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# India wins the trophy without losing a match ● No other team has lifted the Champions Trophy thrice

## Rohit, Rahul shape India's third CT title triumph



**DUBAI, March 9:** India sealed an unprecedented third Champions Trophy triumph with an unblemished record as Rohit Sharma combined his inherent freedom with steely resolve to inspire his side to a four-wicket win in a closely-fought final against New Zealand, here Sunday.

India won the trophy without losing a match, reflecting their dominance in the tournament which they won back in 2002 and 2013. No other team has won the event thrice.

Well-timed fifties by Daryl Mitchell (63) and Michael Bracewell (53) steered the Kiwis to 251 for seven after Indian spinners led by Kuldeep Yadav applied the squeeze for a large part of their innings.

Indian batters needed to capitalise on that fine effort of the bowlers, and Rohit, who many believe was featuring in his last ODI match for India, led from the front, slipping into his turbocharged version almost immediately.

The chase of 252 grew tight in the business end while the Blackcaps spinners were operating on a sluggish pitch, but skipper Rohit's ebullient 83-ball 76 had already given them the cushion to overhaul the target in 49 overs.

KL Rahul with his 34 not out, there was no dramatic twist to the tale, leading the side past the finish line after India lost well-settled batters.

Pacer Nathan Smith, who replaced injured Matt Henry in the line-up, felt the heat as the 37-year-old Rohit hammered him for two sixes and as many fours in the beginning of the chase.

At the other end Shubman Gill (31), who helped Rohit to raise 105 runs for the opening wicket, was more subdued and the lone spark in his innings was a maximum off spinner Rachin Ravindra.

But a stunning catch by Glenn Phillips off left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner ended his stay, and opened a creek for the Kiwis. Virat Kohli came to the middle accompanied by loud cheers but his stay lasted just two balls, an effort to turn Michael Bracewell off his pads saw the master batter getting trapped plumb in front. By now, Rohit had decided to

knuckle down after racing 49 in the Power Play segment. In the next 16 overs the Mumbai man added only 27 runs more to his score, as he tried to play a rather forgotten role of innings building. His belief in his own defence too seemed to have come back as he smothered Santner and Bracewell quite effectively.

It ended when his charge against Ravindra resulted in a stumping by Tom Latham. India were 130 runs away from a win at that juncture.

India were 122 for three then and needed some consolidation, Shreyas Iyer (48) and Axar Patel (29) gave them precisely that during a 61 runs stand for the fourth wicket.

They carried India closer to the shore but Shreyas, who was dropped on 44 by Kyle Jamieson off Phillips, fell four runs later to Santner and Axar too perished to Bracewell. But those dismissals only created artificial excitement as a focused KL Rahul (34 not out) helmed India's march home. But the Indian spinners also can rightfully claim a good chunk of credit for this victory. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

### Vice-Prez Dhankhar admitted to AIIMS, condition stable

**NEW DELHI, March 9:** Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar was admitted to the AIIMS here early on Sunday after complaining of uneasiness and chest pain, sources said. Dhankhar (73) was taken to the hospital around 2 am and was admitted to the critical care unit (CCU) under Dr Rajiv Narang, head cardiology at AIIMS Delhi.

The vice-president is stable and under observation, a source said, adding that a group of doctors is monitoring his condition.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited AIIMS on Sunday afternoon and inquired about Dhankhar's health. In a post on X, Modi said, "Went to AIIMS and inquired about the health of Vice President Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar Ji. I pray for his good health and speedy recovery." Union Health Minister J P Nadda also visited AIIMS to inquire about Dhankhar's health. (PTI)

### Suspected thieves enter DIPR office

**GUWAHATI, March 9:** Suspected thieves broke into the office of the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) in Guwahati in the early hours of Sunday, officials said.

DIPR officials and police told PTI that no items were found to be stolen, but files and papers were found scattered on the floor and tables. "We received a complaint from the DIPR about a theft case. However, we found that no item had been lost. We have registered a case and started our investigation," a police officer said.

When contacted, a senior official of the Directorate of IPR said that laptops, cameras and other valuable items were lying in the open and nothing had been stolen. "We found that our almirahs and lockers were opened by the thieves and all papers were out in the open. We are not able to understand the motive of the persons who entered the office," he added.

Incidentally, the DIPR office is located in the high-security zone of Dispur. It is opposite to the MLA quarters and 100 metres away from the secretariat complex. (PTI)

### AIGMF holds historic executive meeting in Kaziranga

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, March 9:** The All India Glass Manufacturers Federation (AIGMF) made history by hosting its Executive Meeting at Kaziranga, Assam, under the hospitality of NES Refractories LLP.

This marks the first time in AIGMF's 80-year history that the Federation's executive meeting was held in Kaziranga, Assam.

The meeting saw participation from esteemed delegates from India and abroad, including Japan, USA, Uganda, and Indonesia. The program was moderated (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Normal life affected in Kuki-dominated areas of Manipur as agitators enforce shutdown

**IMPHAL/CHURACHANDPUR, March 9:** Normal life was affected in Kuki-dominated areas of Manipur on Sunday as agitators enforced an indefinite shutdown called by Kuki-Zo groups against a "crackdown by security forces".

The situation in Kangpokpi district, where at least one person was killed and 40 others were injured in clashes between Kuki demonstrators and security forces on the previous day, remained tense but calm on Sunday.

In other Kuki-dominated areas in Churachandpur and Tengnoupal districts as well, protesters burnt tyres and blocked roads with boulders, which the security forces were seen clearing.

However, no fresh violence has been reported so far. Business establishments remained closed and few vehicles were seen plying the roads in Kuki-dominated areas in the state. Agitators were seen asking people to remain indoors.

Additional security forces have been deployed in Gamghiphai and other parts of the district along the NH-2 (Imphal-Dimapur Road) and vehicular patrolling was being conducted to ensure law and order, a district official said.

A protester was killed while over 40 others,



including women and policemen, were injured in clashes between Kuki demonstrators and security forces in different parts of Kangpokpi district on Saturday, officials said.

Clashes erupted between demonstrators and security forces in the Kuki-dominated district after police fired tear gas shells to disperse them, as they opposed Union home minister Amit Shah's directive allowing free movement across the state. Protesters clashed with security

forces till late on Saturday night as the agitators used catapults against the law enforcers, he said, adding windshields of at least five vehicles of the security forces were damaged.

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), a Kuki-Zo body, extended support to the indefinite shutdown called by Kuki Zo Council (KZC) in all areas inhabited by the community in Manipur to protest the crackdown of security forces on demonstrators protesting free movement along all roads in the ethnic strife-torn state.

In a statement, ITLF said, "Yesterday, the Government of India's decision to allow the movement of Meiteis through Kuki-Zo areas led to agitation and protest in Kangpokpi... the security forces used excessive force on the protesters." Endorsing the indefinite shutdown called in all Kuki-Zo areas, ITLF asked everyone to "adhere to the shutdown in solidarity".

"We respect everyone who came out to protest yesterday," the ITLF said.

Manipur Police, in a statement, said 27 security personnel were injured in the attacks by the Kuki protesters who pelted them with stones, and barricaded (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 100% electrification of Assam's entire railway network by '25: Somanna



**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, March 9:** Minister of State for Railways V Somanna on Sunday said that Assam would achieve cent per cent electrification of the entire railway network within 2025 itself reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

He said this while talking to the press during his visit to Guwahati Railway station on the final day of his three-day tour of Assam and the Northeast. He was accompanied by NFR general manager Chetan Kumar Shrivastava along with senior railway (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 'Despite scoring high, knowledge of candidates limited': Assam to seek stricter NEET security

**GUWAHATI, March 9:** The Assam government will urge the Centre to increase the security at NEET centres, including checking the biometrics of candidates at the gate, as it has been found that despite scoring high numbers in the medical entrance exam, the knowledge of many students is limited, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday.

