

INDIAN CHRONICLE

President Murmu, PM Modi mourn Asha Bhosle's passing

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu expressed her grief over the passing of playback singer Asha Bhosle on Sunday, stating that the legendary singer enriched Indian music for decades, and her music will live forever. Asha Bhosle passed away at the age of 93 on Sunday in Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital. In a post on X, President Murmu said, "The passing of Asha Bhosle Ji has created a huge void in the world of music. Her legendary career as an iconic singer has defined an era of music in India. I have fond memories of having interacted with her personally."

Mamata Banerjee warns of NRC, delimitation if BJP wins Bengal

Kolkata : West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday alleged the BJP has "struck a Rs 1,000-crore deal" to unseat the Trinamool Congress from power in the state. She made the claims while ostensibly referring to a now-viral video in which Aam Janata Unnayan Party chief Humayun Kabir was purportedly heard saying he was in touch with BJP leaders to unseat her from power, and receiving Rs 200 crore as an advance to a Rs 1,000-crore deal to split the minority votes.

Modi writes to floor leaders on women quota, wants '29 rollout



New Delhi, April 12

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has written to floor leaders of both Houses of Parliament, urging political parties to come together to operationalise the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam in time for the 2029 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, ahead of a special three-day sitting beginning April 16.

In his letter, the PM underlined that the upcoming discussion presents "an opportunity to further strengthen our democracy" and reiterated that women's participation in leadership was central to India's development trajectory. He noted that across sectors, from space and sports to startups and the armed forces, women were increasingly shaping outcomes through "hard work and determination".

"After extensive deliberations, we have concluded that the time has come to implement the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam in its true spirit across the country," Modi wrote.

He said implementing the law from 2029 would "in-

fuse new energy into India's democratic institutions and strengthen public trust", while ensuring greater participation and representation of women in governance.

Calling it a moment "above any one party or individual", Modi urged MPs to treat the issue as a collective responsibility towards "women and our future generations"

Referring to the 2023 constitutional amendment that mandates 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies, the PM pointed out that there had been broad political consensus on advancing women's representation. He said consultations had been held with experts and political stakeholders on the timing of implementation, with a view that the provisions should take effect at the earliest. Under the existing framework, the quota would have become operational only after delimitation based on the 2027 Census, effectively pushing implementation to 2034. The government was now seeking to amend the law to enable rollout from the 2029 general elections

Oil Palm Push for Higher Farm Incomes Minister assures profitability; calls for large-scale cultivation across villages.

Khaja Sikander Mohiuddin Staff Reporter, Indian Chronicle Karimnagar, April 12: State Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnamb Prabhakar on Sunday urged farmers to take up oil palm cultivation on a large scale, assuring that the crop offers high returns. Addressing a gathering at the Rythu Vedika in Chigurumamidi mandal, he said the government is committed to supporting farmers through subsidies, infrastructure, and procurement facilities.

The Minister called for at least 50 acres of oil palm cultivation in smaller villages and 100 acres in larger ones, stressing the need for proactive involvement of village sarpanches. "Oil palm cultivation can significantly enhance farmers' incomes. I personally assure profitable outcomes," he said, adding that intercropping can also be practiced to maximise gains.

Earlier, Mr. Prabhakar distributed modern agricultural equipment worth ₹40.80 lakh to 24 farmers under the farm mechanisation scheme. The equipment included rotavators, balers, and power sprayers. He noted that such distribution was being undertaken after several years and would be expanded based on farmers' needs.

Highlighting infrastructure support, the Minister said an oil palm processing unit had recently been established at Narmetta in Nangunur mandal, where produce would be procured. He cited Ashwaraopet as a model region for oil palm cultivation and encouraged farmers to adopt similar practices.

Farmers requiring machinery were asked to submit applications through agricultural officers, with the assurance that additional equipment would be sanctioned promptly. The Minister also acknowledged the growing demand for balers and said steps would be taken to supply them.

