in the UK. “Only 49 visas were issued in 2025. “That is a very low number of visas, indicating that the scheme does not work,” he remarked. Attempts for a wider realignment are likely to be put on ice, however, if the two governments

cannot find a way past the student fees issue. Šefčovič said EU student numbers in the UK had collapsed and it was vital in “this very turbulent world” that relations between future generations were fostered through education in each other’s countries. “We should avoid the situation where we would be depriving our young generation from the common knowledge, common history. “I know that it is challenging, it is difficult, but I believe that on both sides of the channel there is a strong wish from elected representatives of the people that we should solve this problem,” he said. EU students before Brexit represented 27% of the student population but the intake for the 2026-2027 academic year is 5%. The “slow” and methodical nature of talks didn’t help, said Bryant. “Our system is very slow and let me put it this way, the European Union isn’t much faster. And when you put the two of us together, I don’t think it drives the pace of change that actually all of our voters and our communities really, really want and actually need economically.” Thomas-Symonds said he took onboard the sense of urgency MEPs and MPs were looking for. “The message I take from this room very much today is about putting our foot on the accelerator,” he said. The Labour MP Stella Creasy said the UK was still “marriage” material and hoped that the competing voices in the party leadership, those insisting on red lines and those wishing to move closer to the EU did not stymie a deal. “It is precisely because we are not yet willing to go bigger that these negotiations are turning out to be so hard.”

Trump says Rubio will announce countries joining Strait of Hormuz coalition amid Iran deal claims

US-Israel-Iran: The political upheaval in the Middle East continues to reshape international relations and the energy market, as the United States pushes for a global initiative to secure the Strait of Hormuz, which is strategically important. US President Donald Trump hinted that a number of nations will soon join a marine alliance to restore the crucial oil transport route following the upheavals caused by the present conflict with Iran. Trump discloses that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio would name the nations who will participate in the planned alliance. The increase comes as the confrontation between Washington and Tehran enters its third week, raising concerns about a broader escalation of the fight in the area. The Strait of Hormuz is a length between Iran and Oman that processes over 20% of all worldwide oil supplies and is one of the most critical maritime choke points in global energy trade. Trump stated that he was discussing with European leaders about taking part in the security operation. He also revealed that he spoke with Emmanuel Macron and informed him that the French president seems willing to contribute to the security of Gulf maritime lines. The US would have liked to have the involvement of allies in that it would enhance the credibility of the mission as well as diversify the operational roles of various countries. Analysts believe that such a coalition might be similar to past multi national naval projects aimed at protecting the international commercial routes. Washington seems to be keen on expanding the coalition as Britain has been cautious where the UK Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, noted that London would focus on defensive operations and not taking an active part in a broad war with Iran. Starmer pointed out that the UK would do whatever it could to safeguard its national interests and its allies but take no action likely to plunge the situation into a bigger war. Geopolitical tension has already had an impact on energy markets. Oil prices have been volatile as a result of interruptions caused by Iran’s activity around the Strait of Hormuz. According to energy industry



estimates, the canal transports 21 million barrels of crude oil each day. Even minor delays can cause prices to rise and spread across global financial markets, placing pressure on governments and companies that rely on a stable flow of energy. Although there are military tensions, Trump indicated that Iran can be willing to negotiate so as to conclude the confrontation. But he further confessed that it is still unknown who is presently leading the Iranian leadership in potentially negotiable discussions. “We don’t know their leaders,” he said, noting uncertainty around decision-making authority in Tehran. The conflict escalated after the US and Israel jointly attacked Iran on the 28th of February and hit major Iranian installations. The military campaign has greatly diminished the ability of Iran to launch drone and missile attacks according to the white house. According to Trump, the coalition troops have already hit more than 7,000 targets in Iran, resulting in a 90% decrease in the number of missile attacks and a 95% decrease in the number of drone strikes. United Kingdom: The UK is a strong friend of the United States, with large naval deployments in the region and a clear interest in guaranteeing the security of global oil transit routes. France has been in talks with the United States and might help regional maritime security measures. Japan: As one of the world’s top oil importers, Japan is sig-

nificantly reliant on oil traveling through the Strait of Hormuz. South Korea: With majority of its oil import requirements satisfied by supplies flowing through the Middle East area, this route is critical to South Korea. China is the world’s greatest oil consumer, and much of its oil supply passes via the Gulf area. With shipping security under threat, the energy price and stability in the region all being compromised, the move that will be taken next in diplomacy will be a point of observation with the backing of the Hormuz coalition by the key allies, the main trade routes might be reopened and the oil flows put back to normal. However, the situation is still not stable as a political solution between Washington and Tehran is lacking and the whole global markets and governments are shuddering considering more uncertainties. The Hormuz Strait is one of the world’s principal oil shipping routes, connecting the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. This short canal transports almost 20% of global oil output, or 21 million barrels per day, making it important to global energy markets. The United States is attempting to form a global naval alliance that will aid in the protection of commercial ships and the opening of the Strait of Hormuz. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is expected to announce which nations can participate in the initiative.

Drone attacks on Fujairah might disrupt global oil supply and cause fuel price spikes worldwide



Israel : As tensions build in West Asia, attention has shifted to Fujairah, a coastal emirate in the United Arab Emirates that plays an important role in the global oil supply. What was originally largely recognized as a refueling and storage facility has evolved into one of the world’s most strategically vital energy centers. Recent drone strikes on petroleum installations in Fujairah have raised worries about the stability of global oil markets. Although officials verified that the damage was minor and no injuries were recorded, the strikes emphasized the port’s significance and vulnerability during the continuing regional violence. According to energy specialists, any disruption in Fujairah’s operations might have far-reaching effects for international oil pricing and supply lines. In recent days, Fujairah has faced multiple security threats, including drone attacks that triggered fires at energy facilities near the port. Officials confirmed that emergency teams responded quickly and managed to control the situation. The Fujairah Government Media Office stated that the fire was contained and did not cause casualties. However, the incident forced a temporary halt in some oil-loading operations at the port. According to foreign media sources, operations resumed immediately after, but the strikes served as a stark reminder of the region’s mount-

ing energy infrastructure vulnerabilities. The raids happened immediately after rumors of US military action against Iranian installations on Kharg Island, one of Iran’s most important oil export terminals. In reaction, Iran has warned that energy infrastructure across the region might be targeted, sparking a cycle of retribution known as a “tit-for-tat” warfare. One of Fujairah’s most significant assets is its unique geographical location. Unlike other major ports in the UAE, Fujairah is located on the Gulf of Oman, which links directly to the Indian Ocean. Most of the UAE’s oil exports pass via the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow and strategically important waterway between Iran and Oman. During times of conflict, this route is particularly prone to interruption. Fujairah provides an alternate approach. Because it is located outside the Strait of Hormuz, ships may fill oil there and sail directly to international markets without going through contentious seas. This makes the port especially useful during geopolitical crises that jeopardize established trade routes. Fujairah plays a major role in the global energy supply chain thanks to its connection to the Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline, also known as the Habshan-Fujairah Pipeline. The pipeline stretches roughly 400 kilometres across the UAE and transports crude oil from inland oil fields

