

Bargi Dam Accident Triggers Cruise Ban

Guwahati, May 01: The Madhya Pradesh government on Friday ordered a high-level probe into the tragic cruise boat accident at Bargi Dam in Jabalpur district that claimed nine lives, and announced an immediate ban on the operation of such vessels across the state. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav expressed deep condolences to the families of the victims and said that locals who risked their lives during rescue efforts would be honoured on Independence Day. "Those who showed exceptional courage in saving lives will be recognised for their bravery," he said. The accident occurred on Thursday evening when a cruise boat capsized in Bargi Dam, built on the Narmada River, after being caught in a sudden storm. Officials confirmed that nine people lost their lives, while around 28-29 passengers were rescued. Rescue operations were still underway at the time of reporting.



Speaking to reporters outside the Lok Bhawan, Yadav said the tourism department has been directed to investigate the incident thoroughly. "A detailed probe will be conducted to ascertain the causes, including the impact of the sudden weather disturbance, and to ensure such incidents do not recur," he said. He added that multiple agencies,

including the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and local administration, were swiftly mobilised for rescue and relief operations, alongside senior officials and ministers. Deputy Chief Minister Jagdish Devda confirmed that the state's tourism department has issued orders banning cruise boat operations until further notice, alongside initiating an inquiry into the incident. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed grief over the loss of lives. In a post on microblogging website, he said, "The loss of lives due to the capsizing of a boat in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, is extremely painful. I extend my condolences to those who have lost their loved ones... Praying for the speedy recovery of the injured." He also announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) for the next of kin of each deceased and Rs 50,000 for those injured.

Passport row: Singhvi says dissent cannot be criminalised after SC relief to Khera

Guwahati, May 01: The Supreme Court of India on Thursday granted anticipatory bail to Congress leader Pawan Khera in connection with an Assam Police case linked to remarks made against Assam Chief Minister's wife Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, while sharply criticising observations made earlier by the Gauhati High Court. A Bench comprising Justices J K Maheshwari and Atul S Chandurkar observed that the High Court's findings appeared "erroneous" and were not based on a proper appreciation of the material placed before it. The apex court further noted that the allegations and counter-allegations in the matter appeared to be "prima facie politically motivated" and stemmed from political rivalry rather than circumstances warranting custodial interrogation. Allowing Khera's appeal against the April 24 order of the Gauhati High Court, the Supreme Court directed that he be granted anticipatory bail in the event of arrest, subject to conditions imposed by the investigating officer.

The court also held that the High Court had unnecessarily shifted the burden onto the accused and made observa-

tions regarding provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) that were not even invoked in the FIR. The Supreme Court directed Khera to cooperate with the investigation, refrain from influencing witnesses or tampering with evidence, and not leave the country without prior permission from the competent



court. Clarifying the scope of its order, the Bench said its observations were confined to the consideration of the bail plea and would not affect the merits of the investigation or any future trial proceedings. The development triggered a fresh political exchange, with senior Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi urging the Assam Chief Minister to reconsider his position in the matter in light of the Supreme Court's observations.

Speaking after the verdict,

Singhvi said the remarks recorded by the apex court should prompt introspection "regardless of Monday's outcome". He said several public statements made during the course of the controversy were "highly inappropriate" and had lowered democratic standards.

Singhvi also pointed out

that most of the charges levelled against Khera were bailable and questioned the manner in which the case had been pursued. Stressing the importance of democratic freedoms, he said political dissent must remain protected in a democracy and warned that freedom of speech comes under threat when dissenting voices are curtailed. Singhvi said the case also raised concerns over attempts to criminalise political dissent and warned against shrinking democratic space.

Manipur Victim Bodies Released



Imphal, May 01: The mortal remains of two children, who were killed in a bomb attack in Manipur's Bishnupur district in April, were handed over to family members on Saturday, officials said. The bodies of the five-year-old boy and his six-month-old sister were kept in the morgue for 25 days, as the family members had refused to accept the mortal remains, demanding that the perpetrators be brought to book at the earliest. On April 25, Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh had appealed to the family members of the children to accept the bodies.

Singh had also said that all efforts were underway to find the culprits. The two children were killed in a bomb attack at Tronglaobi in Bishnupur district on April 7. Their bodies were kept in the morgue at the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences in Imphal. The incident had triggered widespread violent protests in the five valley districts of Manipur, and the case was subsequently handed over to the NIA. Hundreds of people lined up along the way to Tronglaobi to offer floral tributes, as the mortal remains were taken for the last rites in an open vehicle earlier in the day.

Nepal Protests India-China Yatra Plan Via Lipulekh

New Delhi, May 01: Nepal on Sunday objected to India and China planning to conduct the upcoming Kailash Mansarovar Yatra via Lipulekh Pass, claiming that it is Kathmandu's territory. In a statement, the Nepalese Foreign Ministry said that Kathmandu was not consulted before finalising the route for the pilgrimage. New Delhi has been maintaining that Lipulekh belongs to it. Nepal's objection to the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra came days after India announced that it would be held between June and August. "The Nepal government is clear and fully committed to its stand that Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura and Kalapani, lying in the East of the Mahakali river are its inseparable territories based on the Sugauli Treaty of 1816," the foreign ministry said in the statement posted on social media. "The Nepalese government has reiterated its clear stand to both India and China regarding the Kailash-Mansarovar tour to be organised via Nepalese territory, Lipulekh," it said.

Earlier, the Nepalese government had also requested the government of India not to



conduct activities such as road construction, expansion, border trade and pilgrimage in the area, it said. The statement added that the Nepalese government has also informed China about it. "The Nepal government is

always committed to resolving the border issue through diplomatic channels based on historical agreement, understanding, facts, maps and proofs in view of close and friendly relations existing between Nepal and India,"

the ministry said. Nepal claims that Lipulekh and Kalapani are its territories, whereas India maintains that the territories belong to it. Nepal's K.P. Oli-led government in May 2020 included the territories, including Kalapani and Lipulekh, in its official map.

The move came after India inaugurated an 80-km road linking Dharchula to the Lipulekh Pass—a route to the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage site in Tibet. Nepal protested the road's inauguration as what it called India's "unilateral act". On April 30, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in New Delhi announced that the annual Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is set to take place from June to August this year via two routes -- Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand and Nathu La in Sikkim. The pilgrimage to Mount Kailash and Mansarovar Lake in China's Tibet Autonomous Region holds religious significance to Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists. The yatra resumed last year after a gap of nearly five years as part of efforts to normalise the relations between India and China.

India tops global virtual water trade amid freshwater crisis

Climate Strains Deepen Water Stress



New Delhi, May 01: India leads the world in unequal “virtual water” trade, even as the country grapples with significant freshwater stress, according to a latest study by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. The study advocates for increasing water tariffs to reduce virtual water trade and calls for investment in water infrastructure and technology. The concept of virtual water trade (VWT) refers to the practice of exporting water-intensive goods, such as rice, cotton, sugar, and textiles. Essentially, India is exporting substantial volumes of its freshwater resources through these products, which is termed “virtual water export.” Meanwhile, rich and industrialised countries benefit from these exports.

The report titled “Where the Water Flows: Infrastructure and Governance for a Sustainable Water Cycle” illustrates the global patterns of VWT, highlighting a distinct divide between exporters and importers. The largest exporters include India at the top, followed by Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam—all emerging and developing economies with strong agricultural bases and a high dependence on water-intensive exports. In contrast, major importers include high-income countries like the United States, Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom, which outsource much of their water-intensive production.

Despite having a heavy agricultural base, China and Bangladesh are exceptions, acting as importers of virtual water due to their roles as manu-

facturing hubs in global value chains. Over the past two decades, China has transitioned from a virtual water exporter to an importer. High-income countries remain net importers of virtual water while experiencing relatively low and declining water stress.

In contrast, middle- and lower-income countries consistently serve as net exporters. On average, lower-middle-income countries face the highest water stress while simultaneously being net exporters of virtual water to high-income countries. This suggests that global VWT reflects production and trade specialisation rather than relative water availability. The study emphasises that VWT has exacerbated water stress, especially amid climate change and other environmental challenges. It calls for the development of a global VWT system model that could more efficiently utilise water resources and allocate production. Furthermore, the study highlights that appropriate water tariffs can significantly impact agricultural exports and water usage, as research indicates that agricultural exports tend to decline as water tariffs increase.

Air India Trims International Flights Over Rising Costs



New Delhi, May 01: Air India will scale back international operations through July as soaring jet fuel prices and regional airspace restrictions render several routes unviable. CEO and Managing Director Campbell Wilson informed staff that the airline has “no option” but to trim schedules for June and July following similar cuts in April and May.

The disruptions stem largely from the West Asia conflict, which has forced longer flight paths and increased fuel consumption. Compounded by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, these factors have severely impacted profitability. Air India Group is estimated to have posted losses exceeding ₹22,000 crore for the financial year ending March 31, 2026. Wilson, who is set to step down later this year, expressed regret over the customer disruption, noting that operations will remain constrained until regional tensions ease.

Shimla eatery owners slam steep hike in commercial LPG price, warn of food inflation

Shimla, May 01: Eatery owners in Shimla have strongly criticised the sharp increase of Rs 993 in commercial LPG cylinder prices, warning that the surge will inevitably push up food costs and add to inflationary pressures. Local traders say their earlier apprehensions have materialised. “We feared that LPG prices would be raised after the assembly elections in five states, and that is exactly what has happened,” said a shopkeeper. He noted that this is the second revision since the onset of the US-Israel-Iran conflict, with the price of a 19-kg commercial cylinder now reaching Rs 3,071.