He further stated that maize procurement centres had been opened and were functioning smoothly. Encouraging farmers with landholdings above five acres to adopt oil palm cultivation, he maintained that the crop is relatively resilient and less prone to issues such as wildlife interference.



On irrigation, Mr. Prabhakar sought public cooperation for the construction of canals under the Gouravelli Project, assuring that pending works would be completed soon. He also appealed to landowners to cooperate in land acquisition, promising timely compensation.

The Minister announced that payments under welfare schemes were being released without delay and later distributed cheques to beneficiaries.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Prabhakar inspected a proposed site for a public school at Chigurumamidi. He said the institution would be developed over four acres with modern facilities, offering education from Classes I to XII within a single campus, including primary, high school, and junior college sections.

Additional Collector Ashwini Tanaji Wakade, RDO K. Maheshwar, and other officials were present.

Wanaparthy Students Shine in Intermediate Results



creating a wave of success. Local residents praised the junior colleges in wanaparthy for transforming the district into an educational hub. Over the past few years, CV Raman Junior College and Jagruthi Junior College have consistently achieved state-level ranks in both BiPC and MPC streams, earning a distinguished reputation across the erstwhile district. In the 2026 results, students of CV Raman Junior College excelled remarkably. In the second-year MPC stream, V. Meghana secured 993 marks, while K. Akshaya, Hansika, M. Swathi, and Saniya scored 992 marks each. In the BiPC stream, Sri Lakshminarayana scored 991, and P. Surya Varshini

secured 986 marks. In the first year MPC stream, K. Navya Sudha and E. Kavya scored 468 marks, while Manaswini, Jayasurya, Narasimha, and Suman secured 467 marks. In the BiPC stream, Muralikrishna scored 433 and Abhilash secured 427 marks. The college reported that 133 students scored above 900 marks in the second year, while 131 students scored above 400 marks in the first year. Students of Jagruthi Junior College also delivered impressive results. In the second-year BiPC stream, H. Anusha secured 994 marks, and M. Archana scored 993. In the MPC stream, K. Apoorva and Tyagaraju scored 992, while Hindu secured 991 marks. In the first-year BiPC stream, M. Harish and S. Swapna scored 437 marks. Additionally, the management stated that their students performed exceptionally well in the recent JEE Mains results, securing a leading position in the combined district. Residents of wanaparthy district are encouraging parents to choose these local colleges for their children's bright future.



****Dyarpoggu Srinath, wanaparthy Correspondent | April 12 (Indian Chronicle):**** Students from wanaparthy district have delivered outstanding performance in the Intermediate examination results released on Sunday, securing top ranks at the state level and

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C.V. రామన్ జూనియర్ కళాశాల

సంచిహెల్స్, వనపర్తి
☎ 9010657875, 7075698222

Groups: MPC, BPC, CEC & MEC, T/M & E/M INTENSIVE IIT, JEE MAINS, EAPCET & NEET BATCHES

IPE - 2026 ఫలితాలలో రాష్ట్ర స్థాయి మార్కులు సాధించిన మా విద్యార్థులకు శుభాకాంక్షలు

FIRST YEAR RESULTS				SECOND YEAR RESULTS			
MPC	468	468		MPC	993		
	K. Navya Sudha	A. Kavya			V. Meghana		
BPC	433	427	423	BPC	991	986	
	Manaswini	Akshaya	Hansika		Sri Lakshminarayana	Sanyasireddy	
MEC	489	479		MEC	983	967	884
	Rakshita	K. Shiva Kumar			V. Navya	Graveshwar	R. Vidya
	475	475					

400 పైగా మార్కులు సాధించిన మా విద్యార్థులు 131 | 900 పైగా మార్కులు సాధించిన మా విద్యార్థులు 133

జాగ్రత్త జూనియర్ కళాశాల

College Code: 54206
☎ 9491387769, 9440264037, 9985070353, 9491485004

IPE 2026 ఇంటర్ ద్వితీయ ప్రథమ సం॥లో ఫలితాలలో MPC, BIPC, CEC, MEC అన్ని గ్రూపులలో రాష్ట్రస్థాయి మార్కులతో మరొకసారి ప్రభంజనం సృష్టించిన జాగ్రత్త