in Abu Dhabi directly to the Fujairah coast. This infrastructure allows the UAE to export large volumes of oil without relying entirely on the Strait of Hormuz. Energy data providers estimate that the port handles exports of more than 1.7 million barrels of crude and refined fuels every day, representing a significant share of global oil trade. In addition to crude exports, Fujairah is also a major centre for marine fuel supply and blending, a process used to create different types of petroleum fuels required by shipping vessels. By 2025, the port ranked as the fourth-largest marine fuel hub in the world, behind only Singapore, Rotterdam and Zhoushan. Fujairah’s importance has grown considerably in recent years, as the UAE has improved its oil production capability. Prior to the recent regional conflicts, the nation produced more than 3.4 million barrels of oil per day. The Habshan-Fujairah pipeline alone can deliver about 1.5 million barrels per day to the port. This pipeline system allows the UAE to continue exporting crude oil even if the Strait of Hormuz becomes unstable. Analysts argue that without Fujairah, the UAE may struggle to continue its oil exports, notably its Murban crude, which is largely marketed in Asian markets. Events in Fujairah may appear distant to people all across the world, yet they have a direct influence on their daily lives. The port has massive oil storage facilities with a capacity of around 18 million cubic metres, which are operated by major energy firms such as VTTI, Vitol, and ADNOC. These reserves operate as a buffer, helping to stabilize markets during supply problems. However, when the storage center itself becomes a target of assault, markets respond swiftly. Investors are concerned about supply shortfalls, which frequently drive up oil prices. If operations at Fujairah are severely affected, economists predict that global petroleum prices would skyrocket. This would have a global impact on transportation costs, power rates, and industrial expenses. In simple terms, Fujairah currently plays a key role in keeping global oil flowing despite the instability in West Asia.

More than 200 killed in a strike on an Afghanistan hospital treating drug users

Pakistan: Afghanistan accused Pakistan’s military of airstriking a Kabul hospital that treats drug addicts on Monday, with Health Ministry spokesperson Sharafat Zaman claiming that more than 200 people were killed and that the institution was completely damaged. Pakistan denied the charge, claiming that the attacks were specifically directed at extremist installations and did not harm civilians. The purported strike occurred hours after Afghan officials reported the two forces traded fire along their shared border, killing four people in Afghanistan as the bloodiest fighting between the neighbors in years entered its third week. Health Ministry spokesman Sharafat Zaman gave the death toll during a television interview posted on X, saying all parts of the drug treatment hospital had been destroyed. Afghanistan’s government spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, also posted the video. Local television stations showed footage of firefighters struggling to extinguish flames among the ruins of a building. Mosharraf Zaidi, spokesperson for Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, denied the charges as unfounded, claiming that no hospital in Kabul was targeted. In a post on X, Pakistan’s Ministry of Information stated that the attacks “precisely targeted military installations and terrorist support infrastructure, including technical equipment storage and ammunition storage of Afghan Taliban” as well as Afghanistan-based Pakistani terrorists in Kabul and Nangarhar. It stated that the facilities were being utilized



against innocent Pakistani citizens. The ministry stated that Pakistan’s targeting was “precise and carefully undertaken to ensure no collateral damage is inflicted.” It labeled Mujahid’s assertion “false and misleading” and claimed it was intended to incite feeling and cover up “illegitimate support for cross-border terrorism”. The fighting began in late February after Afghanistan launched cross-border attacks in response to Pakistani airstrikes inside Afghanistan that Kabul said killed civilians. The clashes disrupted a ceasefire brokered by Qatar in October after earlier fighting killed dozens. Pakistan accuses Kabul of harboring militant groups, particularly the Pakistani Taliban, which it says carry out attacks inside Pakistan. Kabul denies the charge. Earlier Monday, Afghan officials said four people, including two children, were killed and 10 wounded in southeastern Afghanistan

in an exchange of fire. Mortar shells fired from Pakistan overnight struck villages in Khost Province and destroyed several homes. On Sunday, Pakistan said a mortar fired from Afghanistan hit a house in northwestern Bajaur district, killing four members of a family and wounding two others, including a 5-year-old. Hours before Monday’s assault, the UN Security Council overwhelmingly passed a resolution urging Afghanistan’s Taliban leadership to urgently increase efforts to combat terrorism. The resolution did not mention Pakistan, but it denounced “in the strongest terms all terrorist activity, including terrorist attacks.” It also prolonged the UN political mission in Afghanistan, UNAMA, by three months. Pakistani Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said Sunday that the military has killed 684 Afghan Taliban soldiers, a claim denied by Afghanistan’s Taliban-led government, which

claims deaths are far fewer. Afghanistan’s Defense Ministry and other officials have confirmed that more than 100 Pakistani soldiers have been killed. A: Afghanistan says Pakistan’s military struck a Kabul hospital treating drug users, killing more than 200 people and destroying the facility. A: Pakistan denies targeting any hospital, saying its strikes precisely hit militant installations and terrorist support infrastructure. A: Afghanistan’s Health Ministry spokesman says more than 200 were killed. Pakistan disputes this, saying no civilians were hit. A: Pakistan accuses Afghanistan of harboring Pakistani Taliban militants who attack inside Pakistan. Afghanistan denies this and says Pakistan targets its territory. A: The UNSC unanimously adopted a resolution calling on Afghanistan to combat terrorism and extended the UN political mission.

In a time when travellers are increasingly seeking out off-the-beaten-path destinations and more meaningful experiences, hiking’s popularity is on the rise. Hundreds of millions of trekkers took to trails in 2025, and, according to the Adventure Travel Trade Association, hiking is now one of the most popular adventure travel activities across the globe. “Hiking’s attraction is no secret,” says Uta Ibrahim, a Kosovar mountaineer who recently became the first person from the Balkans to summit all 14 of the planet’s 8,000m peaks. Last year, she also helped launch an overhauled version of Kosovo’s stretch of the Via Dinarica hiking trail that connects the countries of the Western Balkans. “An unplugged walk into nature brings physical, mental and emotional wellness – and you don’t need much more than a pair of boots, an idea of where to go and desire. Hikers are naked to the elements, but they are also exposed to living culture in real time.” Hiking’s popularity has been bolstered by a wave of adventure navigation apps providing hikers with a continuous supply of self-guided itineraries. AllTrails, for instance, has around 500,000 routes digitally mapped. Trailforks, a crowd-sourced database, shares nearly 1.5 million kilometres of trails. And Komoot boasts more than 45 million users. From South Korea’s first cross-country trail to the longest managed coastal path in the world in the UK, the trails on this diverse list promote a respect for nature and help adventure-seekers experience those most elusive of states: calm and wonder.

1. Pohorje-Kozjak Trail, Slovenia

While many hikers in Slovenia beeline to the Julian Alps in the country’s north-west, the Pohorje-Kozjak Trail, scheduled to open in June, encourages adventurers to discover the country’s less-crowded eastern corner. What’s more, it’s easily accessible: it’s a circular route with the city of Maribor acting as its main access point. Hikers are rewarded with two mountain ranges, the Pohorje and the Kozjak, which form a natural amphitheatre around the Drava River, one of the region’s most important waterways. From Maribor, the 20-stage trail heads south and west across the Pohorje Mountains. Near the range’s western edge, the route crosses the Drava, climbing north and east into the Kozjak Mountains, along the Austrian border, then back towards Maribor. The moderate-difficulty route passes through a primeval forest, crosses ski slopes, skirts waterfalls and summits the path’s highest peak, the 1,543m-tall Črni vrh (Black Peak). Mountain huts welcome trekkers along the way. “There’s so much of Slovenia to discover beyond the normal tourism circuit,” says Jan Klavora of Good Trail, a route development company that worked with local communities to create the trail. “This hike makes that easier and reminds us about the beautiful surprises around every corner in this country.”