Addressing a press conference here after a Cabinet meeting, Sarma said faculty members at medical colleges in the state have pointed out that students who crack the entrance examinations

with high numbers are not as good as they should have been.

"Many professors told us that many students' practical or academic knowledge is very limited despite scoring high numbers in such a big examination. We had asked the Special Branch to probe the matter around one-and-a-half-year back," he added.

Sarma said the police have informed the government that most of the entrance exam centres are in private institutes, not in government schools or colleges.

"We didn't interfere so far as it is conducted by Delhi. The Cabinet

today took three decisions, to request the central government. The first is to hold the medical entrance exam only in government schools," he added.

The state government will also request the NTA and Ministry of Education to conduct the NEET under the direct supervision of the district commissioners and superintendents of police, the CM said.

"The third request will be to have a biometric testing of the candidates before they enter the exam halls. If these steps are taken, I believe the medical examination process will (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Two British High Commission employees quizzed by SIT

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, March 9:** Two employees of the British High Commission have been questioned by the Assam Police's Special Investigation Team (SIT) in the national capital, in connection with Pakistani national Ali Tauqeer Sheikh.

"The SIT team interrogated the two British High Commission employees to gather more information about their ties to Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, who is named in an Assam Police FIR for allegedly attempting to disturb communal harmony. Sheikh is also under investigation for his alleged involvement in obtaining sensitive national security information," said a senior police official on condition of anonymity on Sunday. He further said that the SIT has also questioned an environmental scientist in connection with this investigation.

Earlier, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma claimed that the SIT, which was established to probe the links between Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi and his wife Elizabeth Gogoi to Pakistan, has made significant progress in its initial investigation.

"The SIT has uncovered important evidence related to Pakistani national Ali Sheikh, who has been questioned for his multiple visits to India and controversial social media posts expressing an intense interest in Assam's politics. Sheikh visited India with a large Pakistani delegation, which included the Attorney General of Pakistan," Sarma had said.

According to CM Sarma, Sheikh and his team made frequent visits to India until 2018, often staying in small hotels to avoid public attention. "We are investigating the entire network related (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Budget session set for 'EPIC' showdown; budget, Waqf bill top priority for govt

**NEW DELHI, March 9:** Parliament's Budget session resumes on Monday amid indications of an 'EPIC' showdown between the government and the opposition which is planning to raise issues such as the alleged manipulation of electoral rolls, the fresh bout of violence in Manipur and India's handling of the Trump administration.

The focus of the government will be on getting Parliament nod for the demands for grants, completion of the budgetary process, seeking approval for the Manipur budget and passage of the Waqf Amendment Bill. Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to move a statutory resolution seeking Parliament approval for the proclamation of President's Rule in Manipur.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is also scheduled to table the budget for Manipur on Monday. Manipur has been under President's Rule since February 13 after the resignation of chief minister N Biren Singh.

The opposition said it is set to corner the government over the issue of duplicate Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers.

The Trinamool Congress has taken the lead in flagging the issue, following which the Election Commission declared that it would take corrective measures within the next three months.

The Election Commission had rejected the Trinamool Congress claim that the voter lists were manipulated to allow voters from other states to exercise their franchise in West Bengal.

The poll body also made it clear that while the EPIC numbers of some voters "may be identical", other details such as demographic information, Assembly constituency and polling booth are different.

Trinamool Congress leaders are meeting the Election Commission on Monday and have also rallied other opposition parties, including the Congress, DMK, Shiv Sena-UBT, to (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## 'India is just a really critical, top market for London'

### India pegged as No 1 source market for London's ambitious new 'Growth Plan'

**LONDON, March 9:** The UK's capital city has unveiled an ambitious new 'Growth Plan' to provide an estimated 27 billion pounds extra tax revenue to fund vital public services in London and across the country, with India pegged as its number one source market in terms of foreign direct investment.

The plan, unveiled recently by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan along with growth agency London & Partners, aims to restore productivity growth to an average of 2 per cent a year in the next decade, which is hoped would make London's economy 107 billion pounds larger by 2035.

India has been on a growth curve for the last three years, overtaking the US as London's single-largest FDI source market in 2022-23 and continuing through 2023-24.

"Foreign direct investment from India has been the fastest growing and has been our number one market for the last two years," said

Laura Citron, CEO of London & Partners.

"So, it's Indian tech companies setting up operations in London. Equally, if we look at it as a student market, post-Brexit, India has really rapidly grown as a student market. It's now the number two source market for London after China. It's also a fast-growing tourism market for London; India is just a really critical, top market for London," she said.

According to official data for 2023-24, London played host to 38,625 Indian students, reflecting a steep growth curve over the past 10 years with the country's share of all international students in London increasing from under 5 per cent to over 20 per cent.

"It is positive that London's quantity of Indian students has increased in the past decade, with Indian students now accounting for over 20 per cent of international students enrolled at a London university," said Mark Hertlein, Head of Global Engagement at City St George's University and Chair of the International Network at London Higher, the city's advocate for higher education.

"At City St George's the number of Indian students joining us has doubled over recent years... They become lifelong ambassadors of our capital city and create lasting and powerful bridges between our nations," he said.

Ashish Devalekar, executive vice president and Head of Europe at Indian IT major Mphasis, hailed London's attractiveness as an innovation powerhouse and a global hub for world-leading businesses and talent. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)





# Assam DGP visits Bodofa Fwthar to review ABSU conference preparation

*Scheduled from March 13 to 16 featuring series of events*

HT Correspondent

**KOKRAJHAR, March 9:** Assam Director General of Police (DGP) Harmeet Singh on Sunday visited the Bodofa Fwthar, Dotsma in Kokrajhar to inspect the preparations for the upcoming 57th Annual Conference of the All Bodo Students Union.

DGP was accompanied by MLA Lawrence Islay, ABSU president Dipen Boro, and other senior police officials. DGP Singh assessed the venue to ensure that all necessary arrangements, particularly security measures, are in place for the high-profile event.

The senior police officer discussed on logistical arrangements, crowd management ensuring the safety of all attendees. The conference is anticipated to draw a significant gathering, making security a key priority.

The four-day ABSU conference, scheduled from March 13 to March 16 would feature a series of events, including sports competitions, educational sessions, and cultural activities.

Union Education minister Dharmendra Pradhan is scheduled to participate on March 14, where he would engage in an interactive session with students.

On the concluding day, Union home min-



ister Amit Shah and Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma are expected to attend the open session. Several 20 sub-committees of the confer-

ences are involved in the conference's preparation and arrangements to meet a smooth successful of the conference.

A science exhibition, space lab exhibition, flowers exhibition etc are being installed in the conference complex which is expected to attract the visitors in the conference.

During the delegate session, more than 6000 delegate and observers from 22 district committees, unit committees across the country are going to participate in the delegate session.

During the concluding day, the open session would be witnessed by gathering of nearly 2 lakh people from various districts to mark the grand celebration of the conference.

ABSU president Dipen Boro said that necessary preparation and arrangements have been going in full swing to meet a grand success of the event.