The impact is being felt across segments. A 5-kg cylinder has risen from Rs 549 to Rs 810 — an increase of nearly 48% — affecting small consumers such as daily wage workers and petty vendors. Varun, who runs a

sweet shop in Shimla, said the effective cost of a commercial cylinder, including logistics, now comes to around Rs 3,450. “Earlier, we could get two cylinders for this price. The burden will have to be passed on, so



both regular customers and tourists will feel the pinch,” he said, adding that higher food prices could hurt business.

Tavesh, owner of an 85-year-old sweet shop in Ram Bazaar that also serves tea and snacks like samosas and chole bhature, said ris-

ing LPG prices, coupled with delays in cylinder supply, are eroding profit margins. “We have not raised food prices yet despite rising input costs, but it’s becoming increasingly difficult to sustain,” he said. Hoteliers have echoed

similar concerns. Inderjeet Singh, a hotelier and former president of the Shimla Vyapar Mandal, said the hospitality sector is under strain. “There was already a shortage of commercial cylinders earlier. Now, after the elections, prices have been increased as well. Ultimate-

ly, the burden will fall on consumers,” he said.

Singh also criticised the Centre’s policies, arguing that steep hikes should have been avoided and warning that domestic LPG prices may also rise in the coming days. Political reactions have also followed. CPI(M) leader Vijender Mehra said the hike was anticipated after the elections. “The government is citing the US-Israel-Iran conflict, but people feel misled. The burden is being shifted to the public,” he said, calling the increase “anti-people” and demanding an immediate rollback.

He also questioned the progress made under the “Make in India” initiative in achieving self-reliance in the gas and petroleum sector. With costs rising across the board, traders and political leaders alike have warned of protests in the state if the price hike is not reversed.

EC Orders Repoll At 15 West Bengal Booths

Kolkata, May 01: The Election Commission on Friday ordered repoll in 15 polling stations of two Assembly constituencies in West Bengal’s South 24 Parganas district, to be held on May 2, following reports of electoral malpractices. This also comes a day after the Special Roll Observer (SRO) submitted his report following an on-the-spot visit to Diamond Harbour in South 24 Parganas district. The repoll will be held on Saturday, May 2, from 7 am to 6 pm, covering 11 polling stations in Magrahat Paschim Assembly constituency and four in Diamond Harbour Assembly constituency. The ECI said the repoll order was based on reports received from returning officers and observers of the two constituencies and “material circumstances”. The BJP too alleged that the party symbols on EVMs were covered with tapes or ink in certain booths during the second and final phase of West Bengal Assembly elections on Wednesday.

The EC had deputed its special observer, Subrata Gupta, to fact-check the allegations from the ground. According to an order issued by West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Agarwal, following reports from the Returning Officers and Observers of the 142-Magrahat Paschim and 143-Diamond Harbour Assembly constituencies regarding the April 29 poll for the 2026 West Bengal Legislative Assembly elections, the Election Commission has reviewed all relevant circumstances. Based on this assessment, the Commission has declared the poll at certain specified polling stations void under Section 58(2) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. A fresh poll for these stations will be held on May 2, 2026, the order stated.

The order also directed that the re-poll information be widely publicised in the regions, including through traditional methods such as drum announcements. Additionally, all contesting candidates must be informed in writing about the fresh poll.

Reacting to the development, TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said, “BJP knows it will be defeated by a big margin in Diamond Harbour and Margahat, and that is why they are demanding a repoll in these places. With the EC’s assistance, the BJP is forcing people of these areas to go through the rigours of the voting process yet again. The mandate is against the BJP, and it will remain the same,” Ghosh said.

HC Bans Exclusive Religious Public Land Use



Lucknow, May 01: The Allahabad High Court has ruled that while occasional and non-disruptive religious prayers on private property are protected under the Constitution, regular or large-scale congregational activities may be subject to government regulation. A Division Bench comprising Justice Saral Srivastava and Justice Garima Prasad clarified that transforming private premises into a “de facto public religious venue” constitutes a change in land use, requiring compliance with local planning laws. The court emphasized that the right to practice religion under Articles 25 and 26 is not absolute and remains subject to public order, morality, and health.

The observation came as the court dismissed a petition filed by a Sambhal resident, Aseen, who sought to use a specific plot for offering Namaz. The Bench found the land in question was recorded as public property. It reiterated that public land belongs to everyone and cannot be used exclusively or unilaterally by any single party for religious purposes. Furthermore, the court noted that authorities are not required to wait for an actual disturbance to occur before intervening; they are legally entitled to act in advance if an activity poses a potential threat to public order or introduces a new religious practice in a sensitive area.

Meghalaya honeymoon murder case: Court denies bail to accused Raj Kushwaha

Guwahati, May 01: A local court in Shillong has rejected the bail plea of Raj Kushwaha on Friday on technical grounds in the ongoing Raja Raghuvanshi murder case, marking a different development in the proceedings. This decision comes just days after co-accused Sonam Raghuvanshi, the wife of the deceased, was granted bail by the same court due to procedural lapses in her arrest on April 28.

Raja Raghuvanshi, a transport businessman from Indore, went missing on May 23



last year while on his honeymoon in Meghalaya. His mutilated body was later discovered on June 2 near a waterfall in Sohra in East Khasi Hills district. After the body was

recovered, Sonam and several others, including her alleged boyfriend, were arrested in connection with the case.

Sonam, who had been in Shillong jail for several months, was granted bail after the fourth hearing. The development was also confirmed by the victim's brother, Vipin Raghuvanshi. With Kushwaha's bail plea now dismissed, the case continues to see different legal outcomes for the accused, while the investigation and court proceedings are still ongoing.

Exit polls manipulated by BJP to mislead voters: Gaurav Gogoi

Guwahati, May 01: Assam Congress chief Gaurav Gogoi on Saturday alleged that exit polls are being manipulated by the BJP to confuse voters, asserting that the opposition will prove its strength on counting day. Addressing a press conference after a meeting of opposition alliance leaders, Gogoi said the BJP may attempt to mislead people but would not succeed. "Neither the opposition parties nor the people of the state have fallen into the trap of exit polls, and this will be evident on the day of counting on May 4," he said.

He claimed that a "silent vote" and an "undercurrent" in favour of the opposition have not been reflected in exit poll surveys. According to him, many voters, particularly women, have cast their ballots based on issues such as price rise and governance.

Gogoi also alleged attempts by the BJP to interfere with strongroom arrangements but said opposition candidates and vigilant citizens had repeatedly approached authorities to prevent any irregularities. "All sections of society



across the state want a change of government in the state. They have voted for this on April 9, and the results will be known on May 4," he added.

Meanwhile, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shi-

vakumar echoed similar concerns, calling the exit polls misleading and expressing confidence in internal surveys favouring the opposition. "The party is confident about its survey, which indicates the opposition will form the gov-

ernment after May 4," he said.

He further alleged that the BJP was attempting to disrupt the counting process but said the opposition was prepared. "We are prepared to deal with the situation with legal rooms

in both Delhi and Guwahati to deal with the situation," he said. "We are prepared to protect our candidates and to ensure that the state machinery is not used for any mischief," he added.

Shivakumar also questioned why the BJP had allegedly approached opposition candidates after polling if it was confident of victory. "This proves that they are not confident, but the people of Assam are, and there is going to be a change of government in the state," he added. The meeting was attended by leaders from several parties, including Rajjor Dal's Akhil Gogoi, Assam Jatiya Parishad's Lurinjyoti Gogoi, and representatives of CPI(M), CPI and CPI(ML), among others. Senior Congress leaders Jitendra Singh, Bhupesh Baghel and election observer Bandhu Tirkey were also present.

Arunachal: 'Operation Dawn 2.0' anti-drug campaign gathers pace in East Siang



Guwahati, May 01: As part of ongoing efforts to tackle drug abuse in Mebo subdivision of East Siang district, the Mebo Dolung Drugs Mimak Team organised a day-long awareness programme at the Mebo community hall on Thursday.

The initiative was conducted in collaboration with the anti-drug squad of Arunachal Pradesh Police under the supervision of East Siang Superintendent of Police, Pankaj Lamba. The campaign forms part of 'Operation Dawn-2.0', which focuses on building healthier communities through localised sustainable development goals. Authorities said that the campaign is gaining momentum, with several local organisations stepping up awareness efforts against drug trafficking. "Once become addicted to contraband drugs, it is very difficult to bring back to main-

stream", Oson Borang said, while urging the elders to play a responsible role in guiding youngsters in the right way. He also warned that unchecked drug abuse could harm future generations and urged volunteers to act responsibly within the law, while calling for greater community support.

Mimak Team general secretary, India Rukbo said drug-related cases have declined in Mebo following the launch of the 'Nasha Mukh Mebo Abhiyan'. He recalled the contributions of eminent persons of Mebo area including Kaling Tayeng, public leaders Mowha Borang and Kitem Tayeng, and advocate Nong Ratan for their active support. Among others, Mebo Banggo-I ZPM Amping Ratan, Mebo village head GB Tokrom Ratan spoke and supported the efforts of the Mimak team and district police to curb drugs trade.