2. Rocky to Nordegg Rail Trail, Canada

Just east of Banff and Jasper national parks in the foothills of the Canadian Rockies, the new Rocky to Nordegg Rail Trail takes hikers past lakes, through dense forests and across the historic, restored Taunton Trestle



The world’s five most anticipated hiking trails of 2026

bridge in the province of Alberta. The route utilises a repurposed section of the Canadian Northern Western Railway, allowing adventurers to explore a formerly inaccessible swath of wilderness. As of autumn 2025, roughly half

The King Charles III England Coast Path is staring down history. Established in 2023 for the coronation of King Charles III, the trail circumnavigates the entire English shore. When it’s finally completed this summer, it will become the



ern lobe, snaking its way site. The trek ends with a



of the new trail – around 50km, from Nordegg at the trail’s western end to the Jackfish Creek – is now open to hikers, cyclists and horseback riders. The moderate-to-challenging route is also being built with year-round recreation in mind, namely winter activities such as cross-country skiing, dog-sledding and snowshoeing. New sections will open as development continues in 2026.

3. King Charles III England Coast Path, England

longest managed coastal path in the world. The route has been slowly creating and adding sections since its original incarnation as the England Coast Path in 2009. Today, more than 2,000 miles of the path’s eight sections, managed by Natural England, already welcome hikers. The result is one of the most varied and diverse itineraries anywhere. The trail rolls across beaches and passes farms, estuaries and fishing villages. It takes hikers to bays, castles and cliffs in the north-east. Hikers

walk through cities like Brighton, Portsmouth and Southampton in the south. In the north-west, there are Roman ruins and it’s possible to link up with Hadrian’s Wall Path.

4. East Mallorca GR-226, Mallorca

Completed in January 2026, the East Mallorca GR-226 is perfect for those who want to divide their time between hiking, recovering on beaches, absorbing panoramic sea views and exploring historic towns rich with culture. The route traverses the island’s north-east

between the Iberian Sea and inland villages in four rolling stages; each about 25km of easy trekking. The largest elevation gain on any day is 248m. Starting in the seaside town of Cales de Mallorca, the GR-226 heads to the island’s interior along farms and vineyards to the town of Manacor. The trail swings back to the shore before again taking hikers inland, past the 13th-Century Bellpuig Monastery and Ses Païsses, a 3,000-year-old, Bronze Age archaeological

tough decision: lounge on the white sandy beaches of Cala Agulla on the outskirts of the fishing village Cala Rajada, or relax at Cala Mesquida on Mallorca’s north-eastern tip?

5. Dongseo Trail, South Korea

Stretching 849km and inspired by Spain’s famous Camino de Santiago, the Dongseo Trail will be South Korea’s first coast-to-coast, cross-country trail when it fully opens in 2027. But six sections of the 55-stage route are already open to the public and more than 70% of the trail – roughly 600km – is complete, with completion of the remaining portions expected by year’s end. The ambitious trail was designed and managed by the Korea Forest Service

and will take hikers across South Korea from the East Sea in the east (“dong” in Korean) to the Yellow Sea in the west (“seo”) – hence, its name. Travellers itching to set off now can tackle the Dongseo Trail’s western portions, starting from Anmyeondo Island, where they can expect treks of about 15km per day. Along the way, the route follows the rugged and majestic Baekdu-Daegan Mountain Range, known as the backbone of the Korean Peninsula. The new path will take travellers to sandy beaches, dense forests, Unesco World Heritage sites, rice fields, farms, 225 villages, thousand-year-old Buddhist temples and accommodations in mountain communities.



Karan Johar writes a heartfelt tribute for his mother Hiroo Johar’s 83rd birthday



Mumbai:Today, March 18, is Hiroo Johar’s 83rd birthday. The filmmaker wrote a lengthy message on his Instagram account on the momentous day, saying that he and his children feel fortunate to have her with them every morning. Karan added that because she has experienced so many health problems in recent years, he is always concerned about her health as a son. Karan posted a cute old photo from his childhood. His mother was observed holding him on her lap while he had his finger in his mouth. “It’s difficult to describe the most important relationship of your life... words don’t have the power to describe a mother’s place in a child’s life... unconditional is also a tiny word for a

force as large as a mother,” he wrote in the caption. ”My mom turns 83 today, and the only reason I share this feeling is because I know it will deeply resonate with many others out there. I wake up anxious or am constantly worried about her health and can’t imagine a life without her,” he went on. Despite battling a number of health problems, she insists on blow drying her hair every day, wearing lipstick every day, and being wheeled out in her flowing kaftan to enjoy the sun and doom scroll (Gen Z, you got nothing on my mom). Concluding the note, Karan wrote, “Her spirit is my strength...even when her memory or her thoughts fails her ... she remembers one very strong aspect always Love! My

twins and I are really fortunate. Every day that we get to give her a kiss and say, “I love you, mama,” we count our blessings. Mom, happy birthday. Karan talked about having a “modern family” in which he and his mother care for the children he got through surrogacy during his participation on the Netflix series Fabulous Lives vs. Bollywood Wives. Addressing Neelam Kothari having tough conversations with her daughter, he said, “You spoke about your daughter and that’s also something that struck a chord with me. I’m always afraid that my own kids will ask me about my predicament and that I have a contemporary family. On the professional front, moviegoers were not impressed by Karan’s most recent production, Tu Meri Main Tera Main Tera Tu Meri, which starred Ananya Panday and Kartik Aaryan.The director is now working on Nagzilla, which stars Kartik, and Chand Mera Dil, which stars Lakshya and Ananya Panday. Mrighdeep Singh Lamba is the director of Nagzilla, a supernatural high-fantasy comedy-drama supported by Dharma Productions. August of this year is when the movie is supposed to be released. Conversely, the love drama Chand Mera Dil is scheduled for release on May 8, 2026.

Celina Jaitley declares that she will support her brother even if he doesn’t get in touch with her



Mumbai: Celina Jaitley’s appeal to visit her brother, Vikrant Jaitley, who is presently detained in the United Arab Emirates, was denied by the Delhi High Court on March 16 after he declined to get in touch with her. Celina addressed her brother’s choice on Instagram on Wednesday, speculating that he might be attempting to “shield” her from more stress. In order to resolve the matter, Celina sent her brother a photo along with a lengthy statement in the description. “The last time

I spoke to my brother was on August 23, 2024, a few days before he was taken (6 September 2024), where he was held in secret detention until the end of May 2025,” she started. After that, he was sent to a detention facility in the Middle East, where he has been detained for nearly 18 months without legal processes and with restricted access. She continued, “I cannot speculate on what my brother may have been advised or told in detention,” in reference to her brother’s choice. He

has no idea what is going on in the outer world and is very protective of me. Given my current situation, it’s plausible that he was given incomplete information and is attempting to protect me from additional financial and psychological hardship. Any decision a detainee makes in these situations needs to be considered in its context. ”I think he has, on occasion, also refused to speak to other kin and has stated that he does not wish to speak to her or anyone else,” she went on. Throughout it all, his physical and mental health has been the one thing that has really worried me. I was never the subject of this writing. It was always about making sure I could meet and talk to my brother and, most importantly, that he had the right attorney. Celina Jaitley expressed gratitude to the Government of India for nine consular accesses to

her detained brother, Major (Retd.) Vikrant Jaitley, who has been held in the UAE since September 6, 2024. She emphasized her hope that he would accept legal assistance when ready and appreciated ongoing efforts regarding his well-being. Celina affirmed her steadfast support for Vikrant, prioritizing his safety and legal protection, while acknowledging his attempts to protect her. With repeated concerns over the lack of clear legal representation and updates on his case, she reiterated her commitment to him. Vikrant, previously employed at MATITI Group in the UAE since 2016, is held under undisclosed charges related to national security. His wife, Charul, also requested privacy regarding the details of the case, while the court confirmed ongoing consultations with Vikrant by state authorities.