He said that the reception committee and sub-committees were working dedicatedly towards the completion of the preparation and arrangements. He said that the students union has been emphasizing for bringing a healthy discussion and strategic planning to have a congenial educational environment, social upliftment across the state.

## KAAC CEM public interaction continues



HT Correspondent

**HAMREN, March 9:** The Interaction programme of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) continued with another meeting held in Borkok, Duar Amla Member of Autonomous Council (MAC) Constituency on Sunday.

In the interaction program, the chief executive member (CEM) of KAAC, Tuliram Ronghang, addressing the people, said that inter-district issues of the constituency will be solved through dialogue. KAAC has been taking steps to implement development schemes in every corner of the Duar Amla

constituency.

The school would also be provincialised; the office of block development office would also be taken up.

The CEM promised that transportation and building infrastructure would also be improved to attract tourists.

Local MAC and also executive member (EM) of KAAC, Prabhat Chandra Taro; MLAs Darsing Ronghang, Bidya Sing Englang and Rup Sing Teron; former MP Horen Sing Bey; EMs Uphing Maslai, Madhuram Lekhe and Madhurya Dhekal Phukan were also present.

## Two cannabis dealers apprehended at Nagsankar

HT Correspondent

**BISWANATH CHARALI, March 9:** Two individuals identified as Biswajit Rajgarh (29), son of Binod Rajgarh and Prem Urang (23) son of Parha Urang both from Majbat village under Udalguri District were detained at Nagsankar Centre under Sootea PS, based on reliable sources on Sunday, informed Trilochan Das, officer-in-charge of Sootea PS.

Their bags were checked in the presence of independent witnesses, revealing the presence of cannabis (Ganja). The narcotic substance was measured with a digital apparatus, confirming a net weight of 10.400 kg.

## Self defense training held in Baksa

HT Correspondent

**KOKRAJHAR, March 9:** Self-defense training under Baksa district for young women has been going on under the banner of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme under 5 ICDS blocks (Baska, Tihu Barama, Dhamdhama, Jahal and Gobardhana).

It got underway in December 2, 2024 and a total of 130 girls and young women are undergoing training.

The objective of the camp is to create awareness on importance of self defense, life skills and personal safety skills especially for girls and young women which would make the society aware through demonstration by the on-going camps in the district.

Instructors of self-defense training under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme Baksa are- Danswring Daimary (WUSU-NS-NIS Certificate, Coach and National Judge and referee (Black Belt 1st Dan (Kick Boxing). He took in-charge for training at Mushalpur centre under Baska ICDS Block. Dharani Dhar Basumatary- Kung Fu Black Belt 1st Dan is in-charge for training under Gobardhana ICDS Block.

Bidon Baro- Kung fu, Black Belt 1st Dan. He is in-charge for training under Dhamdhama ICDS block.

Rajen Ramchiary-Kung fu, Black Belt 3rd Dan, National Judge and referee. He is in-charge for training under Tihu Barama ICDS Block.

Sensei Janak Uzir, BPES, Dist Tech Director, Black Belt 4th Dan, Karate, (Kanyakumari & Chennai, India. He is overall in-charge for self defense training under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Baksa District and additionally looking after Jahal ICDS Block of Baksa Dist.

## Dhubri Medical College and Hospital successfully performs first spinal surgery

*Assam CM lauds achievement*

HT Correspondent

**DHUBRI, March 9:** Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has extended his congratulations to Dhubri Medical College and Hospital for successfully conducting its first spinal surgery, marking a significant milestone for the institution.

Taking to social media platform X, the chief minister lauded the hospital's achievement, emphasising the availability of advanced medical facilities and expert doctors in government hospitals.

He encouraged citizens to seek specialized treatments at medical colleges without financial concerns, as such procedures are now covered under government healthcare schemes.

Dr. Ankumoni Saikia, principal of Dhubri Medical

College and Hospital provided details about the surgery, stating that a 16-year-old female patient from Dhubri district underwent a complex spinal procedure. The patient had a spinal tumor, which led to a post-traumatic fracture and neurological deficits.

The medical team successfully removed the tumor, performed decompression, and fixed a screw in the spine.

The surgery was conducted under the Ayushman Bharat scheme, ensuring zero cost for the patient.

Dr Saikia further highlighted that the hospital is now capable of performing other critical procedures, including total knee replacement and hip replacement surgeries, reinforcing its commitment to advanced healthcare services.

## Cheque distribution amongst ex-NDFB members held in Kokrajhar

HT Correspondent

**KOKRAJHAR, March 9:** In a step towards rehabilitating 678 former NDFB members, cheques of Rs 4 lakh each were given away in Kokrajhar on Saturday.

The cheque distribution ceremony took place at the Bodofa Cultural Complex, Chandamari in Kokrajhar amidst a huge gathering.

Pramod Boro, the chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), Assam cabinet ministers, Urkhao Gwra Brahma, Ashok Singhal, MPs Rwngrwa Narzary, Joyanta Basumatary, BTR executive members, Ranjit Basumatary, Saikhong Basumatary, Sajal Singha, MLA Lawrence Islay, ABSU president Dipen Boro, additional DGP, Hiren Chandra Nath were graced the occasion and handed over the cheques to the former members of the NDFB organisation.

In his speech, the CEM of BTR, Boro stated that the NDFB entered into ceasefire in 2005 looking for peaceful negotiation with the government of India. The Bodos started statehood movement since 1967 under the banner of PTCA. Later, the ABSU started democratic mass movement since 1987 while BLT and NDFB started arms movement.

"Where there is struggle, there is rebuilding and reconstruction of the community. Indians fought with the British and after Independence, rebuilding of India started," Boro said.

He said that common people extended support to the ABSU, BLT and NDFB and many innocent villagers faced atrocity of security

forces, some of them jailed and became martyrs.

"We are to think of pain and suffer of common villagers," he said.

He mentioned that only 300 BLT cadres got rehabilitated in the last 17 years but within short time, over 4000 NDFB cadres have been given rehabilitation cheque through the spirit of the BTR Peace Accord clauses.

The government of BTR has decided to impart pre-training to ex-NDFB cadres to absorb in para-military forces, he said adding that the council government has written to the authority to absorb the youths in the Territorial Army.

"This is the time of reconstruction, not for struggle, he said adding that the cases of non-heinous cases were being withdrawn while heinous cases were being examined and state government has been taking due initiatives. He also said the government of BTR had been extending support in dealing with withdrawal of cases.

"I'm glad to attend the ceremonial distribution of Fixed Deposit Certificates (One-Time Grant) to 678 surrendered NDFB cadres at the Bodofa Cultural Complex, Kokrajhar—the City of Peace—in the presence of esteemed dignitaries. With today's distribution, the total number of ex-cadres supported in their journey towards peace and dignity has risen to 4,881, building on the 4,203 who were previously assisted. This initiative marks a crucial step in ensuring sustainable livelihoods and successful rehabilitation, offering ex-cadres a renewed

## Sivasagar Govt Boys' 77 batch reunion meeting held



HT Correspondent

**SIVASAGAR, March 9:** The Sivasagar Govt MP HS School's HSVC 1977 batch reunion meeting was held on Saturday at Maral Ghar Resort, Rajimai Sivasagar.

The participants became nostalgic in each other's company, sharing and recounting their school day memories over a hearty meal together.

The group stood silently for a minute praying for the 18 class mates who are no longer alive.

A 36 member committee was formed in the meeting with Manoj

Kumar Bhagwati as president, Rajiv Barpujari as secretary, Chandan Das, assistant secretary and Phulbar Dihinia as the Treasurer.