Nagaland Conducts Statewide Earthquake And Extreme Weather Drill

Dimapur, May 01: A state-level mock drill on earthquake and extreme weather disaster management was held across districts in Nagaland on Thursday. The mock drill was organised by the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority and District Disaster Management Agencies, in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). During a press conference after the mock drill, Nagaland Home Commissioner Abhijit Sinha said the exercise was conducted to test the efficiency of departments and the public in managing disasters in the state. He added that the drill aimed to create awareness, improve management, and help officials understand the actual scenario of a major earthquake and extreme weather disaster, as well as how to handle such situations. Lead Consultant (Mock Exercise & Incident Response Systems), NDMA, Maj. Gen. Sudhir Bahl stated that disasters can never be managed with 100 per cent efficiency, but response systems can always be improved. He appealed to the telecom department and other service providers to coordinate and work as a team, noting that communication is one of the most critical aspects during a disaster. Bahl also spoke about the safety of petrol pumps, saying that adequate fire safety materials and equipment should be provided to them. "School safety was another important area where maximum exercises should be taken up," he added.

Bahl said medical teams should always be prepared to provide additional medical equipment and maintain coordination with neighbouring states during emergencies.

He added that the PWD, NHIDCL, and BRO should be ready to restore emergency surface communication routes in case of landslides and damage to roads and bridges. He stressed that uniformed volunteers, including NCC and other agencies, are an asset during disasters and should be properly trained. Bahl also mentioned that participation and coordination are the most important factors.



Editorial

The Political Genome Where Defection is Evolution

There is something almost comforting about the old, schoolbook version of human origins. It had a single ancestral population, a neat beginning, and a tidy lineage that branched politely and predictably into the present. It is the kind of story our politicians would approve of; a story that is clear, linear, reassuring, and above all, easy to narrate on a stage with a microphone and a slogan. But then science, with its irritating habit of refusing to flatter simplicity, has come along and ruined the script. A 2023 study in *Nature* magazine suggests that human evolution was not a disciplined parade from one ancestral source, but a sprawling, unruly network of populations scattered across a continent, mingling, then separating, or recombining into something visible. If one were to be uncharitable, this sounds less like a biological revelation and more like the internal structure of a modern political party. Take the latest big-name defector Raghav Chadha, formerly of AAP and now BJP's. The dramatic version says he "left" one party and "joined" another, as if he jumped from one clean branch to a completely different one. In reality, AAP and the BJP operate in overlapping ecosystems. They speak to similar voters. They borrow similar language around governance, corruption, delivery, and nationalism. Which means, they share a political DNA. What Chadha's walk represents is not a dramatic break but something closer to exchanging usable traits. His move (and those of others around him) is not an isolated mutation. It is a coordinated gene-flow event. In genetics, when a block of individuals migrates together, they carry a package of traits that can immediately alter the receiving population's profile. Trans-

lated, this means media fluency, urban appeal, and legislative experience: traits Chadha cultivated in AAP's ecosystem. Overnight, he looked slightly different, not because he swapped "species," but because he absorbed a working module from a neighbouring political population. But what about ideology, that sacred word politicians utter like a family name? Under one coalition, a leader expresses secularism. Under another it is 'governance'; and under a third it is 'muscular nationalism'. The underlying "genome" hasn't been replaced, but is being differentially expressed.

When a group of politicians migrate together, they carry similar habits, messaging styles, networks and instincts. The timing tells you even more. When conditions get harsh, human populations move toward safer or more resource-rich zones. In politics, elections, ED raids, and ticket uncertainty create that pressure. Leaders don't suddenly discover new beliefs; they reveal ones they were always flexible about. The irony sharpens when you remember that Chadha had earlier argued for stricter anti-defection rules. That isn't a contradiction in evolutionary terms; it is adaptation equalling using the system's own rules to survive inside it. Evolution rewards strategic fits. The politician, that curious specimen of adaptive behaviour, presents himself as the direct descendant of a singular ideological ancestor. "We stand for this," he declares, as if "this" has not been borrowed, diluted, rebranded, or occasionally stolen from rival factions or a forgotten manifesto. In reality, the political class resembles that newer model of human evolution far more closely than it would ever admit. What appears from a distance as a

coherent party ideology is often the temporary alignment of multiple, loosely related ambitions that have agreed, for the moment, to stop quarrelling in public. And just as the DNA study suggests that differences between early human groups took long to become genetically visible, the distinctions between political actors are often performative than real. For years, they will sound indistinguishable by intoning the same phrases about development, justice, growth, the future; until suddenly, a faction splits or a leader "realigns." It is at this point that a cross-the-floor politician will insist loudly and with great indignation that he represents a decisive break, a new direction, and a clean departure from the muddled past. The tangled web is redrawn as a bold, straight line, with himself at the tip.

One is reminded of how the older model of human origins persisted for so long: it was easier to teach, easier to believe, and far more flattering to our desire for narrative clarity. Politicians, too, rely on this instinct. They simplify their actions because complexity invites questions, and questions are inconvenient things that tend to linger longer than campaign promises. Yet the truth, whether in genetics or governance, is messier. Continuity masquerades as change. Hybridity pretends to be purity. The new science tells us that mankind's origins are rarely singular and that identities are rarely stable. But while scientists present this as a humbling insight into the nature of our species, politicians have long treated instability as a professional technique. They have, in other words, been evolving this way all along, only with far less honesty about the process.

Democracy dies a thousand deaths



As India waits for the counting day of the 2026 Assembly elections, the atmosphere is heavy with the "entertainment" of exit polls and a deep-seated unease. While West Bengal remained largely peaceful, critics argue this was achieved through an unprecedented "militarization" of the democratic process. The Siege of Bengal The deployment in West Bengal has reached a scale previously unseen in Indian electoral history. To curb the state's legacy of violence, the Election Commission deployed approximately 2.4 lakh Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)—nearly 1,920 to 2,300 companies. The Contrast: This force is roughly ten times the volume of troops currently stationed in conflict-ridden Manipur.

The Impact: While physical clashes were minimal, the presence of encounter specialists, night-time raids, and "flag marches" created an atmosphere of intimidation. Security forces are scheduled to remain for two months, long after the new government is formed, raising questions about the permanency of this "menace."

The 91-Lakh Discrepancy Beyond the physical boots on the ground, a "surgical strike" on the voter rolls has sparked a positive uproar. Following a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) using AI tools, over 91 lakh names were deleted from the West Bengal electoral rolls. Disproportionate Impact: Reports suggest that 60–65% of the deleted voters are from minority communities, particularly in border districts. The "Logical Discrepancy": Many deletions were based on minor spelling mismatches or age-gap inconsistencies, leaving millions—often the most vulnerable—without a recourse for appeal before the polls.

One-Party Blueprints The shadow of Gujarat looms large over this election cycle. In the local body polls held on April 26, 2026, the ruling party was declared the uncontested winner in 730 seats after opponents withdrew nominations en masse. This trend toward "one-party rule" suggests a future where elections become a foregone conclusion rather than a choice.

As the "talking heads" on TV spin yarns, the reality remains: between the erasure of voters and the militarization of booths, the agency of the masses is under siege. Democracy, it seems, is in dire need of a more uplifting horoscope.

Musk's New School of Thought

When any mention is made of Elon Musk's name, many things come to mind. These range from his forays into the American political arena to his very impressive and high-end path breaking creations in the realm of technology. What most readers may not be aware of are his radical and productive ideas on education. Musk's concerns over the last several years have stemmed from his very true observation that education seems to be in a state of suspended animation. I have found his ideas for educational reform very much akin to the spirit that drove our seers of Upanishadic times. They too questioned the existing practices and beliefs of that age, many of which were directly related to education. Of course, lest I be misunderstood, I am not trying to liken him in other ways to the sages who engendered the Upanishads. As much as I can tell, Musk has challenged, interrogated, even dismantled, and then reconstructed the education platform. At the heart of his vision stands a simple, yet profound question: why must education remain the ghost of the industrial age, with its straitjacketed silos? What seems to result from his questions and challenges is the emphasis on the need for minds to be spurred by curiosity and to engage boldly with uncertainty. During my school going years, one of the most enjoyable

and truly engaging experiences that I recall centred around regularly exchanging comic books with my school principal. He even made time for me to discuss the contents of those comic books. My first exposure to interesting history and to many of the great creations of literature happened through those comic books. They most certainly whetted my curiosity about several things. I thus find Musk's metaphor of materialising education in a manner akin to playing video games as quite similar to my joy of learning through comic books. The school that was set up for Musk's own children and for some employees of SpaceX did away with the old drudgery of sitting in rows, harking to the bells, and wearily transitioning from mathematics to language and back. Instead, he invites us to see them as singularities, each with a unique path so that the nine-year-old devours calculus and the 12-year-old finds poetry in the algorithm. I cannot help but recall the episode from the Chandogya Upanishad where the great guru Gautam Haridrumat through his precept and example teaches Satyakama in a manner so creatively unique. Satyakama is not asked to memorise and recite the Vedas, instead, he is given a project in wealth management when he is asked to take a few hundred head of cattle into the forest and not return until

they have multiplied three fold or so.