Sr. BIPC	994		Jr. BIPC	438
	H. ANUSHNA / H.T.No. 2654204533 Makthal			UZMA HAJRA / H.T.No. 2654103566 Wanaparthy
993	992	992	991	990
M. ARCHANA	K. APOORVA	TYAGARAJU	B. HINDU	P. LAVANYA
989	989	988	988	986
B. SREEJA	B. VISHNUPATI	CH. ARJUN	N. VENU PRASAD	G. NAGACHAITRANYA
984	984	983	982	982
B. BALASUBHARATHA	S. YASODA	A. LALLU SINGH	K. NAM TEJA	N. NAREEN BHANU
981	981	980	980	980
K. NAREEN BHANU	D. BHOLEJA	S. ANU	P. SURESHKUMAR	SRINU PRASAD
965	954			
P. YASHWANTH / H.T.No. 2654201468 RAMAPURAM	M. SREELATHA / H.T.No. 2654202325 IRKICHEDU			
467	467	467	466	465
467	466	465	992	992
992	992	992	992	991
434	434	433	431	
466	466	466		
465	464	464		
463	463	462	461	460
491	482	460		

900 పైగా మార్కులు సాధించిన మా విద్యార్థులు - 96 | 400 పైగా మార్కులు సాధించిన విద్యార్థులు - 128
ఫలిత విద్యార్థుల శాతం - 98% | నోటిఫికేషన్లలో ఒకటికి 400 పైగా మార్కులు

ఇంతటి విజయానికి సహకరించిన విద్యార్థులకు, అధ్యాపకులకు, తల్లిదండ్రులకు, శ్రేయోభిలాషులకు వ్యాసమూర్తి కృతజ్ఞతలు

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Climate battle gets tougher

Despite considerable progress in renewable energy, India continues to depend on coal to meet its energy requirements. This makes phasing out fossil fuels a daunting task, requiring massive investments and the adoption of innovative technologies. The Union Cabinet recently approved the updated targets on tackling climate change that are quite ambitious. A new set of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) — voluntary climate targets submitted by the member countries to the United Nations — has been cleared, promising that at least 60% of the country's electricity installed capacity would come from non-fossil fuel sources by 2035, up from the 50% target it had set for 2030. India has also promised to attain at least a 47% reduction in emissions intensity or emissions per unit of GDP, on 2005 levels, which is two percentage points more than its current target of 45% for 2030. It has been targeted to create a carbon sink that is at least 3.5-4 billion tonnes of CO2-equivalent, larger than what existed in 2005. This highlights the importance of afforestation and ecosystem restoration in climate mitigation. The new climate targets signalled that India remains committed to the clean energy pathway, despite developmental issues. However, there are many challenges ahead. Scaling up renewable energy requires huge investments in grid modernisation, energy storage solutions, and grid flexibility to handle intermittent supply. Expanding forest cover at the required scale poses land-use and ecological challenges. There is also a need to overcome infrastructure gaps and secure affordable clean energy technologies. India's status as a lower-middle-income country limits its financial and technological capacity. Besides, commitments such as infrastructure expansion, industrial growth, and poverty reduction require careful balancing with climate goals. By adopting realistic and achievable targets, India positions itself as a responsible global actor advocating climate justice. To achieve the goals, it needs to strengthen international cooperation for climate finance and technology transfer, promote sustainable land-use practices and afforestation initiatives, and integrate climate goals into national development planning for long-term sustainability. Under the 2015 Paris Agreement, every country is obligated to formulate and implement a set of climate actions that help the global fight against climate change. In the current scenario, global efforts to mitigate the climate change crisis are being stymied by the outright non-cooperation from the United States under President Donald Trump. His administration has abandoned renewables and is reinvesting money and efforts towards developing and controlling oil and gas resources. Such a reversal by the world's second-largest producer and consumer of energy has major consequences for the fight against climate change.