Sara Tendulkar posts images from the wedding of her brother

Mumbai: The lavish wedding of Arjun Tendulkar, the son of Sachin Tendulkar, was a star-studded event with multiple high-profile ceremonies and numerous notable fashion moments. The Tendulkar family also provided a number of striking appearances. On March 17, Sara Tendulkar shared some of the “miscellaneous” looks from the wedding celebrations on Instagram, captioning them “miscellaneous masti.” She was dressed traditionally this time. Let’s take a brief look at her outfit and style. In the carousel of pictures, the first featured a colourful ethnic look, multicoloured, as she posed for the

mehndi. Saaniya Chandhok, who married Arjun, was also spotted having fun while wearing a pink suit with golden accents. Sara wore a blue saree and the traditional Maharashtrian ornament, the nath, in the most recent photos. The saree’s golden floral appliqué work complemented her gold necklace, and she parted her hair in the center into a tidy bun.

In contrast to her navy blue, Anjali Tendulkar twinned with her in a contrasting shade of blue, more turquoise. For someone who is eager to wear a saree with a nath, this styling is great. Among the lessons to be learned from Sara’s ensemble is how to achieve

a simple, classic style by combining traditional jewelry with a middle-parted bun. In contrast to the conventional jewelry, the hair-cut appears delicate and sophisticated, making it ideal for a timeless look. In this manner, the gold necklace and nath are more noticeable.

On March 5, 2026, Arjun Tendulkar wed businesswoman Saaniya Chandhok, his lifelong girlfriend, in Mumbai.

Top cricket players, administrators, politicians, businesspeople, and well-known Bollywood figures were among the many celebrities there. Saaniya chose a traditional red saree over a lehenga.

Deepika Padukone liked the article that supports her desire for an 8-hour work shift



Mumbai: In 2025, actor Deepika Padukone reportedly left Sandeep Reddy Vanga’s Spirit and the Kalki 2898 AD sequel, sparking a discussion regarding actors’ eight-hour work shifts. Several prominent figures in the industry, including Rana Daggubati and Kareena Kapoor, responded in a variety of ways. After a digital

media portal published an opinion piece about the actor’s requests, the conversation reappeared on social media. On Instagram, the actor “liked” the article. Debiparna Chakraborty’s piece on The Quint, which highlighted the actor’s decision to withdraw from two high-profile movies and sparked a discussion about her professionalism, was liked by Deepika. According to the story, Deepika herself criticized the hypocrisy of the industry, pointing out that while male actors have been working set hours for years, it turns into a “tantrum” when a female performer asks the same. The identical post was shared on Reddit by a social media user, and many people there supported Deepika. “The sexism definitely exists,” someone wrote. if actresses like Salman or SRK arrived late to the set. They would be called derogatory names and thrown away. “I support Deepika here,” another person remarked. Even in the 1980s and 1990s, movies were filmed in eight-hour shifts every day, but now they are focusing on Deepika despite the fact that she recently gave child! The film

industry has a very high level of misogyny. The first eight-hour shift cannot be classified as a demand, according to a statement. An actor is working eight hours to complete the task. The same is true for male actors; some of them arrive late and lack decency. Why should women do nothing but watch this? A portion of the industry was calling her outright unprofessional. When Deepika Padukone left the pan-Indian picture Spirit, which starred Prabhas, allegedly over conflicts about creative terms and a request for an eight-hour workday, the controversy around her and director Sandeep Reddy Vanga began. Triptii Dimri replaced her after she left. In a post on X, the producers of Kalki 2898 AD also revealed her departure from the follow-up, igniting an online discussion regarding professionalism, work-hour restrictions, and compensation in high-budget projects.

The next film starring Deepika and Shah Rukh Khan is called King. Additionally, Deepika will co-star with Allu Arjun in an upcoming Atlee-directed movie.

A card from daughter Raha and an adorable kiss from Ranbir Kapoor marked Alia Bhatt’s 33rd birthday

Mumbai: Alia Bhatt celebrated her 33rd birthday in Hong Kong with her daughter Raha and Ranbir Kapoor. Yesterday, the actress posted a carousel of photos from her family’s emotional festivities on Instagram.Ranbir Kapoor kisses Alia on the cheek to start the carousel. The other photos show her visiting Disneyland in Hong Kong, standing with her sister Shaheen Bhatt, and receiving a birthday card from her daughter Raha. When Ranbir Kapoor recently arrived in the city with wife Alia Bhatt after celebrating her birthday in Hong Kong this year, he made a light-hearted comment that left paparazzi in stitches.



tured on camera leaving the airport as photographers gathered to take pictures of them.Ranbir jokingly asked the photographers whether they had brought

a birthday cake for Alia as they met her and wished her a happy birthday.The actor mockingly expressed regret by shaking his head in response to the paparaz-

zi’s comment that they had failed to bring one.The photographers laughed at his playful response, creating a fun moment outside the airport. Ranbir wore a

navy blue T-shirt, a dark jacket, and blue trousers to maintain a laid-back and travel-ready appearance as the couple headed back to the nation.Conversely, Alia chose a cozy airport style. She had on loose-fitting pants and an oversized white hoodie.The video showed them leaving the airport without their daughter Raha.

Along with tiny Raha, the couple had taken a special birthday trip to Hong Kong.On March 15, Alia Bhatt celebrated turning 33.

In terms of her career, Alia Bhatt co-stars with Vicky Kaushal and Ranbir Kapoor in Love & War. She also has Alpha with Sharvari from Yash Raj Films.

Sarke Chunar by Nora Fatehi is a “violation of human rights,” according to the Human Rights Commission



Mumbai: The controversy surrounding Sarke Chunar’s song KD: The Devil won’t go away. The Censor Board has received complaints from social media users regarding the song’s “vulgar” lyrics and dancing. The Central Board of Film Certification, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and Google India have all received notices from the National Human Rights Commission regarding the song’s “vulgar, sexually suggestive, and double-meaning lyrics.” The relevant bodies received letters from the NHRC on Tuesday, instructing them to look into the situation and provide an Action Taken Report within two weeks. In accordance with the Protection of Human Rights Act of 1993, the NHRC bench, chaired over by member Priyanka Kanoongo, noted that the accusations appear to be a possible human rights violation. The complainant claimed that a newly published song from the upcoming movie KD: The Devil had offensive, sexually provocative, and double-meaning lyrics that are unsuitable for public consumption, particularly for young audiences. Such content is said to be freely available on television, social media, and public venues, which could have a detrimental effect on children’s moral environment and mental health. The complaint additionally claimed that young audiences are becoming accustomed to inappropriate expressions due to the growing trend of explicit lyrical content in mainstream entertainment. In order to control such content and protect children’s rights, the complaint sought the Commission’s involvement in the situation and asked it to take cognizance, request a report from the relevant certifying body, and issue the required instructions and advises,” the letter states. On the surface, the complaint’s accusations seem to violate the victim’s human rights. The song must be taken down from all platforms, according to National Human Rights Commission member Priyanka Kanoongo, who also asked to know how the CBFC approved it in the first place.”We have sent a notice to the Ministry of IT, the Ministry of Information Broadcasting, and the Censor Board requesting that this be taken down and outlining how the Censor Board may permit its distribution. He continued, “Action should be taken against any guilty Censor Board personnel who are engaged in all of this. In the meantime, the Central Board of Film Certification received a letter from the State Commissions for Women in Karnataka and Haryana expressing worry over the song’s purportedly offensive nature. The manufacturers are the subject of a FIR. In the midst of all of this, KD’s music partner Anand Audio removed the song from social media and YouTube. Raqib Alam, the Hindi writer for the song, has disassociated himself from the controversy, claiming he only translated the lyrics from the original Kannada and even voiced his disapproval of the remarks.Sanjay Dutt and Nora Fatehi perform a dance performance called Sarke Chunar. It appears in the upcoming Kannada film KD: The Devil, which will be released throughout India. The song was just published on Monday, and it immediately gained popularity on social media. The movie will be released the following month.