Ad Astra—that's the name of the small private school Musk set up on SpaceX's campus in Hawthorne, California. It was mainly for his own kids and a handful of SpaceX employees' children, super experimental with no grades or traditional classes. It ran from around 2014 to 2020. There's a newer online version called Astra Nova that's open to more children now. Astra Nova is thriving as an online non-profit school—it has about 315 middle school students from 45 countries, and it's launching its high school programme this coming school year, 2026-2027. Classes happen in English on a live Zoom platform. Class sizes vary from six to 16 students. It focuses on project-based learning, first principles, and real-world skills—no grades, no traditional tests, just meaningful challenges. Tuition is quite steep but any demonstrated financial need is met in full. The high school shall be launched this August for ages 14 to 18. One of the most remarkable features centres around the assessment processes. They don't use grades or standardised tests, so there's no traditional performance data like test scores. Instead, they measure success through curiosity, teamwork, and ethical decision-making.

Godrej unveils India's first facial recognition home locker, plans Rs 100 crore push for smart security solutions

Guwahati: Godrej Enterprises Group has launched India's first facial recognition-enabled home locker and introduced a range of smart connected security solutions at the Smart Home Expo 2026 in Mumbai, strengthening its focus on technology-driven safety products for modern homes.

The company unveiled the NX Pro Ncrypt home locker, which combines facial recognition, biometric fingerprint access and digital PIN authentication in a single platform. Built with advanced AES encryption technology, the locker converts facial information into secure digital templates instead of storing images, enhancing privacy and data security. Users can choose between single-mode and dual-mode authentication for added protection.

Alongside the launch, the company announced an investment commitment of ₹100 crore over the next three years to expand digital and connected security solutions focused on personalisation, privacy and convenience.

The company also showcased its connected home ecosystem powered by Advan-



tis IoT9. The system allows homes to automatically adjust lighting and air-conditioning settings once a user unlocks the door through biometric access. In addition, the firm introduced a web-based access solution for hospitality locks aimed at enabling faster and contactless hotel check-ins.

According to Pushkar Gokhale, Business Head of Security Solutions Business at Godrej Enterprises Group, the company aims to create intuitive and future-ready security

systems tailored for evolving Indian households.

In Guwahati, the growing adoption of smart homes and digital lifestyles in Northeast India is expected to boost demand for connected security products. Industry observers believe rising urban housing projects and increasing consumer focus on home safety in Guwahati could create strong opportunities for advanced smart lockers and IoT-enabled security solutions in the region.

CDSL IPF launches investor awareness drive across 84 Northeast towns

Guwahati: ICICI Bank has introduced biometric authentication for UPI transactions on its mobile banking application, iMobile, allowing customers to approve payments of up to ₹5,000 using fingerprint or facial recognition instead of entering a UPI PIN.

The bank said the feature is aimed at improving both convenience and security for users by enabling faster transactions while reducing risks such as shoulder-surfing in public spaces. Customers can use biometric authentication for peer-to-peer fund transfers, QR code-based in-store payments, and online transactions conducted through the iMobile app. Transactions above ₹5,000 will continue to require the traditional UPI PIN for authorisation.

An ICICI Bank spokesperson said the move aligns with

regulatory guidelines and reflects the bank's focus on offering secure and seamless digital banking solutions. The spokesperson added that customers will continue to have the option to choose between PIN-based and biometric authentication based on their preference.

The feature is available on Android version 30 and iOS version 28.2 of the iMobile app. Android users can authenticate transactions through fingerprint verification, while iPhone users can use facial recognition.

In Guwahati, the move is expected to boost confidence in digital payments among retail consumers and small businesses, especially as UPI adoption continues to grow rapidly across Assam's urban markets and organised retail sectors.

MSDE unveils roadmap to boost MSME apprenticeships, strengthen India's skilled workforce



Guwahati: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) on Wednesday launched a major push to expand apprenticeship adoption among Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), aiming to build a future-ready workforce aligned with the Viksit Bharat vision.

At a high-level workshop on "Scaling Apprenticeship Uptake in MSMEs," policymakers, industry leaders and MSME stakeholders discussed ways to increase apprenticeship participation among smaller businesses. The deliberations focused on barriers such as low awareness, compliance complexities and limited industry engagement despite strong growth under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS). Officials noted that 94 per cent of MSME apprentices are currently hosted by private sector establishments.

Debashree Mukherjee said apprenticeships can bridge the gap between education and employment while helping MSMEs access skilled manpower. The workshop examined scalable models including Group Training Organizations (GTOs), Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programmes (AEDP) and Work-Integrated Learning Programmes (WILP).

The consultation also proposed pilot projects, policy reforms, targeted incentives and social security measures to improve apprenticeship accessibility, especially for women, PwDs, SC/ST/OBC groups and youth from remote areas.

In Guwahati, the initiative is expected to support Assam's expanding MSME ecosystem, particularly in sectors such as handloom, food processing, retail and small-scale manufacturing. Industry stakeholders in Guwahati believe simplified apprenticeship models and work-integrated training could help local businesses address skilled workforce gaps while generating employment opportunities for youth across the Northeast.

Renault bets on premium affordable mobility with launch of upgraded Triber 2026



Guwahati: Renault has launched the upgraded Renault Triber 2026 in India, aiming to strengthen its position in the affordable family vehicle segment with a range of premium and segment-first features. Priced between ₹5.80 lakh and ₹8 lakh (ex-showroom), the multi-purpose vehicle is available in four variants — Authentic, Evolution, Techno and Emotion.

The company said the upgraded Triber introduces segment-first features such as automatic climate control and second-row one-touch fold-and-tumble seats. Renault has also enhanced the vehicle's practicality with fully foldable second-row seats that expand boot space to 1,065 litres, claimed to be best-in-segment. The cabin now features a modern dual-tone dashboard with a floating 20.32 cm touchscreen supporting wireless Android

Auto and Apple CarPlay.

Francisco Hidalgo Marques, Vice President, Sales & Marketing, Renault India, said the upgrades reinforce the company's focus on delivering value-driven premium mobility solutions for Indian families. The Triber 2026 also comes with 21 standard safety features, including six airbags, ABS with EBD, electronic stability control and tyre pressure monitoring systems.

In Guwahati, automobile dealers expect the upgraded Triber to witness strong demand due to rising preference for spacious yet affordable family vehicles in Assam and the Northeast. Industry players believe the vehicle's modular seating, premium features and competitive pricing could attract middle-class buyers and boost Renault's presence in the regional passenger vehicle market.

Vi posts second consecutive subscriber gain as 5G push boosts rural and circle-level growth

Guwahati: Vodafone Idea reported net subscriber additions for the second consecutive month, signalling improving stability in its customer base amid ongoing network investments and expansion of its 5G services. According to the latest telecom subscription data released by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India for March 2026, Vi added 1,02,899 subscribers, following net additions of 21,927 subscribers in February 2026. The company also recorded the addition of 1,92,211 rural subscribers during March, indicating stronger traction in rural markets.

The telecom operator registered subscriber gains across 15 circles, including Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Kolkata, Maharashtra, Mumbai, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and UP-East. Gujarat and Karnataka emerged as major growth drivers with additions of 1,01,748 and 1,00,701 subscribers respectively, while Bihar added 57,452 users and UP-East recorded 47,869 additions.

Industry observers said the gains reflect Vi's renewed focus on customer retention and network improvement. The company's consumer offerings such as "Nonstop Hero" with unlimited 4G data and "Super Hero" with half-day unlimited 4G access, along with its ongoing 5G rollout, are helping attract users. Vi recently announced the expansion of its 5G services to 90 more cities, taking its total 5G footprint to 133 cities by May 2026.



Oriflame expands fragrance portfolio with launch of 'Love Potion Cherry on Top' range in India

Guwahati: Direct selling beauty brand Oriflame has introduced its new "Love Potion Cherry on Top" fragrance range in India, expanding its premium personal care portfolio with a cherry-and-chocolate-inspired scent collection aimed at fragrance enthusiasts.

The newly launched range includes the "Love Potion Cherry on Top Eau de Parfum" priced at ₹4,899 and the "Love Potion Cherry On Top Hand Cream" priced at ₹469. The Eau de Parfum features an ambery fruity composition that blends mandarin, juicy cherry and lipstick accord in the opening notes, followed by black cherry, rose and Peru balsam at the heart. The fragrance settles into a warm base of chocolate truffle accord, cedar-



wood and roasted tonka bean, designed for long-lasting wear from daytime to evening occasions.

Meanwhile, the hand cream is enriched

with almond oil and formulated to moisturise dry hands while leaving behind subtle gourmand notes of cherry and chocolate truffle. The company said the product is designed for daily use and can be layered with the perfume for a longer-lasting fragrance experience.

In Guwahati, rising demand for premium fragrances and personal grooming products among young consumers and working professionals is creating opportunities for lifestyle and beauty brands in the city. Retailers and beauty consultants in Guwahati say consumers are increasingly showing interest in long-lasting gourmand fragrances and compact skincare products suited for travel and daily use.

CDSL IPF launches investor awareness drive across 84 Northeast towns

Guwahati: Central Depository Services (India) Limited Investor Protection Fund (IPF) Trust has launched a large-scale investor awareness campaign across 84 towns in Northeast India to improve financial literacy and increase participation in the securities market across the region.

The campaign, launched from Guwahati on April 28, will cover Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and Sikkim. The initiative aims to educate people on safe investing practices, investor rights and the use of demat accounts through simplified and locally relevant communication methods.