Road Works Near Beerappa Gadda Temple Must Be Completed on War Footing – BRS Leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj

“Kishore Vaddepalli, Uppal, April 12 (Indian Chronicle):”BRS party state leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, along with party leaders, inspected the ongoing CC road construction works being carried out at a cost of ₹25 lakh from Beerappa Gadda Thene Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple to Bank Colony Park on Sunday. “Speaking on the occasion, they urged GHMC officials and the contractor to expedite the work and ensure its completion before April 30, in view of the upcoming Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Kalyana Mahotsavam.



They emphasized that all pending works should be finished on priority before the festival. “They also pointed out that this road serves as a main route connecting the colonies to Uppal Junction, and hence special attention must be given to complete the works at the earliest. The program was attended by leaders Kondal Reddy, Kokonda Jagan, Bingi Srinivas, Govu Anand, Indrasena Reddy, Muddam Srinivas Yadav, Balakrishna Goud, Balu, Shyam, Banti Goud, Chinna, Maisalu, Raj Kumar, and others.

Seminar on Equality and Social Justice at Uppal Government Degree College on the Occasion of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Jayanti



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 12 (Indian Chronicle):”On the occasion of Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Jayanti, a seminar on “Equality and Social Justice” will be held on Monday, April 13, at Uppal Government Degree College. The coordinators unveiled the poster for the seminar on Sunday. As part of the event, state-level competitions will be conducted for the review of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's book “Annihilation of Caste.” The program is being coordinated by Head of the Political Science Department P. Vijay Kumar and NSS Programme Officer Jaldha Vishwanath Kumar. “Renowned social activist, poet, and writer Joopaka Subhadra will attend as the chief guest and serve as a judge for the state-level book review competition. She will also deliver a lecture on the topic “From Silence to Resistance: Women and Annihilation of Caste.” Guest of honor, Acharya Dr. Bandi Raju, Principal of Malkajgiri Government Degree College, will speak on “Ambedkar's Vision for Democracy and Social Justice.” The event will be presided over by College Principal Dr. K. Vijay Kumar. Coordinators Vijay Kumar and Vishwanath Kumar informed that attractive prizes will be awarded to the winning students.



“Chalo Basti Baat” Program Organized by BJP Uppal Division under the Leadership of President Marineni Phanindra

“Kishore Vaddepalli, Uppal, April 12 (Indian Chronicle):”Under the aegis of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Uppal Division, the “Chalo Basti Baat” program was conducted today. As part of the initiative, BJP Uppal Division President Marineni Phanindra handed over a ceremonial conch to senior BJP leader Balavantha Chari at the division office, marking the commencement of the program. For the first time in the division, the Basti Baat initiative was launched with Balavantha Chari blowing

the conch, symbolically inaugurating the program. Subsequently, the program was carried out in Gandhi Nagar. During the event, party leaders interacted with the residents of Gandhi Nagar, discussing local issues and available civic amenities. They also explained the welfare schemes being implemented by the Central Government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and highlighted what they described as the failure of the State Govern-

ment in fulfilling its “six guarantees.” Prominent participants in the program included Shamshirpeta Dharma Reddy, Division General Secretary Teega Vithal Rao Mudiraj, Nama Shraavan, Akula Rishikesh, Maddela Padma, Aadepe Ramesh, Ananthu Achyutha Rao, and youth leaders Venkat Sai Mudiraj, Naveen Raja, Arun, Ravi Teja, Abhiram, Rajender, Mahesh, Satish, Dhana Krishnaswamy, Anil, Suresh, and others. [4:33 PM, 4/12/2026] +91 93911 09207: End