Sidharth Malhotra states, “I finished reading the script with tears in my eyes”



Mumbai: Today marks the tenth anniversary of Shakun Batra’s 2016 family drama Kapoor & Sons, which starred the late veteran Rishi Kapoor alongside Sidharth Malhotra, Fawad Khan, Alia Bhatt, Ratna Pathak Shah, and Rajat

Kapoor. Sidharth played the role of Arjun, the family’s underdog and younger son.

The character harbored animosity toward his older brother, Rahul (played by Fawad), for being the “golden child,” and was based on Shakun’s relationship with his sister. Sidharth remembers how he joined the team, saying, “I remember finishing the script with tears in my eyes when I first read it.” Every character had a heartbeat, and it seemed incredibly real, like entering a cozy, chaotic Punjabi family. Because Arjun was complex, sensitive, and had a lot inside of him, playing him was unique.According to the 41-year-old, this project has been incredibly fulfilling. “The movie, the situations, and the familial relationships are still discussed ten years later. As if they have personally lived with these folks. I’m thankful we were able to make that story come to life because that type of love is uncommon,” he says. Rahul and Arjun,

two estranged brothers, return to their boyhood home after their grandfather falls very sick in the touching family drama Kapoor & Sons. As long-buried grudges, rivalries, and personal fears arise, what starts off as a straightforward reunion quickly devolves into a difficult and emotional examination of family dynamics. The pandemonium is exacerbated by their parents’ problematic marriage, which is characterized by miscommunication and adultery, and the fact that both brothers are attracted to the same lady.

The illusion of harmony starts to crumble as the grandfather longs to see a picture of the ideal family, exposing profound secrets like Rahul’s secret identity and emotional difficulties. The family is forced to face their shortcomings and suffering as a result of an unexpected catastrophe, which eventually results in acceptance, forgiveness, and a more sincere understanding of one another.

Thirty years after Shane Warne was deemed overrated by Arjuna Ranatunga



New Delhi: Shane Warne and Arjuna Ranatunga had a well-documented rivalry that extended beyond their playing careers. In Warne’s book, “Shane Warne’s Century: My Top 100 Test Cricketers,” he placed Ranatunga at 93rd, signaling their contentious relationship. Ranatunga, a former Sri Lankan World Cup-winning captain, criticized Warne as an “overrated” bowler and stated he was ‘not a role model’ for young cricketers. Four years after Warne’s death, Aravinda de Silva shared a revealing

conversation he had with Warne concerning the psychological impact of Ranatunga’s comments during their encounters, particularly during the 1996 Cricket World Cup.The rivalry began during that World Cup when Ranatunga made disparaging remarks about Warne’s bowling, asserting that he did not understand the admiration for it. This taunt reportedly unsettled Warne and disrupted his bowling rhythm, making it challenging for him to concentrate on the game. De Silva recounted Warne’s admission that Ranatunga’s words affected his performance, noting, “It got under my skin, and I just couldn’t control my bowling.” This psychological battle was evident during the 1996 World Cup final, where Warne’s inability to maintain focus contributed to a lackluster performance against Ranatunga. As Sri Lanka chased a target of 242, Warne’s frustration was palpable, especially after Ranatunga’s pointed critiques. Ultimately, Ranatunga played strategically, achieving an unbeaten 47 runs off 37 balls and leading his team to victory by scoring the World Cup-winning runs. On the broader scale of their statistics, Ranatunga played 83 Tests for Sri Lanka, accumulating 5,105 runs, and distinguished himself further in ODIs with 7,456 runs. Meanwhile, Warne solidified his legacy as arguably the greatest leg-spinner, concluding his cricketing career with 708 wickets in 145 Tests and 293 ODI wickets across 194 matches, culminating in a World Cup victory in 1999.

A guy from Gurugram jumps from the 23rd storey with his daughter, age 2

New Delhi, Mar 18: A 38-year-old man and his two-year-old daughter were reportedly killed by jumping from the 23rd floor of a high-rise residential society in Gurugram.Rahul, the deceased, was originally from Delhi and had been renting a home in a Gurugram society with his family. The “Joy Ville” condominium complex was the scene of the incident on Tuesday morning. A man was reportedly jumping from a multi-story building in Gurugram’s Sector 102, close to the Dwarka Expressway, at approximately eight in the morning, according to police. Rahul and his daughter were discovered dead when police arrived.Together with his spouse, Rahul operated a school for pupils up to Class 5 in the Kirari neighborhood of Delhi. According to officials, he was apparently receiving treatment for severe health problems and mental stress that he had been suffering with for a while.The deceased has long struggled with severe mental and health issues. This seems to be a case of depression at this point, according to Ashok Kumar, a police spokesperson at the Gurugram headquarters. Rahul and his daughter leaped from the 23rd level of Tower 5, despite the fact that Rahul lived in Tower 9 of the complex. No suicide note was found at the location, according to the authorities. After being taken for a post-mortem, both bodies were given to the family.”Rahul’s mental distress appears to have been the reason behind this tragic act,” Ashok Kumar continued. We are still doing a thorough investigation to verify every aspect of the situation.



A Mumbai man is captured on camera pushing his wife in front of a train

New Delhi, Mar 18:A tragic incident occurred at Mulund station in Maharashtra on March 14, when Raju Gupta allegedly pushed his wife, Pushpa, onto the tracks, resulting in her death by an incoming train. The couple had been arguing that day, leading them to the police station for assistance. During a brief moment when Pushpa’s brother, Kamlesh, had left to retrieve a wallet, the fight escalated. After the incident, Raju fled and turned off his phone to evade capture, but was apprehended within 20 hours in Surat through



coordinated efforts involving CCTV analysis and a manhunt. He confessed to the crime, citing ongoing marital tensions. A murder case has been opened under Section 103 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and investigations are continuing to gather the full context of the events leading to the tragedy.

Senegal’s AFCON title was revoked, and Morocco emerged victorious

New Delhi: Senegal plans to appeal after being stripped of the Africa Cup of Nations title following a controversial final against Morocco. The Confederation of African Football (CAF) declared Morocco champions two months after the match, citing Senegal’s players’ walk-off as a refusal to play, which violated AFCON Regulations Articles 82 and 84. These rules stipulate that if a team leaves the pitch without referee approval, they forfeit the match, recorded as a 3-0 loss.

The Royal Moroccan Football Federation stated that their appeal aimed only to enforce competition regulations and not to undermine the sporting performance of participants. Senegal’s football authorities condemned the decision as unjust and pledged to appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.During the final, a late penalty was awarded to Morocco after a VAR review, leading to protests from Senegalese players and supporters. Although Senegal goalkeeper Edouard Mendy saved the penalty attempt, Pape Gueye scored



in extra time, seemingly securing the win for Senegal. Following the ruling, several Senegalese players expressed their outrage on social media.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino criticized the actions of Senegal’s players post-match, calling them unacceptable. CAF had previously imposed fines on both countries for unsportsmanlike conduct, while the appeal trial for 18 Senegalese supporters sentenced for “hooliganism” has been postponed to March 30.