As part of the outreach, mobile awareness vans fitted with LED screens and multilingual audio-visual content will travel across the region. The campaign will also feature interactive sessions, street plays and mobile theatre programmes to engage local communities and youth audiences.

Speaking on the initiative, Smt. Nayana Ovalekar and Shri. Sudhish Pillai of CDSL IPF said the Northeast remains a priority region where stronger investor awareness is needed to support informed and safe participation in market-linked investments.

According to the SEBI Kantar Report, household participation in the securities market remains below the national average of 9.5% in several northeastern states, with Nagaland at 3.4% and Meghalaya at 4.2%.

In Guwahati, the campaign could help strengthen investor confidence in the region's growing financial market ecosystem. Financial awareness initiatives are expected to encourage more retail investors from the Guwahati market to explore regulated investment opportunities and participate more actively in India's capital markets.

ICICI Bank expands Arunachal footprint with first branch in Tirap district

Tirap: ICICI Bank has strengthened its presence in Arunachal Pradesh by opening its first branch in Khonsa, the headquarters of Tirap district. The move marks the bank's entry into the southeastern district and is aimed at expanding access to formal banking and financial services in the region.

The branch was inaugurated by Wanglin Lowangdong, MLA of Borduria Bogapani constituency, along with Tirap Deputy Commissioner Techu Aran. Equipped with a Cash Recycling Machine (CRM), the branch offers savings and current accounts, fixed and recurring deposits, and a range of retail and business-focused loan products including home loans, education loans, auto loans, business loans, Kisan Credit Card and farm equipment loans.

The facility will also provide Tab Banking services that enable customers to access nearly 100 banking services at their doorstep through tablet-based banking support.

The expansion is expected to create fresh momentum in the Tirap market, where banking penetration and access to organised financial services have remained limited. Traders, small business owners and entrepreneurs in Khonsa and nearby areas are expected to benefit from improved access to credit facilities, digital banking and deposit services, which could support local commerce and encourage economic activity in the district. With the new addition, ICICI Bank now operates 21 branches and 22 ATMs and CRMs across Arunachal Pradesh.

Gokula education foundation unveils RISM, partners with UAlbany to launch future-focused STEM and management university



Bengaluru: The Gokula Education Foundation (Medical) on Tuesday announced the launch of the Ramaiah Institute of Science and Management (RISM), a new deemed-to-be university focused on artificial intelligence, aerospace engineering and industry-driven management education in collaboration with the University at Albany. The university, set to begin its first academic session in August 2026, aims to deliver globally benchmarked and industry-aligned education through

undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes across engineering, business and science disciplines. Initial academic offerings will include B.Tech programmes in Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence, Aerospace Engineering and Electrical Sciences, along with BBA and MBA courses. The institution said its academic structure has been designed jointly with industry and academic partners to combine interdisciplinary learning with internships, live projects, translational research and industry-sponsored Centres of Excellence.

Executive Director and Chief Strategy Officer of Gokula Education Foundation (Medical), Gurucharan Gollerkeri, said the initiative seeks to prepare students for rapidly evolving global industries by integrating technology, business and applied learning models.

University at Albany President Havidán Rodríguez said the partnership would strengthen collaboration in education and research across fields including engineering, computer science, business and nanotechnology.

Medanta doctors warn of rising pediatric liver disease cases in Northeast

Guwahati: Doctors at Medanta – The Medicity have raised concerns over a growing number of pediatric liver disease cases in the Northeast, particularly in Guwahati, linking the trend to unhealthy lifestyles, junk food consumption, and lack of physical activity among children.

Dr. Neelam Mohan, Senior Director of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Hepatology at Medanta Gurugram and National President of the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP), said cases of metabolic associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), commonly known as fatty liver disease, have increased sharply over the past decade. She said obesity among children has become a major risk factor, adding that 35-45 percent of obese children are at risk of developing MASLD.

According to Dr. Mohan, pediatric liver conditions such as fatty liver, biliary atresia, and pancreatitis are often misdiagnosed as common digestive problems, delaying treatment. She warned that many of these diseases progress silently and may eventually lead to cirrhosis or end-stage liver disease if not detected early. Highlighting prevention, Dr. Mohan said parents play a crucial role in shaping children's habits. Comparing children's health to a WiFi device depending on a router for connectivity, she stressed the importance of healthy home environments, balanced diets, reduced sugar intake, regular sleep, and at least 45-60 minutes of daily physical activity.

In Guwahati, rising urbanisation and changing food habits in the city have led to increased dependence on processed and fast foods among children. Growing awareness around lifestyle diseases is also driving demand for preventive healthcare consultations, pediatric screenings, and nutrition-focused services in Guwahati's healthcare sector.

Godrej Tooling business eyes 15% growth, showcases advanced capabilities at TAGMA 2026

Guwahati: Godrej Enterprises Group's Tooling business is showcasing its advanced engineering capabilities at TAGMA 2026 while targeting a 10-15% year-on-year growth over the next two to three years, driven by strong demand from automotive and electric vehicle (EV) sectors.

The company reported steady progress over the past three years, with orders rising nearly 25% in the current year. EV-related projects now contribute close to 20% of the total order book, reflecting increasing demand for high-precision tooling solutions to support new-age vehicle platforms and lightweight materials. At the event, the company is displaying its capabilities at Hall 2, H02, including IoT-enabled tools for real-time monitoring, additive manufacturing solutions such as 3D printing, and connected systems enabling remote diagnostics and operational efficiency. "India's manufacturing landscape is undergoing a transformation driven by localisation and the rapid shift to electric mobility," said Pankaj Abhyankar, highlighting the company's focus on precision engineering and digital manufacturing.

With over 10,000 tools manufactured and continued investments in technology and MSME collaborations, the business aims to strengthen India's position as a globally competitive manufacturing hub.



NPCI advises consumers to stay alert as digital payment usage rises across India

Kohima: With digital payments becoming a routine part of daily life for millions of Indians, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has urged consumers to follow safe payment practices to avoid online fraud and financial scams. In a fresh consumer advisory, NPCI shared five important tips to help users make secure digital transactions. The organisation advised customers to always verify the recipient's name before making payments to avoid sending money to the wrong account. It also recommended using only trusted and official payment apps or websites and

warned against downloading unknown applications or clicking suspicious links. NPCI stressed that users should never share sensitive information such as UPI PINs, OTPs, or bank details with anyone, including people claiming to represent banks, police, or government agencies. Consumers were also advised not to rush into making payments under pressure and to carefully review payment requests before proceeding. To improve security awareness, NPCI encouraged users to keep SMS and app notifications active and regularly monitor transaction alerts

for suspicious activity. Victims of suspected fraud have been advised to report incidents through the national cybercrime helpline 1930 or the Department of Telecommunications portal while preserving screenshots and messages for investigation purposes. In Kohima, retailers and small businesses are seeing increased use of UPI and mobile-based payments among customers. Traders say stronger consumer awareness about digital payment safety is becoming essential as cashless transactions continue to grow across Nagaland's retail sector.

HPCL ramps up LPG supply network amid surge in demand across India

Mumbai: State-run Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) has intensified its nationwide LPG distribution operations to manage a sharp rise in demand, delivering 349 lakh LPG cylinders between April 1 and April 28, 2026. The company said it supplied 13.8 lakh cylinders on April 28 alone, highlighting its expanded operational capacity during the peak demand period.

To maintain uninterrupted supply, HPCL deployed 2,06,985 LPG tankers during the month to replenish bottling plants and distributor points across the country. The company said dispatch operations are being adjusted daily based on consumption trends to avoid regional supply shortages.

HPCL also tightened operational cycles across bottling plants through faster turnaround times, route optimization, and extended working hours. Its digital booking platform played

a major role in handling the surge, with 99.3 per cent of LPG bookings processed online, allowing quicker coordination between bookings and backend logistics systems.

The company further stepped up enforcement measures to prevent irregularities in LPG distribution. Between March 14 and April 28, HPCL conducted 6,150 inspections and initiated action against 170 distributors, including 34 suspensions. It also carried out 664 raids leading to 44 FIRs and the seizure of 4,155 cylinders. In Guwahati, LPG distributors reported stable supplies despite rising household demand during the ongoing pre-monsoon season. Industry observers said HPCL's strengthened logistics and digital booking systems helped ensure timely deliveries across Assam and other Northeast markets, where consistent fuel supply remains critical for both urban and semi-urban consumers.

Aviva India launches 'Secure Nest' annuity plan for lifelong retirement income

Guwahati: Aviva India has launched the "Aviva Secure Nest Annuity Plan," a retirement-focused insurance solution aimed at providing customers with a guaranteed lifelong income through a one-time premium payment. Announcing the launch on Monday, the company said the plan is designed to cater to a wide range of retirement needs and allows entry for individuals up to 80 years of age.

The plan offers multiple annuity options, including single life and joint life coverage, flexible payout frequencies, and a return of purchase price feature that enables nominees to receive the invested amount. The company said the product is aligned with Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) regulations, making it suitable for National Pension System (NPS) subscribers seeking long-term financial security after retirement.

Speaking on the launch, Asit Rath said retirement should be marked by "security and dignity" and added that the plan aims to ensure a steady stream of income while protecting the financial well-being of families. Ajai Kumar Tripathi said the product has been structured to balance guaranteed returns with flexibility and family protection features.