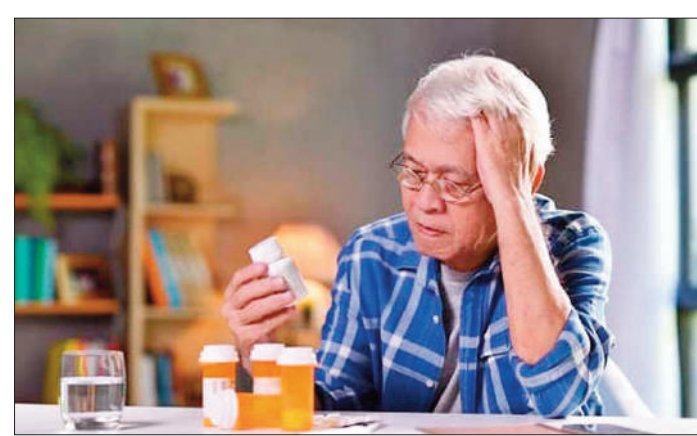
The batch mates with former DGP Bhaskarjyoti Mahanta and a number of retired bureaucrats among them took three resolutions: first to make a detailed information of the families of the deceased members, second to honour the teachers that taught them, and awarding talented students of the school showing skills in sports and scientific adaptations

## Polypharmacy and self-medication pose risk to geriatric population

*Indian Council of Medical Research Centre for Ageing and Mental Health, NMCH Nagaon conduct study*

**HT Bureau**  
**GUWAHATI, March 9:** A door-to-door study conducted in 6 cities in India by researchers from Indian Council of Medical Research Centre for Ageing and Mental Health, NMCH Nagaon, Safdarjung Hospital etc. published in Scientific Reports, revealed significant findings regarding medication usage and self-medication practices among older adults.

The study analysed 2,741 prescribed medicines (solid oral formulations) and found that 173 out of 600 participants had prescriptions containing potentially inappropriate medications (PIMs)—drugs that may be unnecessary or harmful—while 20.3 percent were missing essential medicines, classified as potential prescribing omissions (PPOs). Self-medication was prevalent at 19.7%, with notable associations with living alone, comorbidities, and recent hospitalizations. Polypharmacy (use of five or more medications simultane-



ously) was prevalent, with 33.7% of individuals taking multiple medications. Dr Mandeep Sarma, Clinical Pharmacist from Assam and co-author of the study expressed concern over the lack of awareness and unsafe practices that were found among self-medication individuals. He further emphasized that

these findings underscore the complexity of medication management among older adults and highlighted the need for comprehensive interventions to optimize medication use and promote safe practices.

The most commonly prescribed drugs were antihypertensives, antidiabetic medications, cholesterol-lowering drugs, calcium

supplements, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). However, there was a notable omission of crucial therapies, such as anti-clotting medications for diabetic patients with cardiovascular risks, aspirin or clopidogrel for those with coronary artery disease, and calcium or vitamin D for osteoarthritis patients.

Concerningly, self-medication was widespread, with 65.3% of self-medicators lacking proper knowledge, 50% unaware of the risks, and 40.7% engaging in unsafe practices. The most frequently self-administered drugs were NSAIDs (used by nearly 60% of individuals), paracetamol (used by about 42%), and antibiotics for respiratory infections and diarrhea (used by roughly one-third). Overall, the study underscores the urgency of addressing polypharmacy and self-medication among older adults in urban Indian communities to mitigate potential health risks and improve overall well-being.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

You have to believe in yourself when no one else does - Serena Williams

Downward trend of crude prices

Oil prices have hit their lowest since October and by all indications the downward move is far from over. Brent has already dipped below 70 dollars per barrel as the market is feeling the weight of a supply overhang...

Prices experienced a brief rebound following comments by Russia's deputy prime minister, suggesting that OPEC+ might reverse its decision to increase oil production. Despite plans to start pumping more oil in April, Brent crude prices surged to over \$71 a barrel.

Prices have slipped as markets reacted to U.S. tariff threats on Mexico and Canada and OPEC+ confirming its plan to turn the production taps back on in April. The tariffs, initially set to take effect, have now been put on ice...

Canny Canadians take the fight home to President Trump's tariffs

Canada has found a unique way to fight the 25% tariffs slapped by the US President Donald Trump even as Trump put on hold for a month the tariffs that were to come into effect...

Replacing Californian tomatoes with Italian tomatoes. Ohio-made pepperoni with meats produced in Ontario and Quebec. Coca Cola with sparkling water, sweetened with Canadian maple syrup.

At the end of January, as US President Donald Trump ramped up threats to annex Canada and wreck its economy with tariffs, Graham Palmateer, who runs a pizza joint in Toronto's west-end, told his customers he'd be making some swaps to his fridges and shelves...

"At one point I just figured, that's enough, I'm going to do this," Palmateer, the owner of Gram's Pizza, told CNN. An unfamiliar emotion has been brewing in normally polite Canada: Anger.

Since Trump first threatened to enact sweeping tariffs on Canadian imports and began referring to the US' northern neighbour as the 51st state, animosity toward the US, and its leader, has been mounting, a report from CNN aid.

Canadians have cancelled vacations south of the border and loudly booed "The Star-Spangled Banner" at sports events. An ice hockey game between the two countries last month quickly turned into a geopolitical event as players on both sides threw fists.

Others, like Palmateer, have boycotted US products - not always an easy task in a country that has been economically tied to its southern neighbour for decades, with trade exceeding \$760 billion last year.

As Trump targets one of his biggest trading allies, Canada, it has given rise to a rare moment of unity in a country that faced a crisis of leadership months ago following the people's frustrations over Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's leadership reaching boiling point...

Trump has blamed Trudeau of exploiting the situation by stoking emotions on his tariffs asking Canadians to fight back so that he could stay in power. Trump's actions have fuelled a surge in Canadian patriotism and disrupted the country's politics in an election year...



and try to create fights," said Torontonian Dylan Lobo, who runs online directory Made in Canada, which has seen a surge in traffic in recent months as Canadians look to support domestic brands in response to Trump's threats.

"It's an attack on Canada," he said. After months of warnings, Trump on Tuesday slapped 25% tariffs on nearly all Canadian goods, sending markets plummeting and driving Canada-US relations to a new low.

Almost immediately, Canadian leader Trudeau responded with matching tariffs on 30 billion Canadian dollars (\$20.8 billion) worth of American goods, with potentially more to come.

"Canadians are reasonable, and we are polite, but we will not back down from a fight - not when our country and the well-being of everyone in it is at stake," Trudeau said Tuesday.

Trump claimed he told Trudeau on a Wednesday telephone call that the Canadian leader hadn't done enough to curb fentanyl crossing the border, though official estimates say that only a minuscule amount arrives from the northern neighbour as compared to Mexico that smuggles the bulk.

Trump got off the phone from Trudeau and called it ending in a friendly manner. He suggested after the call that the outgoing Trudeau could be using the tariff issue to "stay in power."

Later in the week, the US President announced brief reprieves from the tariffs for automakers, and for goods that fall under the North American Free Trade Agreement negotiated during Trump's first term, the United States-Mexico-

Canada Agreement. But for many, the two months of back-and-forth with Trump on tariffs have irreparably damaged ties.

"The relationship has been changed forever," British Columbia Premier David Eby told reporters this week.

"We've got friends, family and relationships that have gone back for generations across the border. We love our American family members," he added. But Canadians "will never again put ourselves in the position of being so dependent on the United States."