Kumble describes Sanju Samson as “in similar mould to MS Dhoni”

New Delhi: Sanju Samson is prepared to start a new chapter in the Indian Premier League with Chennai Super Kings after contributing significantly to India’s T20 World Cup-winning campaign. Rituraj Gaikwad is expected to captain the Rajasthan Royals, which Samson has captained for the previous few seasons. His precise role is still up for debate, particularly in light of MS Dhoni’s continued presence, which may affect his ability to take wickets. Samson’s career has undergone a major change as a result of the relocation. Opportunity and pressure are equally present while joining one of the most prestigious teams in IPL history. His capacity to adapt will be put to the test in a new setting at Chepauk, but it also provides a larger platform for him to display his skills. He already has a sizable fan base, so a stint at CSK might help him become even more well-known in the upcoming campaign.Anil Kumble discussed the generational change in Indian cricket leadership and connected it to CSK’s choice to sign Samson. He thinks Samson is a useful addition to the CSK lineup because of his recent performance and self-assurance. “In Indian cricket, the baton has been passed down from one generation to the next, starting with Sunil Gavaskar and continuing through Sachin, Virat, and MS Dhoni. Before the transition to MS Dhoni and Virat Kohli, who still possess that aura and continue to produce, you had players like Rahul Dravid and Sourav Ganguly. Sanju’s arrival is therefore a wise decision for CSK. Regarding CSK’s choice to sign Samson, Kumble remarked, “The icing on the cake is his fantastic form leading into the IPL and winning the World Cup for India with three back-to-back knocks.”Samson’s inclusion extends beyond his abilities, Kumble continued, pointing out the cultural fit and local connection. Samson, who was born in Kerala, speaks Tamil, and is a wicketkeeper-batter similar to MS Dhoni, is expected to improve CSK’s performance on the field and among their supporters. That will undoubtedly increase the franchise’s fan base, I’m sure. From Chennai’s point of view, he meets their needs because he was born in Kerala, speaks Tamil, and is a wicketkeeper-batter who is comparable to MS. CSK would benefit from his expertise, he added.CSK has struggled to create a clear leadership structure in recent seasons as MS Dhoni has frequently filled in as captain due to injuries or transitions.Samson is a perfect fit for a vice-captain position at CSK, according to Kumble.He can help the leadership group, fill in for Rituraj when he’s not available, and offer stability thanks to his vast captaincy experience at the Rajasthan Royals. “I believe Sanju would be ideal in that position, managing those duties in a manner akin to that of a vice-captain. He has been Rajasthan’s captain for a long time, therefore he is naturally suited for a leadership role, which is what CSK will be searching for. When Rituraj was hurt last year, MS had to step in, and in the past, when Ravindra Jadeja was captain as well, MS Dhoni took over midway through the season. Rituraj was chosen as MS’s next captain after some difficulties, and it’s fortunate that he stays in that role even when Sanju entered the picture. If MS Dhoni assigns Sanju to keep at some stage throughout the season, I wouldn’t be shocked. He will be a member of the leadership team, and Sanju will likely take over instead of MS if Rituraj is unable to do so for any reason, including injury, according to Kumble.

Amid airspace restrictions, 1,600 Indians return on five Qatar Airways flights

New Delhi, Mar 18: According to the Indian Embassy here, five Qatar Airways aircraft carried almost 1,600 Indian citizens to India on Tuesday, despite the airline’s continued limited operations because of limitations on Qatar’s airspace. ccording to a social media post from the embassy, there were two planes to Delhi and one each to Mumbai, Kochi, and Thiruvananthapuram.Approximately 1600 Indian people took flights on Qatar Airways today, according to the report.

The mission observed that Qatar Airways currently only operates a small num-



ber of unscheduled flights and that Qatar’s airspace is still essentially blocked. Passengers can make reservations via the Qatar Airways website, mobile

application, or authorized travel agencies. The airline has announced that it would begin service to nine Indian locations on Wednesday. or stranded Indian nationals

who want to go to India via Saudi Arabia by crossing the Salwa land border, the embassy stated it still offers temporary Saudi transit visas.In the upcoming week, the mission will be open every day to provide consular services, such as passport issuance, and its control room and help-lines via phone, email, and WhatsApp will be operational around-the-clock. In order to preserve community peace and public safety, it called on the Indian community to abide by the directives given by Qatari authorities and to provide information responsibly.

‘Jag Laadki’ Reaches Adani’s Mundra Port With 80,886 Metric Tonnes Crude Oil

New Delhi, Mar 18: With the smooth arrival of the Indian-flagged crude oil tanker Jag Laadki at Adani Ports Mundra in Gujarat, the country’s energy imports have significantly increased.About 80,886 metric tons (MT) of crude oil were on board when the ship arrived at the port. The cargo was loaded in Fujairah Port after coming from the United Arab Emirates. With a total length of 274.19 meters and a beam of 50.04 meters, the tanker has a gross tonnage of roughly 84,735 tons and a deadweight tonnage of roughly 164,716 tons.The arrival at Mundra highlights how important the Adani Ports facility is for managing large imports of petroleum. Major refineries depend on these cargoes to sustain steady operations and support India’s energy security. In the context of growing regional tensions in West Asia, some maritime developments have taken place.Before arriving



in India on March 16 and 17, the two Indian-flagged LPG carriers, MT Shivalik and MT Nanda Devi, securely traversed the Strait of Hormuz early on Friday, March 13, 2026, carrying about 92,712 metric tons of LPG.India keeps a steady naval presence in these areas under “Operation Sankalp” to protect its commercial interests. The safeguarding of important maritime lanes and the se-

cure berthing of ships like the Jag Laadki continue to be the key goals of this program. According to a statement, the Directorate General of Shipping (DG Shipping) is keeping a careful eye on the situation in collaboration with ship owners, Recruitment and Placement Service License (RPSL) organizations, and Indian diplomatic posts operating in the area.It further stated that the Union Ship-

ping Minister is keeping a close eye on the situation. The government is collaborating closely with ports, shipping companies, and logistics players to minimize any operational disruptions to marine trade in order to guarantee seamless maritime operations. When necessary, ports have been urged to provide relief measures, such as reduced anchorage, berth rental, and storage fees.

Nanda Devi, India’s second LPG tanker, crosses the Strait of Hormuz and arrives at the Kandla port in Gujarat

New Delhi, Mar 18: Amidst rising shortages of the cooking fuel that 333 million Indian families depend on, a second ship carrying liquified petroleum gas from the Persian Gulf safely crossed the problematic Strait of Hormuz and arrived on India’s west coast early on Tuesday.Around two in the morning, the state-owned medium-range carrier MT Nanda Devi sailed into an offshore mooring point carrying 46,500 tonnes of LPG. Its crew was given refreshments and health checks right away. The package was prepared for further transit very immediately. There is enough cargo to fill 3.3 million 14.2 kg LPG cylinders. Although it has instructed domestic refiners to produce more LPG in the wake of the West Asian crisis, India imports 60–65% of its LPG needs. The petroleum ministry reported on Tuesday that domestic output had grown

by 38%. On Monday, there were over 7 million reservations every day. In order to save turnaround time by moving cargo immediately to another ship, it was decided to keep the vessel offshore near Vadinar rather than berthing it at Kandla port, its flagged destination, according to Deendayal port chairman Sushil Kumar Singh. According to Singh, “ship-to-ship transfer is a routine practice and helps save time.”A shipping directorate officer stated separately that the cargo was loaded onto the MT BW BIRCH, which sailed to Chennai instead of using ground transportation.