In Guwahati, demand for retirement and pension-linked products is steadily rising in the city as more salaried professionals and self-employed individuals seek stable post-retirement income options amid growing awareness about long-term financial planning.

EY-HICA pushes for GST cut on household insecticides to boost access and preventive healthcare

Guwahati: EY India and the Home Insect Control Association (HICA) have jointly urged the government to reduce GST on household insecticide products from 18% to 5%, saying the move would improve affordability, strengthen preventive healthcare and curb the spread of mosquito-borne diseases across India.

The recommendation was made in a report titled "GST Rationalization for Household Insecticides: A Public

Health Imperative", which noted that products such as liquid vapourisers, coils and aerosols are a key line of defence against diseases like malaria, dengue and chikungunya. The report highlighted that while urban penetration of household insecticides stands at 92-99%, rural adoption remains between 64-73% due to affordability constraints. Jayant Deshpande, Secretary and Director of HICA, said the high GST burden makes essential

insecticide products costly for consumers while allowing illegal and unregulated players to thrive through tax evasion and misclassification. The report also warned that unsafe, substandard alternatives in the market create consumer safety risks and revenue leakage. Bipin Sapra, Tax Partner at EY India, said lowering GST to 5% could improve access to safe and regulated products, especially in rural and high-risk regions, and

support India's broader preventive healthcare goals.

In Guwahati, demand for mosquito repellents and household insecticides rises sharply during the monsoon season across Assam and the Northeast. Retailers believe a GST reduction would make branded products more affordable for households and help organised companies compete better against low-cost unregulated products commonly sold in local markets.

HPCL strengthens vigilance network as LPG distribution crosses 362 lakh cylinders

Guwahati: Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) has intensified its vigilance and enforcement measures across its LPG distribution network as the state-run energy major scaled up nationwide supply operations amid rising consumer demand.

The company said it delivered 362 lakh LPG cylinders across the country between April 1 and April 29,

2026, including 12.7 lakh cylinders on April 29 alone. To maintain uninterrupted supply, HPCL dispatched 2,16,507 tankers during the period, including 9,522 tankers in a single day, reflecting the scale of its logistics operations.

Alongside LPG distribution, HPCL recorded sales of 12,02,694 KL of Motor Spirit and 20,78,756 KL of High-Speed Diesel during the same

period, underlining stable demand across fuel segments.

As part of its vigilance drive, the company conducted 6,217 inspections between March 14 and April 29 to monitor compliance with operational and safety norms. HPCL initiated 173 actions against distributors, including 34 suspensions, while 664 raids led to 44 FIRs and the seizure of 4,155 LPG cylinders linked to

alleged diversion and unauthorized sales.

The company said 99.3 per cent of LPG bookings are now processed online, improving transparency and supply-chain tracking. HPCL also expanded access to affordable energy by selling 7,68,892 units of 5 kg cylinders and 26,916 units of 2 kg cylinders targeted at migrant workers and low-income households.

Xiaomi expands budget portfolio with REDMI A7 series launch, targets value segment growth

Guwahati: Xiaomi India on Tuesday launched the REDMI A7 Series, introducing the REDMI A7 and REDMI A7 Pro with a focus on affordability, performance, and long battery life, as the company strengthens its foothold in the entry-level smartphone segment.

The REDMI A7 features a 6.88-inch display, while the A7 Pro offers a larger 6.9-inch HD+ display with up to 120Hz refresh rate for smoother visuals. Both devices come with TÜV Rheinland-certified eye protection and wet touch technology. They

support 15W charging with an in-box charger and 7.5W wired reverse charging for added convenience.

The series is equipped with 64GB storage, LPDDR4X RAM, and virtual RAM expansion to enhance multitasking. Camera features include a 13MP rear and 8MP front lens. Additional highlights include a side-mounted fingerprint sensor, IP52 durability, 3.5mm headphone jack, dual nano SIM support, and expandable storage up to 2TB. The A7 Pro also integrates Google Gemini and Circle to Search for smarter user

interaction.

In Guwahati, retailers anticipate steady demand driven by price-sensitive consumers seeking reliable smartphones with larger displays and battery efficiency. Traders note that aggressive pricing—₹10,499 for REDMI A7 and ₹11,499 for REDMI A7 Pro—positions the devices competitively against rivals in the budget segment.

The REDMI A7 Series will be available from April 24 via Mi.com, Amazon India, Flipkart, and Xiaomi retail outlets.



The Significance of Posture and Spinal Health in Contemporary Living

The spine serves as the main support framework of the human body. It consists of a series of vertebrae, nerves, and muscles that enable us to carry out fundamental bodily activities like standing straight, bending, and twisting. Additionally, it safeguards the spinal cord, which plays a crucial role in relaying signals between the brain and the remainder of the body. Dr. Ilavarasan S, M.B.B.S, D.ORTH, Dip.N.B (Ortho), Apollo Spectra Hospital, Chennai, shares all you need to know: Life, in general, has become increasingly stagnant for everyone. Technological advancements have made tasks easier, leading to a noticeable decline in physical activity. Food and grocery delivery apps, convenient commute options, and online shopping have all contributed to a sedentary way of living. What once required a 100–200 meter walk to the grocery



store has now been replaced by a 10-minute delivery, no effort, no movement. Good posture and spinal health go hand in hand. Maintaining proper posture reduces strain on the spine, muscles, and ligaments. Neck sprain, back pain, and structural changes in the spine are common problems caused by poor posture.

Simple habits such as keeping your shoulders aligned while walking and avoiding high heels for long durations can help maintain good posture. Our dietary choices also have a direct impact on spinal health. Consuming foods high in sugar and unhealthy fats promotes weight gain, which places additional pressure

on the spine. This can lead to back pain and other spinal issues at any age. To prevent such problems, it is important to follow a balanced diet rich in vitamins and nutrients that enhance bone health and strengthen muscles. Posture and spinal wellness should never be taken for granted. A healthy spine ensures proper coordination between the spinal cord and the brain, supporting vital functions such as movement, sensation, breathing, and digestion. However, prolonged inactivity can exert pressure on the spine, increasing inflammation and leading to chronic pain and a sedentary lifestyle. Adapting to a modern lifestyle is not inherently harmful, but it is essential to make conscious efforts to stay active. Incorporating movement into daily routines and maintaining proper posture are key to keeping the spine healthy and ensuring overall well-being.

How To Endure The Smog And Winter Allergies

As the holiday lights diminish and winter approaches, a recognizable haze reappears in the atmosphere – laden with pollutants, allergens, and respiratory irritants. Following Diwali, Delhi and numerous northern cities are experiencing a significant decline in air quality, prompting doctors to caution about a seasonal increase in allergies, asthma, and respiratory problems. Children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions are particularly at risk as the Air Quality Index (AQI) deteriorates in various areas. Reasons Winter Induces Allergies and Respiratory Problems Dr. Hinal Shah, a Consultant Biochemist at Agilus Diagnostics, states that the very nature of winter plays a role in respiratory distress.

“With the increase in air density during the colder months, pollutant particles tend to become stagnant and move at a slower pace. This can irritate the respiratory tract, particularly in individuals who are susceptible to allergic rhinitis, asthma, or eczema,” she elaborates. Common symptoms include sneezing, coughing,

congestion, and wheezing. Dr. Shah recommends minimising exposure by staying indoors during peak pollution hours – usually early mornings and late evenings – and using N95 masks and air purifiers with HEPA filters when stepping outside. “Regularly cleaning AC vents and keeping windows closed on high AQI days can



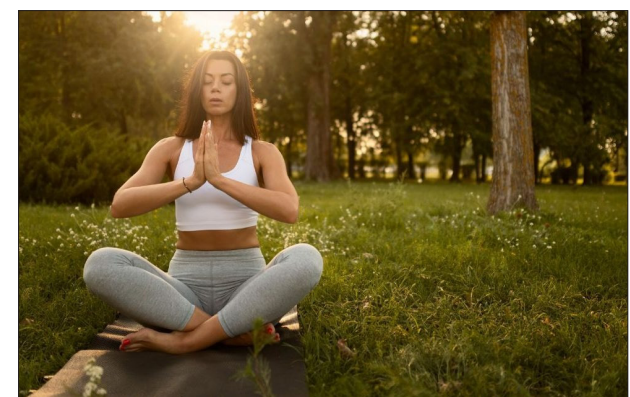
reduce irritation and hyperstimulation,” she adds. How To Keep Indoor Air Safe Dr. Ravi Shekhar Jha, Director & HOD – Pulmonology & Sleep Medicine, Fortis Escorts Faridabad, emphasises the importance of managing indoor environments. “Since people spend most of their time indoors, indoor air quality mat-

ters a lot. Using HEPA air purifiers and keeping humidity around 30–50% can significantly reduce allergens,” he says. He also recommends keeping windows shut when AQI levels spike and avoiding strenuous outdoor activity near traffic zones. “When pollution is high, it’s better to exercise indoors, stay hydrated, and use nasal saline rinses to flush out particles,” he advises. Maintaining cleanliness can also make a big difference. Regular vacuuming with HEPA filters, mopping floors, and dusting surfaces helps minimise allergens like pet dander and mould. For those with chronic allergies or asthma, Dr. Jha suggests working with a doctor to establish a preventive medication plan and to always keep inhalers handy. Children Are Especially At Risk

The youngest lungs suffer the most. Dr. Medha, paediatrician at Madhukar Rainbow Children’s Hospital, warns, “The current air pollution levels in Delhi have become a serious health risk for children. Their immune systems make them more vulnerable to the harmful effects of polluted air.”