Since returning to the White House in January, Trump's repeated threats against Canada - punctuated by him mockingly referring to Trudeau as "governor" - have struck a nerve in the country, America's longtime friend and ally.

"I can tell you that Canadians right now are upset, we're angry, we're dismayed," said John Liedtke, from Windsor, Ontario, which neighbours the US city of Detroit. "I know of people who have said, 'I'm never going to step foot on that side of the border again.'" CNN quoted him as saying.

Nikki Gauthier, a retired nurse living in St. Catharines, Ontario, said she felt anger "right off the bat," when she heard about the "unkind and unwarranted" US tariffs. Gauthier said she cancelled her subscription with US tech giant Amazon in favour of the Chinese online marketplace Temu, and has been carefully inspecting product labels in the grocery store and prioritizing Canadian products when she can.

Canadian officials responded swiftly to Trump's move, with Ontario Premier Doug Ford directing workers at the province's government-run liquor retailers to remove all US products - from California chardonnay to Jack Daniel's whisky - from the shelves. The Liquor Control Board of Ontario is one of the world's largest wholesalers and sells about \$1 billion worth of US liquor per year, according to Ford.

Ford told CNN's Wolf Blitzer on Thursday his province is implementing a 25% tariff on electricity exports to 1.5 million Americans' homes in Minnesota, Michigan and New York next week.

This isn't the first time Canadians have fought Trump tariffs. Seven years ago, during his first term as president, Trump imposed a 25% tariff on all foreign steel imports and a 10% tariff on aluminum imports while in the middle of negotiating a free trade agreement with Canada and Mexico.

The website Lobo runs was created in 2018 to support Canadian businesses and combat those US tariffs. He said he's gone from receiving four to five submissions for new businesses a day to nearly 5,000 in the past few weeks, with the site's daily traffic jumping tenfold from previous years.

"I've never witnessed such a large response from the community," said Lobo, who runs the site solo as a "passion project." Palmateer, the Toronto pizza shop owner, said making the switch from US products - including dropping American retailer Costco as a supplier - has been relatively easy, and has been met with resounding support from his community.

"It's been a while since I've seen Canadians united about much," Palmateer said. "This seems to be something pretty much everybody is on the same page about."

As Canadians' opinion of the US and its leader has plunged, their perception of their own country has improved, said David Coletto, CEO of Canadian polling and research firm Abacus Data.

In a recent survey, the number of Canadians who said they think the country is headed in the right direction hit a two-year high, up to 30% from just 19% when Trudeau resigned in January, Coletto said.

Patriotism - traditionally less overt in Canada than in the US - is on the rise. The Canadian flag, which had in recent years become associated with 2022's right-wing "Freedom Convoy" protests opposing Covid-19 vaccines and restrictions, has been rebranded as a symbol of national pride and resistance to Trump. Canadian Flag maker Flags Unlimited's sales have doubled from a year ago, the company's owner said. (IPA Service)

DEGREE OF THOUGHT By: T N Ashok

Myanmar's struggle: The unfinished war against the Junta

By: Dipak Kurmi

In the heart of Southeast Asia, Myanmar remains embroiled in a battle that has outlasted expectations and defied conventional military calculations. The nation's military, the Tatmadaw, has held sway since 1962, but the coup of February 2021 has triggered an unprecedented resistance.

China's position in the conflict is marked by strategic ambiguity. While it initially hedged its bets, supporting both the junta and certain EAOs, recent shifts suggest a firm alignment with the military regime.

China's next prime minister - to rethink his messaging. "We, as Canadians, we don't go out

imply 42% of Myanmar's landmass under its control, it has disrupted key supply lines, seized military command centers, and orchestrated significant defections within the junta's ranks. Corruption, low morale, and widespread desertions have weakened the Tatmadaw, with some battalions reduced to mere fractions of their intended strength.

The international diaspora has played a crucial role, providing unprecedented financial and strategic support. The term "watermelons," referring to the PDF fighters - green for their uniforms and red for their National League for Democracy (NLD) allegiance - reflects the ideological undercurrents of the resistance.

China's recent ceasefire brokering with EAOs in Kachin, Shan, and Kokang underscores its intent to stabilize the military regime while maintaining a veneer of diplomatic neutrality. With 20,000 new recruits joining the junta, Beijing appears to have concluded that the resistance lacks the capability to secure outright victory.

China's next prime minister - to rethink his messaging. "We, as Canadians, we don't go out

The future of US support for Ukraine?

By: Dr. Satyawan Saurah

U.S. support for Ukraine has seen significant changes under President Donald Trump. Recently, military aid and intelligence sharing with Ukraine have been halted, as the U.S. seeks to encourage Kiev to engage in peace talks with Russia. This shift has raised concerns about Ukraine's defense capabilities, particularly the availability of U.S.-made Patriot missile systems...



ability to maintain its defense against Russia's greater forces. On the other hand, if aid continues at current or increased levels, it could significantly enhance Ukraine's capabilities over time.

Relations between the US and Ukraine have been crucial in influencing the geopolitical landscape since Russia's invasion in 2022. Through 2024, the US had provided over \$119 billion in aid to Ukraine, but recent political changes and budget limitations have cast doubt on the future of this assistance.

The sudden cancellation of the planned diplomatic lunch signals a lack of goodwill, causing concern among Kiev and European leaders. Additionally, many Republican politicians have supported the current position of the US government. A reduction in US military assistance could encourage Russia to intensify its actions in Ukraine, taking advantage of the resulting power vacuum.

Russia's growing economic ties with China, particularly in energy exports, reflect this geopolitical shift. European countries may need to take steps to fill the void left by the US withdrawal, which could put pressure on their economies. Germany and the UK have already committed to new military support in light of US uncertainties. A fragmented Western alliance could lead to a stalemate in a conflict, leading to long-term instability.

The EU's new €50 billion aid initiative aims to mitigate the effects of a potential US withdrawal. The power vacuum could prompt Russia to challenge NATO's resolve in Eastern Europe. Russian hybrid warfare tactics in Moldova and the Baltics show how Moscow tests Western vulnerabilities. European countries dependent on Russian gas could face a renewed energy crisis, as highlighted by the 2022 Nord Stream pipeline sabotage incident, which exposed Europe's vulnerability to energy warfare.



The resistance has been both strategic and relentless. Operation 1027, launched in October 2023 by the Three Brotherhood Alliance - comprising the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and the Arakan Army (AA) - proved to be a game-changer. While the northern states have witnessed sustained rebel victories, the Arakan Army in Rakhine has posed a significant threat to junta strongholds in the south. The momentum of the resistance, however, has been met with an evolving counter-strategy by the military, making the conflict increasingly complex.

The Malacca Strait. The gas pipeline from Kyaukphyu to Kunming provides China with direct access to the Indian Ocean, and infrastructure projects are reinforcing this strategic foothold.

Russia, too, has played a decisive role in sustaining the junta, emerging as its primary arms supplier since 2021. Equipment worth \$406 million has been delivered, including six Su-30 fighter jets, significantly enhancing the junta's aerial capabilities. This military support is poised to increase civilian casualties, further entrenching the cycle of violence. The diplomatic backing from Moscow and Beijing has also shielded the military from broader international repercussions, limiting the effectiveness of sanctions and global condemnation.