The Indian Oil Corp. chartered the MT Nanda Devi, one of two LPG tankers owned by the Shipping Corporation of India that Iran allowed to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway for international trade that passes through

more than three-fourths of LPG imports and roughly half of India’s crude. On March 1, it loaded LPG from Ras Laffan in Qatar, a sizable facility that Iran had attacked. The two tankers transported 92714 tons of gas supply in total. After extensive diplomatic efforts by the government to ensure a safe passage for the tankers, the first ship, the India-flagged Shivalik, cleared the dangerous strait and arrived at the Mundra port on the west coast on Monday. After being given permission to pass through the narrow channel, where Iran has put an embargo on maritime trade, both tankers used their transponders to indicate that they were owned by the Indian government, according to the second official, sparking a worldwide oil crisis. “I am grateful to the shipping ministry and our administration. Sanjay Prashar, chief officer of MT Nanda Devi, added,

“I also thank the Indian navy for facilitating this voyage.” According to the seafarer, the Iranian navy assisted the ship in navigating the Strait of Hormuz.India receives the majority of its gas and crude from Gulf countries, making it one of the economies most susceptible to the West Asia problem.

The government has prioritized gas distribution for home customers in order to protect households, which has resulted in an LPG scarcity that has affected restaurants and industrial consumers. After speaking with the crew of Shivalik and Nanda Devi, shipping minister Sarbananda Sonowal stated, “Major ports are prioritizing berthing for LPG vessels to ensure timely discharge of cargo and continuity in energy supply.” According to a statement, the minister said, “Your efforts ensured the safe passage of critical LPG cargo.”

The Center informs the Bombay High Court that the gas situation is unfit for judicial discussion

New Delhi, Mar 18: On Tuesday, the Bombay High Court’s Nagpur bench dismissed a suo motu suit pertaining to the continued shortage of cooking gas after the Union government argued that the problem is being actively monitored and addressed at several levels.Speaking on behalf of the Center, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta emphasized that it might not be suitable to discuss such issues during

court proceedings and informed the court that the situation is still dynamic due to global developments. He reassured the bench that all essential corrective actions are being taken by the government to prevent domestic supply from being negatively impacted by global disruptions. ”The Indian government is keeping an eye on the issue and taking all necessary corrective action to prevent such global

problems from having an impact on our nation. In such cases, the situation is always changing, and the Indian government would ultimately have to act both locally and globally for the benefit of its people. It might not be beneficial to address or debate these problems in court proceedings due to the nature of the subject matter, he stated. Mehta further stated that the relevant authorities are strictly handling any

local irregularities, such as distributor infractions or neglect of duty, and that action is being taken when necessary.Justices Anil S. Kilor and Raj D. Wakode made up the bench that heard the case, which was started suo motu in response to media reports emphasizing LPG cylinder shortages. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, the Food and Supplies Department of the Maharashtra government, the Nagpur

district collector, and public sector oil corporations such as Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum, and Hindustan Petroleum had already received notices. The court noted, after considering the Center’s comments and affidavit, that the Union and state governments should handle the matter in the greater public interest because it concerns issues that go beyond specific jurisdictions. As it dismissed the

plea, the bench said, “Nothing survives.”In the midst of the ongoing energy crisis associated with the Iranian conflict, six LPG distributors filed a related petition, which the court dismissed in order to increase the supply of home cylinders.The administration is taking all necessary measures to protect the public interest and guarantee the availability of vital resources, the court said in its judgment.

The King Returns to Protect the Crown: Virat Kohli Touches Down for IPL 2026

Bengaluru: Virat Kohli is back in Bengaluru. And this time, he arrives as something Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) fans have never seen before. A champion defending his crown. Kohli was instrumental in Royal Challengers Bengaluru's title-winning campaign last season. He amassed 657 runs at a blistering strike rate of 144.71 and an average of 54.75, with eight half-centuries to his name. The batting icon will be eager to pick up where he left off as RCB look to become the first side in recent memory to successfully defend the IPL title. The Bengaluru-based franchise ended an 18-year wait to claim its first-ever IPL title last season. Rajat Patidar emerged as an unlikely hero, Leading



Them to the promised land. The task now is to do it all over again. Last season was the latest chapter in a Re-

Markable purple patch for Kohli. He had already won his first T20 World Cup title in 2024 before retiring from

Both T20 internationals and Test cricket. The IPL is now one of the last stages where fans can regularly watch him

in action. Every appearance counts. Every season matters more than the last. At 37, Kohli shows no signs of slowing down. His numbers last season were not just good for his age. They were good by any measure. He remains one of the most complete batters in the format, capable of anchoring an innings or shifting gears at will. For a side looking to defend a title, having Kohli at the top of the order is as reassuring as it gets. The hunger, too, appears undimmed. Kohli has spoken openly about what this franchise means to him. RCB is not just a team he plays for. It is personal. And what a stage it promises to be. On March 28, RCB will feature in the season-opener against Sun-Risers Hyderabad at the Sun-Risers Hyderabad Stadium.

Axar Patel Given Warning By Pujara Before The IPL 2026

New Delhi: Cheteshwar Pujara has warned Delhi Capitals captain Axar Patel not to be extra casual when it comes to leading the franchise during the IPL 2026 season. Axar has known to be one of the coolest customers on the field, never letting pressure or the occasion leave him in a vulnerable spot. During the IPL 2025 season, Delhi made a sensational start to the campaign under the all-rounder, winning four out of four matches.

However, things fell apart after that and DC failed to make it to the playoffs, ending up with 15 points, with seven wins and a no-contest to their name. Speaking to Star Sports, Pujara praised Axar's personality but told him that he should be careful



not to let the momentum slip and let things go away from his side. "Axar Patel is quite calm, he does not take too much pressure. His personality is really good, especially for the IPL where there is a lot of pressure. He backs his players, but he should be careful of not being over-relaxed. He should not be extra casual, and let momentum slip and go away from you. DC had momentum last

year, but they let go of that. He has to be careful of that this season," said Pujara. Axar didn't have the best of times with the ball during the IPL 2025 campaign, as he got just five wickets from 12 matches with an average of 57.60 and an economy rate of 8.47. Despite this, Mohammed Kaif is confident that the DC captain can make a comeback with the ball this season.

PV Sindhu Tells Gurugram Students That Success Is Not Immediate Now



Gurugram: Two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu spoke on how "success is not immediate" and how hard work is key in all walks of life, be it in sports or as a student. In a candid and deeply engaging fireside conversation at DPS International on Tuesday, Gurugram, Sindhu and education leader Devyani Jaipuria came together to speak with students about resilience, discipline and the realities behind success. But beyond the applause and admiration, the conversation revealed something more powerful

-- what it truly takes to keep going when things do not work out. Reflecting on her journey, Sindhu shared that success is not defined by a single moment, but by the ability to keep returning after setbacks.

"I have lost more matches than I've won at times," she said as quoted by a press release. "But there is always a next time. You have to keep trying every single time and believe that you can do it," she added. Recounting her journey through repeated near-misses before winning gold at the World

Championships, she added, "There were moments when I thought maybe it is not meant for me. But I kept going, and that belief made all the difference." Her message to students was simple but powerful -- success is not immediate, and it is never easy. "Hard work is the key, whether it is in studies or in sport. Nobody is born with a golden spoon," she said.

For Devyani, the conversation was not just about inspiration, but about reimagining how schools prepare students for life. "Sport teaches some of the most valuable lessons about perseverance, discipline and the courage to pursue ambitious goals," she said. Building on this belief, Jaipuria emphasised that sports cannot remain an afterthought in education. "We cannot continue to treat sport as something secondary. It is one of the most powerful classrooms for life skills," she said. The conversation also brought focus to the importance of support systems in shaping success.