Tips To Curb Impulsivity And Stress

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is frequently linked to hyperactivity, impulsivity, and challenges with concentration; however, there exists an emotional aspect that is equally important. Emotional dysregulation, increased stress responses, and impulsive behaviors can significantly influence the functioning of individuals with ADHD in educational, professional, and domestic settings. Developing emotional intelligence (EI) – the ability to recognise, understand, and manage emotions – can help bridge this gap, bringing greater calm, control, and confidence to everyday life. Understanding ADHD Beyond Attention According to Dr. Zankhana M Buch, Chief Medical Officer, Apollo AyurVAID, “ADHD affects both children and adults, though the manifestations and triggers differ across age groups. In children, the condition is often intrinsic – arising from higher energy levels compounded by inappropriate diet and lifestyle choices.” She explains that excessive sensory stimulation can intensify hyperactivity, while in adults, ADHD often stems from “work-life imbalance, chronic multitasking, ineffective stress management, and insufficient emotional vents,” all of which lead to emotional dysregulation and executive dysfunction. Ayurveda, she adds, associates ADHD with a Rajasic personality – driven by constant desire and stimulation. “Management focuses on harmonizing Ahara (diet), Achara (lifestyle), and Vichara (thoughts),” she says. A balanced, light, and Sattvic diet, regular routines, gentle evening practices, and adequate sleep help stabilise Vata energy and ease the mind. Building Emotional Awareness And Mindful Habits Children with ADHD often struggle to pause before reacting, says Dr. Sonam Kothari, Paediatric Neurologist and CEO & Co-founder of Butterfly Learnings. “When children cultivate emotional awareness, they gain the capacity to pause before reacting impulsively and respond to situations more thoughtfully,” she notes. Simple interventions like mindfulness exercises, art-based expression, and structured routines can help children identify triggers and channel their emotions constructively. Dr. Kothari emphasises the importance of empathy and modelling emotional intelligence. “When caregivers, teachers, and peers provide consistent support, children learn to manage stress and build stronger relationships.” These small but consistent efforts lay the foundation for lifelong emotional well-being. Practical Techniques For Everyday Calm For older children and adults, emotional regulation often requires structured tools. Dr. Ajit Singh Baghela, Consultant, Paediatric Neurology, Artemis Hospitals, recommends mindfulness techniques like deep breathing, meditation, or reflective pauses before responding. “The STOP method – Stop, Take a breath, Observe your feelings, and Proceed thoughtfully – creates a small but powerful space between impulse and action,” he explains. Dr. Baghela also suggests combining mental and physical strategies: stretching, walking, or any body-based activity that helps release excess energy and lower stress. “Structured routines help you know what to expect, which reduces overwhelm,” he adds. Evidence-based therapies like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) can further improve emotional control and interpersonal skills. While ADHD may manifest differently across individuals, emotional intelligence remains a universal tool for balance. Whether through mindful breathing, Ayurvedic routines, or guided self-reflection, these expert-backed strategies highlight one truth: managing ADHD isn’t about suppressing energy, it’s about directing it mindfully.



Sangma Unveils Major Welfare Schemes For Construction Workers

Guwahati, May 01: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma announced a series of welfare initiatives on International Workers' Day, Friday, May 1, aimed at improving the lives of construction workers and recognising their contribution to the state's development.

The initiatives were launched to mark the occasion and focus on social security, skill development, education, and digital access for workers and their families. Under the CM LIGHT scheme, eligible workers will receive Rs 5,000 as direct financial assistance. The government also introduced the Startup Toolkit Support Scheme to help skilled workers become self-employed by providing necessary tools. To improve educational opportunities, the



ENABLE initiative will offer reserved seats and full fee waivers for workers' children in educational institutions. The BUILD programme will focus on strengthening community infrastructure in areas with high worker populations. The government also launched a Digital Labour Chowk App, which will serve as a single platform for accessing welfare schemes and

job opportunities.

In addition, the state announced the extension of central social security schemes, including PM-SYM, PMJJBY, and PMSBY, with insurance premiums to be borne by the Board. Officials said these measures are aimed at ensuring dignity of labour, stronger social security, and inclusive growth for construction workers and their families.

Bail Denied To Zubeen Death Accused



Guwahati, May 01: A special fast-track court on Thursday denied bail to Shyamkanu Mahanta, the prime accused in the death of legendary music icon Zubeen Garg. Judge Sharmila Bhuyan cited Mahanta's "poor conduct" and the high risk of him absconding as primary reasons for the rejection.

Mahanta, the chief organizer of the festival Garg attended in Singapore, allegedly fled to Malaysia following the singer's drowning on September 19, 2025. He was only apprehended after a look-out notice was issued. While Singapore authorities ruled the death an "accidental drowning," Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has maintained it was "plain and simple murder."

Probed Tripura IFS Officer Vanishes; Manhunt Launched

Agartala, May 01: An Indian Forest Service officer facing investigation in connection with a high-profile cash seizure case has gone missing from a forest guest house in Agartala, prompting Tripura Police to launch a search operation. The officer, Gaurav Ravindra Wagh, was under the scanner of the Crime Branch following the recovery of a substantial amount of cash from a vehicle reportedly linked to him near Agartala Railway Station earlier this month.

The seizure triggered a formal inquiry into possible financial irregularities and misuse of his official position. Although he had not been formally arrested, Wagh was placed under close surveillance as part of the ongoing investigation. Subsequently, he was relieved of his post as Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of South Tripura and attached to the Forest Department headquarters in Agartala pending further proceedings.

According to sources, he had been instructed to stay at a designated forest guest house while cooperating with investigators. However, on Wednesday morning, officials

discovered that he was no longer present at the facility. Notably, his mobile phone was found abandoned in the room, raising suspicions of a deliberate attempt to evade tracking. Police officials confirmed that a manhunt has been launched to trace the officer, with multiple teams engaged in tracking his movements. Surveillance inputs and local intelligence are being utilised to locate him.

The case came to light after police detained Rajendra Chintaman Kaklij, a Mumbai-based relative of the IFS officer, at Agartala Railway Station with Rs 59.94 lakh in cash. Following his detention, Kaklij was produced before a court, and police have sought his custodial remand to investigate the source and intended use of the seized money.

According to sources, the large sum of cash was allegedly packed under suspicious circumstances at the DFO's official residence in South Tripura. After the seizure, the case was handed over to the Crime Branch unit of Tripura Police. The seizure was carried out by the Government Railway Police unit posted at Agartala Railway Station.

Manipur: Shutdown in Tengnoupal over arrest of Kuki-Zo leader

Guwahati, May 01: Normal life was paralyzed in Manipur's Tengnoupal district on Friday as Kuki-Zo civil society organizations enforced a 12-hour dawn-to-dusk shutdown. The protest followed the "arbitrary arrest" of social leader Otkhothang Baite on April 30. A coalition of groups, including the Kuki Students' Organisation and Hill Tribal Council, alleged that Baite—a former chairman of Canan Veng—was detained based on "questionable inputs." Protesters characterized the move as "selective targeting" of Kuki-Zo leaders and warned that such actions risk destabilizing the region's fragile peace.

The shutdown disrupted all commercial activities and transport. Demanding Baite's immediate release, the organizations appealed to the Central government for unbiased intervention, asserting that authorities are failing to pursue others involved in regional violence with equal vigor.

Manipur Police and Assam Rifles arrest man with illegal firearm in Senapati



Imphal, May 01: A joint team of Manipur Police and Assam Rifles apprehended a 33-year-old man and seized an illegal firearm along with a magazine loaded with live bullets in Senapati district near the Nagaland border on Thursday. Acting on reliable intelligence regarding the possession of narcotic substances, a joint team of the 16 Assam Rifles, led by Major Saransh Roy, and Senapati District Police, under the overall supervision of the SP, Senapati, initiated an operation against S. Chakho (33), son of Sani from Makhnan Centre Village.

Following a search conducted at his residence in Broadway, Senapati, in accordance with the law, no contraband was found. However, a foreign-made pistol was recovered from inside the house. Upon interrogation, the accused failed to produce a valid license for the firearm, prompting charges under the Arms Act, 1959. Furthermore, examination of the accused's mobile phone and analysis of WhatsApp chats and call records revealed his alleged involvement in aiding and abetting a criminal conspiracy related to the illegal drug trade.

The digital evidence indicated communication with multiple individuals regarding the purchase and sale of narcotics. The accused also admitted to peddling drugs to local addicts, attracting provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985. He was formally arrested at 3:30 PM after completing all mandatory legal formalities. Seized items included one 7.65 mm pistol marked "Made in Japan" along with one magazine, and two 7.65 mm live rounds.

The security forces also recovered one Redmi Note 14 5G mobile phone with SIM cards bearing the numbers 6009253135 and 8730003879, along with the Aadhaar card of the accused. A case has been registered at Senapati Police Station, and an investigation is currently underway.