Despite these challenges, the resistance remains formidable. With approx-

The US has been a vital source of advanced weapons and intelligence that has bolstered Ukraine's defense capabilities. If US aid is reduced or stops altogether, experts believe this would severely hamper Ukraine's













# Aamir Khan, Javed Akhtar announce special film festival 'Aamir Khan: Cinema Ka Jadugar'

**NEW DELHI, March 9:** Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan and veteran lyricist-screenwriter Javed Akhtar on Sunday announced a special festival titled "Aamir Khan: Cinema Ka Jadugar", which will screen some of the actor's best films in theatres once again.

The festival, which aims to honour Aamir's contribution to Indian cinema, will commence on his 60th birthday, March 14, and will run till March 27 across PVR INOX theatres in the country.

Films to be screened under the "Aamir Khan: Cinema Ka Jadugar" are: "Dangal", "3 Idiots", "Lagaan", "Hum Hain Rahi Pyar Ke", "Raja Hindustani", "Ghajini", "Akele Hum Akele Tum", "Andaz Apna Apna", "PK", "Dhoom 3", "Rang De Basanti", "Ghulam", "Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak", "Secret Superstar", "Laal Singh Chadha", "Taare Zameen Par", "Sarfaroosh", "Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar", "Talaash", "Fanaa", "Dil Chahta Hai" and "Dil".

Akhtar said only Aamir could have done the films that he has worked on in the last three decades.

"Aamir did a film with Ashutosh ('Lagaan') with whom he had a flop before. A new director, Farhan came to you with a 3 heroes film ('Dil Chahta Hai') and you did it. Who would have done 'Dangal' in their right mind. Role of such an old man who loses to his daughter in kushti. All actors work in films of directors who have given hits. You take chances no other can."

Aamir will next star in "Sitaare Zameen Par" which is a sequel to his 2007 movie "Taare Zameen Par", that marked his directorial debut and received critical acclaim. The film will, however, have a fresh story and characters. It is expected to release this year. (PTI)



# Pratik on working with wife Bhamini in 'Gandhi' series: It's one of the biggest of our careers

**JAIPUR, March 9:** "Scam 1992" star Pratik Gandhi says working with his wife, actor Bhamini Oza in filmmaker Hansal Mehta's upcoming series "Gandhi" is a special experience as it marks their first time sharing the screen.

Gandhi is essaying the role of Mahatma Gandhi, while Oza will star as Kasturba Gandhi in the series, based on historian Ramachandra Guha's books "Gandhi Before India" and "Gandhi: The Years That Changed the World".

"It's a very dear experience for both of us. It's the first script on which we've worked together for the first time on screen. The magnitude of the characters is huge, so it's one of the biggest (works) of our careers now," Gandhi told PTI on Saturday night on the green carpet of the IIFA Digital Awards here.

Oza, known for her appearances in popular TV sitcom "Sarabhai Vs Sarabhai", the Sanya Malhotra-starrer "Kathal" and web series "Ziddi Dil Maane Na", tied the knot with Gandhi in 2009. They are parents to 10-year-old daughter Miraya.

"It's a beautiful experience we have had shooting for the first season and we are waiting for it to come out and for you all to watch," she added. Gandhi was most recently seen in romantic action comedy "Dhoom Dhaam", co-starring Yami Gautam.

The actor said he is happy with the way audiences have responded to the Netflix movie. "It has worked well with the audience and the whole team is happy. We have received great reactions from all age groups," he added. Gandhi, who last year featured in the buddy comedy "Madgaon Express", said he is a fan of the genre, which is difficult to crack.

"Of late, there are a couple of films that have worked with the audience, though these are just sub-layers of comedy. There are many more sub-genres of comedy that I'm yet to explore," he added. Going ahead, the actor said he wants to try his hand at different genres. (PTI)

# KANGANA RANAUT WRAPS SHOOTING OF THRILLER MOVIE ALONGSIDE R MADHAVAN

**NEW DELHI, March 9:** Actor Kangana Ranaut has finished shooting for the upcoming thriller film also featuring her "Tanu Weds Manu" co-star R Madhavan.

The currently untitled movie is directed by Vijay and is produced by R Ravindran of Trident Arts. Plot details and the title of the film are being kept under wraps. Kangana shared the news on her Instagram story on Sunday and wrote, "Today wrapped filming of my upcoming thriller with some of my fabs #alvijay @actormaddy @tridentartsoff. See you in the cinemas." Madhavan re-shared the story and wrote, "Congratulations... so much fun shooting this one once too... lovely unit and adorable team .. rock it as usual @kanganaranaut."

The actors first worked on the 2011 romantic comedy "Tanu Weds Manu".

They followed it up with its sequel "Tanu Weds Manu Returns" which released in 2015. Ranaut most recently starred in "Emergency" which she also directed. Madhavan's latest work is "Hisaab Barabar". (PTI)



# Never imagined 'Sholay' would receive so much love, success: director Ramesh Sippy

**JAIPUR, March 9:** Veteran director Ramesh Sippy on Sunday said that even after 50 years of its release, "Sholay" still drawing audiences to theatres is a testament to its enduring love across generations.

The filmmaker attended a special screening of his 1975 blockbuster, which completes five decades of its release this year, at Jaipur's Raj Mandir Cinema on the sidelines of the 2025 International Indian Film Academy Awards here.

Regarded as one of the greatest Hindi films of all time, "Sholay" featured Sanjeev Kumar, Amjad Khan, Dharmendra, Amitabh Bachchan, Hema Malini, and Jaya Bachchan. Penned by Salim-Javed, the movie was released on August 15, 1975.

"Even after 50 years of 'Sholay', we are celebrating it, and people are still coming to see it. It's proof enough that people loved the film, and loved it for everything that was in it. From the story, dialogues, emotions, action, adventure, performances, everything... I definitely had a feeling that we are going out to make something really good. But, I never imagined the kind of love, appreciation, and success it would receive. But stepping into it was definitely with a purpose of trying to make something which had not been made before. I didn't know how far I would get," Sippy told reporters at a post-screening press conference. The director credited his cast and crew for helping him realise his vision of "Sholay".

"I had a lot of wonderful people working with me, from star cast to technicians to the entire staff, each and every member of the staff who looked after not just the technical side, just even picking up stones and looking after the horses... Everyone mattered. Otherwise, it would not have been possible to put together such a difficult film. It just grew by itself. Asked what was his greatest learning as a storyteller, Sippy said if the story is not right, a film would never work.

"If we forget we are telling a story, we're going to fail miserably... The heart of a film is the story. The main characters help in telling that story, coming together and exchanging emotions," he added. (PTI)



# 'Valiant' was a surreal experience, say Ilaiyaraaja fans who attended symphony orchestra

**CHENNAI, March 9:** Billed as the first ever symphony written by an Asian film composer, legendary music-director Ilaiyaraaja's Western classical Symphony, 'Valiant', was debuted at London's Eventim Apollo Theatre on Sunday (12 am IST).

"It was truly a surreal experience," London-based pianist, music producer and composer Anirudh Krishna, who had attended the concert, told PTI over Instagram chat.

The music director, often referred to as 'Raaja sir', or 'maestro' by his adoring fans, was joined by the renowned Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra, which also regularly performs film music, video game music and songs from video games, besides western classical symphonies. The orchestra was conducted by Mikel Toms.

"The symphony had four movements, the first and the second were purely western classical music, and the third and fourth also had influences from Indian classical music," said Krishna.

Krishna, like many other ardent Ilaiyaraaja fans - some even

claimed that they went all the way from India to London to pay homage to the historic event - kept the others in the loop through live feeds and Insta stories of the concert.