Sadio Mane Slams Stripping Senegal Of AFCON Title Saying It Is Killing The Passion Of Millions

New Delhi: Sadio Mane has slammed the decision made to strip Senegal of the African Cup Of Nations title on Tuesday, March 17, saying that it was killing the passion of millions who follow the sport on the continent. Morocco national football team were officially handed the AFCON 2026 title on March 17 after CAF upheld an appeal that overturned Senegal's win in the final. The January clash in Rabat had descended into chaos when Senegal players walked off in protest over a late penalty awarded to Morocco. Although Senegal returned after a 14-minute delay and won 1-0 in extra time through Papa Gueye--after Brahim Diaz missed from the spot--the result has now been revised to a 3-0 win in Morocco's favour.

Mane released a statement, saying that the call from CAF went too far and there was too much corruption in the game at the moment. "What happened went too far. This is not the football we fight for, nor the Africa we believe in." There is too much corruption in our game, and it is killing the passion of millions of fans across the continent. The players give everything on the pitch, but decisions made off it end up deciding matches and trophies,"



Said Mane. Mane, who played a big role in getting the Senegal players back onto the field, said that he was extremely disappointed for African football as a whole and said that the fans deserve fairness, transparency and respect. "I am deeply disappointed--not just for Senegal, but for African football as a whole. We deserve better. The fans deserve fairness, transparency, and respect," said Mane. The Senegalese football federation slammed the decision as unfair and unacceptable, and they will approach the Court of Arbitration for Sport to overturn the deci-

sion from CAF. "The Senegalese Football Federation denounces this unfair, unprecedented, and unacceptable decision, which casts a shadow over African football," it said in a statement on Wednesday. "To defend its rights and the interests of Senegalese football, the federation will initiate an appeal as soon as possible before the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne." "The Senegalese Football Federation denounces this unfair, unprecedented, and unacceptable decision, which casts a shadow over African football," it said in a statement on Wednesday.

day. "To defend its rights and the interests of Senegalese football, the federation will initiate an appeal as soon as possible before the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne." The decision adds another layer of controversy, where the walk-off and the fight between fans and spectators had the CAF saying that the image of African football was tarnished. The Senegalese Football Federation (SFF) said that they will take the matter to Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), in a bid to overturn the decision made on Tuesday.

The decision now means that Morocco have become AFCON champions for the second time in their history, 50 years after their first title win. The Royal Moroccan Football Federation appreciated the decision and said they were made the appeal to have the rules of the competition properly applied. Moments later, the drama intensified as Brahim Diaz was judged to have been brought down by El Hadji Malick Diouf, earning Morocco a penalty. Tempers flared, with players and officials clashing while referee Jean-Jacques Ndala reviewed the incident on VAR before confirming the decision. Furious, Senegal coach Pape Bouna Thiaw instructed his players to walk off.

Sabalenka Mulls Dubai Boycott After Director's Harsh Criticism

New Delhi: Aryna Sabalenka has admitted she may never return to the Dubai Tennis Championships after being left furious by sharp criticism over her withdrawal from last month's event. The World No.1, along with Iga Swiatek, was among several high-profile players who pulled out due to injury, illness or scheduling issues, forcing lucky losers into the main draw and diminishing the appeal of the WTA 1000 tournament. Sabalenka had cited a minor hip injury for her withdrawal before regional tensions escalated further amid the US-Israeli war with Iran.

However, Dubai tournament director Salah Tahlak's remarks appear to have angered the Belarusian star, with the official saying players should face harsher punishments than just fines and even have ranking points deducted. Sabalenka slammed the tournament director's remarks as ridiculous and said he had not handled the situation well. She expressed disappointment that tournament organisers were not doing enough to protect players, accusing them of being more concerned about ticket sales and the event itself. "I think it's ridiculous. I don't think he showed himself in the best way possible. For me it's actually so sad to see that the tournament directors and the tournaments not protecting us as players. They just care about their (sales), about their tournament and that's it," Sabalenka told the reporters. His comment was ridiculous. I'm not sure if I ever want to go there after his comment. For me it's too much," Sabalenka added. WTA regulations mandate top players to compete in all four Grand Slams, 10 WTA 1000 tournaments and six WTA 500 events,



with violations punishable through fines or ranking points penalties. Sabalenka said she and her team had decided before the season to take a more selective approach to her schedule, with a greater focus on protecting her health and creating short breaks to recover, recharge and prepare better for the biggest tournaments. Sabalenka recently had reason to celebrate after winning the Indian Wells title by beating Elena Rybakina in the final. It was her first victory over Rybakina in a final after four consecutive defeats, including one at the Australian Open earlier this year. Sabalenka will now turn her attention to defending her Miami Open crown, which she won last year by defeating Jessica Pegula in the final. Jannik Sinner added another landmark title to his

career after defeating Daniil Medvedev in a gripping Indian Wells final on Sunday. The Italian battled through two tight tie-breaks to secure victory and further strengthen his position among the game's leading hard-court players.

The second seed sealed the title with a 7-6(6), 7-6(4) win over Medvedev at the BNP Paribas Open, becoming just the third man in history to win all six ATP Masters 1000 tournaments played on hard courts. After the victory, Sinner said the title held special meaning as it was the only major hard-court event missing from his collection. The victory also marked his first title of the season and helped him close the gap slightly on World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz in the ATP rankings.

India and Pakistan Grouped for 2026 Men's Hockey World Cup India vs Pakistan Set for World Cup

New Delhi : The Indian men's hockey team are all set to renew their rivalry with Pakistan in hockey as the arch-rivals have been grouped together for the upcoming men's Hockey World Cup 2026 in August. India and Pakistan are in Pool D, alongside England and Wales, and will play their matches in the Netherlands.

The Indian women's team also face a tricky lineup at the Women's World Cup, being drawn in Pool D alongside China, England and South Africa. The full schedule is set to be announced soon, with all eyes on the date for the India vs Pakistan clash on the men's side of things. India have been unbeaten against Pakistan in men's hockey since 2016, with their last meeting coming during 2024 during the Asian Champions Trophy. Both teams were supposed to face off in the Asia Cup 2025 in Rajgir, Bihar, before Pakistan decided to pull out of the tournament, citing security concerns. India went on to win the title and secure their spot in the World Cup. Pakistan hockey



ey endured a testing past few months after the players were subjected to an embarrassing ordeal during the Australia tour of their Hockey Pro League leg. However, they were able to turn things around in Egypt during the World Cup qualifiers and made it to the tournament for the first time in eight years. India have a superior head-to-head record over Pakistan since 2013, winning 17 out of their 26 matches. The Indian women's team also secured their passage into the World Cup through the qualifiers and will look to continue their resurgence

in Sjoerd Marijne's second stint as coach. Major global updates include significant developments in the ongoing conflict between the United States and Iran, as well as high-profile arrests in India involving foreign nationals. US President Donald Trump recently addressed the resignation of counterterrorism chief Joe Kent, who stepped down in protest of the military campaign against Iran.

In India, the National Investigation Agency arrested American mercenary Matthew VanDyke and six Ukrainian citizens for allegedly entering restrict-

ed areas to train militants. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has begun offering alternative oil shipping routes via the Red Sea as the Strait of Hormuz remains effectively blocked due to regional tensions. In international security news, Pakistan has reportedly conducted intensive bombings in Afghanistan following its defense pact with Saudi Arabia. On the domestic front in India, the Delhi High Court closed a plea from actor Celina Jaitley regarding her brother's detention in the UAE after he refused to communicate with her.