Sikkim becomes India's first fully paperless judiciary

Guwahati, May 01: Sikkim has achieved a major breakthrough in judicial reforms by becoming the first state in India to operate a completely paperless judiciary, marking an important step towards digital courts in the country. The announcement was made by Chief Justice Justice Surya Kant during the inauguration of the Conclave on Technology and Judicial Education held in Gangtok on Friday.

The two-day event, organised at Chintan Bhawan and Samman Bhawan, is being hosted by the High Court of Sikkim in collaboration with the Supreme Court e-Committee. It has brought together judges, legal professionals, and international participants to discuss how technology is shaping courts and legal education. Calling the development a major transformation, Justice Surya Kant said digital systems are helping remove long-standing challenges such as distance and accessibility, especially in hilly regions like Sikkim. He added that virtual platforms are making it easier for people to seek justice without needing to travel. He also pointed out that India's judicial system is gradually shifting from traditional paper-based processes to digital systems through initiatives like the e-Courts project, real-time data tools, and AI-based platforms such as SUPACE and SUVAS. These are improving efficiency, transparency, and case handling.

However, he stressed that digital progress must be inclusive. Expanding e-Seva Kendras



and ensuring access for people with limited digital knowledge will be important. He also highlighted the need to protect judicial independence and maintain ethical standards while using AI. Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, who attended as the chief guest, described the achievement as a historic moment and reaffirmed the state's focus on digital governance and legal reforms. Chief Justice of the High Court of Sikkim, A. Muhamed Mustaque, said the shift represents not just digitisation but a deeper transformation aimed at improving access to justice at the grassroots level. The conclave which is held during Sikkim's golden jubilee year of statehood, is expected to play a key role in shaping a more transparent, efficient, and people-focused judicial system.



Mbappé Hamstring Injury Clouds Upcoming El Clásico



Madrid, Apr 27: Real Madrid have confirmed that star forward Kylian Mbappé has suffered a left leg injury, casting doubt over his availability for the crucial weeks ahead. In a statement released Monday, the club revealed that the 27-year-old has been diagnosed with a semitendinosus muscle injury. "Following tests carried out today on our player Kylian Mbappé by the Real Madrid Medical Services, he has been diagnosed with a semitendinosus muscle injury in his left leg. His recovery will be monitored," the statement read. No clear timeline has been provided, leaving uncertainty over his participation in the upcoming FIFA World Cup, where France national football team are set to begin their campaign on June 16 against Senegal national football team in Group I, alongside Iraq national football team and Norway national football team.

The injury appears to have originated during Madrid's 1-1 draw with Real Betis, when Mbappé signaled discomfort late in the second half and was substituted in the 81st minute. He went straight down the tunnel after being

replaced by Gonzalo García. Head coach Álvaro Arbeloa admitted after the match that the situation was unclear at the time. "He felt some discomfort. We will see how he evolves over the next few days," Arbeloa said.

Mbappé's absence would be a significant blow for Madrid. The Frenchman has been in scintillating form, leading the La Liga scoring charts with 24 goals this season. He is now a major doubt for the upcoming El Clásico against FC Barcelona on May 11—a fixture that could have major implications in the title race.

Madrid currently sit second in the table with 74 points from 33 matches, trailing leaders Barcelona by 11 points. Their domestic and European cup campaigns have already ended in disappointment, with a quarter-final exit in the Copa del Rey against Deportivo Alavés and a last-eight defeat to FC Bayern Munich in the UEFA Champions League. With the season reaching its decisive phase and international duty looming, all eyes will now be on Mbappé's recovery and whether he can return in time for club and country.

Kei Nishikori Set To Retire After Season

Tokyo, May 01: Kei Nishikori, the most decorated male tennis player in Asian history, announced Friday that he will retire at the end of the 2026 season. The 36-year-old, whose career has been defined by both historic milestones and a grueling battle with persistent injuries, confirmed the news on social media, admitting he was "reluctantly calling it quits." Nishikori became a national icon in 2014 when he became the first Japanese man to reach a Grand Slam final at the US Open, a run that included a stunning semifinal upset of Novak Djokovic. A former world No. 4 with 12 ATP titles and an Olympic bronze medal from Rio 2016, his impact on the sport in Asia is unparalleled.

Currently ranked No. 464 and competing on the Challenger Tour, Nishikori conceded his physical fitness is "barely hanging on." Despite the frustration of "repeated injuries," he expressed immense pride in his journey from training in Florida at age 14 to reaching the global top 10. He vowed to fight through his final remaining matches this season.



India's T20 WC Squad: Key Players Sidelined by Injury

Chennai, May 01: Injuries to all-rounders Amanjot Kaur and Kashvee Gautam headline concerns for the Indian team as the squad for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 was announced on Saturday. In the duo's absence, Chandigarh pacer Nandni Sharma has earned a maiden call-up, while Radha Yadav is making a comeback for the global event. "Amanjot, she was our key player. Unfortunately, she is not available. She is away from cricket for the next four to five months. It was very difficult to find someone like her who could come into that place. But still we are trying, we have got Radha back in the side," skipper Harmanpreet Kaur said in a press conference.

Earlier, in South Africa, Harmanpreet had hoped that Amanjot would be back in the side to provide the necessary balance, but that was not to be, as the all-rounder is down with a back injury. As seen during last year's ODI World Cup, Amanjot, who missed the SA series due to injury, was crucial to the balance and depth of the side. "She is also an all-rounder who can contribute with bat, ball and on the field. It was very hard to find a replacement for Amanjot. We replaced her with Kashvee, and now, she is also injured. We replaced her with Nandni," chief selector Amita Sharma said, adding that she has confidence in the pool of players picked for the T20 WC. Kashvee, who is down with a knee injury, is expected to undergo surgery, raising questions over India's management of their pacers.



In their absence, pressure will be on Renuka Thakur, Kranti Gaud and Arundhati Reddy to deliver in England. With the bat, the focus remains on India's top four. How the likes of Shafali Verma, Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues and Harmanpreet perform will be crucial to determine India's fate at the global event to be held in England from June 12 to July 5. India will have a one-week preparatory camp at CoE from May 10 before leaving for the three T20Is in England on May 22. Even as the injuries continue to affect the balance, this has opened the doors for the likes of Bharti Fulmali and Nandni. Both Fulmali and Nandni had excellent Women's Premier League (WPL) campaigns and are now being rewarded for the same. Fulmali has already played for India and made a comeback in Australia, while Nandni has earned her maiden call-up to the Indian team. Playing for Delhi Capitals, the pacer from Chandigarh finished as the joint-leading wicket-taker alongside Sophie Devine with 17 scalps. "Bharti has proven

herself in domestic and WPL. She has helped win crucial matches. She is a perfect fit for the No. 6/7 slot that we are looking for. Nandni is also a proven performer in WPL and is among the top wicket-takers. Despite losing our top players, I am sure they will come to the fore, and we have good options in them," Harmanpreet said. The skipper went on to add that India wanted to put behind the ghosts of 2024, where they got eliminated in the group stages and build on the success of the ODI World Cup. "The last T20 World Cup, unfortunately, we couldn't play well as a team. Keeping it in mind, we have been preparing hard since then, and we have tasted success in every series except the last one. Yes, there will be pressure and a bit of desperation, but what matters is how we prepare ourselves mentally for the big tournament and how everyone keeps themselves in the best possible shape. Whatever has happened is history. Now we just have to do the right things and keep doing it again and again," said Harmanpreet.

Max Verstappen sees light at the end of tunnel



Miami, May 01: Four-time world champion Max Verstappen said he could "see light at the end of the tunnel" after claiming an impressive second place in Saturday's qualifying for Sunday's Miami Grand Prix. The 28-year-old Dutchman, frustrated by progress at Red Bull

and the driving experience of racing in the new hybrid era of F1 cars, said his team's upgrades had made his car far more comfortable and pleasing to drive. "For sure, the car has not been great in the previous races," said Verstappen, whose previous best grid position this year was eighth.

On Sunday, he will start alongside championship-leading Italian teenager Kimi Antonelli of Mercedes, who claimed his third consecutive pole on Saturday. "From my side, I never felt comfortable with the layout of the car," said Verstappen. "I think over these last few weeks the team has been pushing flat-out to try and bring upgrades to the car and make me feel more comfortable with a lot of things and it really

paid off. "I feel more in control of the car again and then I can push a bit more. The upgrades are working and to be on the front row is way better than I expected heading into this weekend. "Now, let's start with a good start. I've not had a lot of them this year. We'll try to have a look at that, for sure, and see what the weather will do tomorrow, but I'm already very happy with where we are. "From here there's like light at the end of the tunnel, and we can just push on and try to close the gap further." Red Bull, in common with most leading teams, made use of F1's enforced five-week hiatus due to the conflict in the Middle East to deliver major upgrade packages for their cars. While Verstappen purred with satisfaction, his friend and rival

-- defending world champion Lando Norris of McLaren, who won Saturday morning's sprint race in convincing style from pole -- was unhappy at qualifying only fourth. "I think we did a good job but I think the others just did a really bad job yesterday and did what they should have done today... so I have no complaints. "It was trickier today with the wind and the high temperatures and I was struggling a big more for whatever reason. We didn't change anything. It was just the conditions." He revealed also that, like team-mate Oscar Piastri, he had struggled with power deployment problems and found it difficult to have a fully charged battery pack. "It wasn't right and we didn't have a clean run," he said. "And we need to understand why."