What really caught his attention as a professional musician, said Krishna, was the interesting counterpoints in harmonic moments.

Although technically videography and photography were not allowed at the venue, the internet is flooded with snippets of the concert, letting fans beyond London to already begin the customary 'let's decode Ilaiyaraaja music' posts.

But UK-based Sylvian Patrick Jesudoss (@sylvianism), a lecturer teaching Digital Marketing and Consumer Research at the University of Leicester, who also attended the concert and unpacked it in bits and pieces through the evening, said it will take years to "decode this symphony and the sudden tonal shifts".

An ardent fan of Ilaiyaraaja, Jesudoss, who is known for his lengthy 'X' threads deconstructing the music of Ilaiyaraaja, wrote of the concert: "What's the testimony that you lis-

tened to excellence? At the end, before closing, one of the violinists suggested that they play the part of the 3rd Movement as an encore.

Mikel Toms obliged, and they played it again as a closing note. We left with that high." Although Ilaiyaraaja did keep his promise that there will be no background score of film songs in 'Valiant', which lasted for 45 minutes, the fans were nevertheless happy when the Second Act ushered in some of his favourite songs and BGM scores. In the Second Act, the orchestra also experimented with Ilaiyaraaja songs and background scores, said Krishna.

"The orchestra performed Raaja sir's 'Three note Symphony', an orchestral medley of his famous songs like 'Raaja Raajathi', 'Madai Thirandhu', 'Poove Sempoove' and 'Kanne Kalaimaane'," he said.

The orchestra also performed a background score from Malayalam film 'Guru', said Krishna, adding that he spotted Ilaiyaraaja's sons, Karthik Raaja and Yuvan Shankar Raaja, as well as film director Balki.

In his 'X' post, Jesudoss mentioned that the section of background scores might have surprised people.

"The last piece they played was from an animated movie called 'Pandavas' - the first theatrical animated movie in India, produced by Pentamedia and directed by Usha Ganesh Raja," wrote Jesudoss.

Going by the number of reposts, the internet is clearly head over heels in love with orchestral rendition of his seminal 1998 hit, 'Poove Sempoove', sung by K J Yesudas for the film, 'Solla Thudikuthu Manasu'.

But according to Jesudoss, although he was in tears when 'Poove Sempoove' was performed, his most favourite 'non-symphony' moment was when Ilaiyaraaja sang 'Idhayam Poguthe' while the orchestra was playing Schubert's 'Unfinished Symphony'. "We get to hear a lot about Western classical music greats, but to listen to a symphony live in today's age, especially by a composer from our own country, is a remarkable achievement that we should all be proud about," added Krishna. (PTI)



# Struggling Mohammedan Sporting face tough Punjab FC in their last match, seek first home



**KOLKATA, March 9:** It has been a season of harsh reality check for Mohammedan Sporting as the bottom-placed side will look to end on a positive note when they face Punjab FC in their last Indian Super League (ISL) match here on Monday.

Promoted to the ISL this season, Mohammedan Sporting found the top-tier league to be a

difficult pitch altogether.

Their last victory came on January 11, a hard-fought 1-0 result against Bengaluru FC. Since then, they have endured an eight-match winless streak, leaving them at the bottom of the 13-team standings with just two wins, six draws, and 15 losses.

With 12 points from 23 matches, the team has struggled

to adapt, but each setback has been a learning experience for the club that became the third team from Kolkata to enter the ISL after promotion from the I-League.

Mohammedan Sporting have failed to score in six of their 11 home matches this season and have conceded multiple goals in each of their last four games.

The Kolkata side has con-

ceded 10 headed goals in ISL 2024-25, the highest in the league this season and the third-highest in ISL history as Punjab FC would look to exploit this weakness with aerial deliveries into the box.

They are yet to taste a win at Hyderabad FC come close to our goal because of good ball possession, some patterns that we used to follow, and high pressing at the times that we should have done it," he said. (PTI)

glimpse of hope for the future.

"This is the last game of the season so obviously we want to push for a win. We have struggled this season, but we want to give something back to the fans with this game," Mohammedan Sporting's interim head coach Mehrajuddin Wadoo said.

Punjab FC, who were also promoted as part of the ISL expansion in 2023-24, have had a relatively better campaign.

With 27 points from 23 matches, the Panagiotis Dilperis-coached side started strong before their downward spiral in the latter half of the season as they slipped to 10th spot.

In the first leg fixture, Punjab FC secured a 2-0 victory over Mohammedan Sporting, and they will be aiming to complete the double over their opponents while becoming just the second team after Hyderabad FC to register consecutive clean sheets against them this season.

Punjab FC secured a 3-1 away win against Hyderabad FC in their last outing, and earlier in the season, they enjoyed their longest winning streak on the road with three consecutive victories between February and March 2024.

Punjab FC's Dilperis appreciated his side for following set playing patterns in their last match.

"The players just didn't let Hyderabad FC come close to our goal because of good ball possession, some patterns that we used to follow, and high pressing at the times that we should have done it," he said. (PTI)

**BHUBANESWAR, March 9:** Ghanaian striker Elshaddai Acheampong ransacked the rival defence with a quick hat-trick as East Bengal FC defeated Odisha FC 3-1 in the Indian Women's League here on Sunday.

Currently the table-toppers, the Kolkata side now have 18 points from seven matches. Odisha FC are placed third with 11 points from seven outings.

East Bengal owe their victory largely to Elshaddai, who took the wind out of Odisha FC's sails by completing her hat-trick in 38 minutes. Another Ghanaian, Jennifer Kankam Yeboah, found the target from an acute angle in the 74th minute to reduce the margin for Odisha FC.

Elshaddai is a quality poacher and opportunistic striker and her skills were on display early in the match even though defending champions Odisha FC were making the right noises near the East Bengal goalmouth.

After Lynda Kom and Pyari Xaxa gave away the chances that came their way, East Bengal struck at the other end in the seventh minute.

Elshaddai had two able partners in Soumya Guguloth and Sulanjana Raul, who worked in tandem to leave Odisha defence

thoroughly embarrassed.

Soumya's cross from the right inside the box was quickly dispatched by diminutive Sulanjana for Elshaddai. The Ghanaian took a quick turn and smashed the ball past goalkeeper Shreya Hooda.

Further misery was in store for Odisha in the 31st minute when Sulanjana ran in off a counterattack before releasing the ball for an unmarked Elshaddai at the right time. All Elshaddai had to do was send it past a hapless Shreya.

Elshaddai was proving to be a thorn in the flesh for Odisha FC. In the 38th minute, she darted into the box from the right before a desperate Maryam Juke Ibrahim in Odisha defence brought her down.

Elshaddai's conversion from the resultant penalty was solid; she sent it low to the far corner. Shreya had no chance to go for it even.

Elshaddai has so far scored six goals in the ongoing IWFL.

Odisha FC, under national coach Crispin Chettri, were too stunned to react to this early onslaught that snatched the match away from them.

Though they never stopped asking questions in the rival area, especially after Jennifer's goal, their inability to convert chances cost them dear. (PTI)



## NRAI conducts second ISSF Electronic Scoring Target course

**NEW DELHI, March 9:** The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), under its Education Programme, successfully conducted the second ISSF Electronic Scoring Target (EST) course at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Ranges here from March 5-9. The course, the largest-ever conducted by the NRAI, drew 32 participants including three from Nepal and one from Sri Lanka, marking the beginning of international participation in the federation's technical education initiatives.

Following the success of the first ISSF EST Course held between February 24-28, NRAI continued to develop skilled technical officials proficient in handling EST systems. These systems are used in national and international competitions.

The second batch was part of their effort to strengthen the technical capabilities of the sport across India and beyond.

The ISSF EST course, conducted by Jadranka Strukic of Croatia, Kuwait's Khaled Aljerayed, and India's Pawankumar Singh, trained 27 participants in the first batch from across India.

The five-day programme combined theoretical instruction with practical exercises, ensur-

ing participants gained comprehensive expertise in EST operations. Strukic said, "This is the largest batch I have conducted anywhere in the world, which clearly shows the growing commitment towards technical excellence in this region. The ISSF EST license is very important for officials who aspire to work as Rifle and Pistol Jury Members in international competitions. "It is also mandatory for anyone wishing to work in the Results, Timing & Scoring (RTS) team at ISSF events to hold a valid EST license. This certification ensures officials are fully trained to handle the latest technology with precision and confidence."

NRAI president Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo said, "As the use of electronic scoring systems becomes standard across major competitions, it is vital to build a strong, skilled workforce capable of ensuring precision and fairness at every level."

With the growing demand for trained officials in electronic scoring, NRAI said it remains committed to advancing the skills of technical personnel and supporting the growth of shooting sport through quality education and training. (PTI)

## Real Kashmir see off Aizawl 2-1 to close gap at top

**SRINAGAR, March 9:** Real Kashmir FC moved to third spot in the I-League standings with a hard fought 2-1 win over relegation-battling Aizawl FC at the TRC Turf Ground here on Sunday.

Real Kashmir's fifth straight home win, and fourth in the last five overall, took their tally to 32 points in 18 matches, two behind both Churchill Brothers and Inter Kashi.

With just four matches to go, the title race is set to go down to the wire. On the other hand, Aizawl missed the chance to climb out of the relegation zone. The Reds remained in 11th place with 16 points, one behind SC Bengaluru.

Senegalese Karim Samb (31st minute) put the Snow Leopards ahead before Lalrinzuala (58th) equalised for Aizawl with his ninth goal of the season.

Brazilian Paulo Cezar (77th), who came on as a substitute, scored the winning goal for the hosts, who also saved a penalty late on to grab all three points.

It was an end-to-end start with both goalkeepers making some routine saves in the early min-



utes. Gradually, Real Kashmir began to boss possession and took the game to the visitors. In the 21st minute, Aizawl almost scored an own goal as Samuel Lalmuanpuia, intending to clear an Ocran Ildan corner, flicked a header that went just wide of the far post.

The breakthrough for the hosts arrived through a defensive mix-up from Aizawl in the 31st minute.

Karim Samb capitalised on it, burst into the box and slotted it

into the net in the 77th minute and it proved to be the match winner.

Basit squared a low cross into the six-yard box and the Brazilian evaded his marker to convert from point-blank range, making it 2-1.

However, there would be a last twist in the tale just five minutes later.

When left-back Mohd Aqib handled an aerial cross inside the box, referee Crystal John pointed to the penalty spot right away.

Up stepped Lalrinzuala, looking to take his season's tally to double digits. He went down the middle, and Arbaz, who had dived to his left, was able to save the penalty with his trailing foot. (PTI)

parity.

The contest became more equal after that and both teams came close to scoring again but were let down by poor finishing. For Real Kashmir, Mohammad Inam crossed for substitute Paulo Cezar, who headed it agonisingly wide from six yards.

At the other end, Lalrinzuala cut it back for an unmarked Lalbiakdika inside the box, but he skied his first-time shot.

Eventually, Paulo Cezar did find the net in the 77th minute and it proved to be the match winner.

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## Andrew Gutman, Leonardo Barroso rally Fire to 3-1 victory in home opener for Dallas



**FRISCO, Texas, March 9:** Defenders Andrew Gutman and Leonardo Barroso scored two minutes apart late in the second half of Barroso's league debut and the Chicago Fire spoiled FC Dallas' home opener with a 3-1 victory on Saturday night.

Logan Farrington used an assist from Anderson Julio to score for the first time this season and give Dallas the lead in the 57th minute. Farrington had four goals and eight assists in 10 starts and 29 appearances as a rookie last season. Julio picked up his first assist in his first season with the club. Julio also has a goal this season after posting 26 with six assists over four seasons with Real Salt Lake.

Chicago scored the equalizer in the 82nd minute when Gutman used an assist from Hugo Cuypers and 19-year-old midfielder Sergio Oregel to find the net for the first time this season. Cuypers earned his first assist of the campaign on Gutman's 12th career netter. It was the first assist for Oregel in his third career start and fourth appearance.

Barroso scored the go-ahead goal off a rebound.

Cuypers capped the scoring with a penalty-kick goal in the first minute of stoppage time. The PK was awarded after Cuypers was fouled by Sebastian Ibeagha. Cuypers scored twice in a 2-2 draw with D.C. United last week.

Chris Brady finished with five saves for the Fire (1-1-1). Brady had a save on a PK attempt by Dallas' Petar Musa in the fifth minute of second-half stoppage time.

Maarten Paes totaled four saves for Dallas (1-1-1), which opened the season with a victory and a draw in a pair of road matches under first-year coach Eric Quill.

The Fire travel to play Toronto FC on Saturday. Dallas will host the Vancouver Whitecaps on Saturday. (AP)

## LeBron James has 'not much concern' after exiting loss to Celtics with late groin injury

**BOSTON, March 9:** LeBron James didn't sound overly concerned after straining his groin in the waning minutes of Los Angeles' 111-101 loss to Boston on Saturday night.

He also wasn't willing to put a timetable on how fast he could be back on the court as the Lakers look to maintain their recent surge in the standings.

"Not much concern," James said. "Obviously, I'm day-to-day. I'll look at it each day and see if it gets better, and take the proper measures to see what I need to do moving forward."

James exited during a timeout with 6:44 to play after contesting a layup by Jaylen Brown. He walked gingerly to the huddle during an ensuing timeout and then barely moved before making his way to the locker room with trainers. He finished with 22 points, 14 rebounds and nine assists.

He said his first thoughts went to his first season in Los Angeles in 2018 when he suffered a groin injury during a

Christmas Day matchup with Golden State. He missed the next 17 games and the injury bothered him for most of the remainder of the season.

"I've been there before and I know what type of injury we're dealing with," James said.

The good news is he doesn't believe this latest injury is as severe as the 2018 one.

He also said he thought about former teammate Anthony Davis, who incurred his current groin injury in his first game in Dallas following his trade for Luka Doncic.

"That's crazy. But I thought about AD," James said.

Doncic just wants James to give the injury the rest it needs.

"Obviously, he's got to take his time," Doncic said. "Those injuries, I won't say are the worse, but they're tough to deal with."

In the meantime James has confidence that his team, which had its eight-game win streak snapped by Boston, can fill in the gaps as it looks to



maintain its place in the West standings. The Lakers (40-22) fell to third place behind Denver after Saturday's loss and face a tough upcoming stretch. The Lakers continue a four-game trip Monday night at Brooklyn.

It concludes with matchups at Milwaukee and Denver on Thursday and Friday.

They then return home March 16 for a four-game

homestand that begins with Phoenix and bookends with return visits from the Nuggets and Bucks.

"It doesn't matter who's in the lineup, we have to play our game," James said. "We've had guys in and out of the lineup the majority of the year. And we've had guys in and out of the lineup the last six weeks. ... Nothing changes." (AP)