Ambedkar Jayanti Wall Poster Unveiled Ahead of Grand Celebrations

Nacharam, Indian Chornical, April 12: The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), under its 3rd Zone of the Malkajgiri Parliamentary Constituency, is gearing up to celebrate the 135th birth anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in a grand manner at the Uppal Municipal Ground, Uppal Constituency. “As part of the event preparations, a promotional wall poster for the upcoming Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations was formally unveiled by party leaders. The unveiling ceremony marked the beginning of extensive outreach efforts to mobilize participation from across the district. “Speaking on the occasion, Zone In-charge Banoth Ravinder Naik called upon Bahujan intellectuals, community leaders, youth, and supporters from all five Assembly constituencies in the district to actively take part in the celebrations and contribute to making the event a resounding success. He emphasized that Ambedkar Jayanti is not just a commemorative event but a reminder of the values of equality, social justice, and empowerment that Dr. Ambedkar stood for. “Several key leaders and party members were present during the poster launch, including Uppal Assembly President Mindrala Narsing Rao, State General Secretary Manchala Srikanth, along with S.K. Vali, Swarna Raj, and other prominent leaders. They highlighted the importance of spreading awareness about Dr. Ambedkar's ideals and ensuring wide participation from all sections of society. “The upcoming Jayanti celebrations are expected to witness large participation, with cultural programs, speeches, and community gatherings planned to honor the legacy and contributions of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.



Mass Joining into Congress Party in New Shanthinagar, Uppal Division Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge Parameshwar Reddy welcomes new members by draping party scarves



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 12 (Indian Chronicle):”A large number of people joined the Congress Party under the leadership of Uppal Division Congress, in the presence of Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy. He wel-

comed the new members into the party by draping Congress scarves. “On this occasion, Parameshwar Reddy stated that people-centric governance is being carried out in the state under “Indiramma Rajyam.” He added that with the implementation of the six guarantees by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the attention of people from all parties is shifting towards the Congress. “Those who joined the party include New Shanthinagar Congress President B. Lakshmaiah, General Secretary K. Saidulu, Vice President Parashuram, Joint Secretaries Prabhakar and B. Srikanth, former Presidents Lakan and Ganta Chandrashekar Reddy, along with members P. Matsyagiri, G. Yadagiri, Uday, Narasimha, Mallayya, Krishna, Darshan, Uppalayya, Marayya, Raju, Somayya, Sai Kumar, Sattayya, B. Shiva, Janardhan, Kishtayya, Sudarshan, Purushottam and others. Leaders who participated in the program include A Block SC Cell President Lingampalli Ramakrishna, Tummala Devireddy, Venkatesh Gupta, Alugula Anil Kumar, Janagama Ramakrishna, Alwala Bhaskar, Nomula Suresh, Mohan Naik, Rangula Shekhar, Shiva, Dhanalakshmi, Bhavani, Mamata, Rani, and other Congress leaders from Uppal Division.

Kumuram Bheem Asifabad District ‘Helmet Chowk’ Inaugurated to Promote Helmet

“Indian Chronicle. Jade Srinivas. April, 12. “Awareness “As part of the ‘Alive Alive’ program, a large helmet-shaped structure named “Helmet Chowk” was inaugurated on Sunday by State DGP B. Shivadhar Reddy at the check post in Asifabad town. “This unique structure has been set up with the aim of strongly spreading awareness among the public about the importance of wearing helmets, especially for two-wheeler riders, to prevent road



accidents. “Speaking on the occasion, officials stated that helmet usage plays a crucial role in saving lives. They emphasized that accidents can be significantly reduced if every vehicle user strictly follows traffic rules. “They further mentioned that “Helmet Chowk” will serve as a symbol to enhance public awareness about road safety. Officials urged all two-wheeler riders to wear helmets, highlighting that it is essential for their safety. “They also stressed that by following traffic rules, we can protect not only our own lives but also the lives of others.

Anjaneyulu Sagar Participates in Bodrai Festival Celebrations in Rajiv Nagar Basti

“Serilingampalli April 12: Grand Celebrations were held in Rajiv Nagar Basti, located within the Anjayya Nagar Division, on the occasion of the Bodrai Festival. Responding to an invitation from the residents of the basti Anjayya Nagar Division leader Anjaneyulu Sagar visited the Nalla Pochamma Temple to offer his prayers. “On this occasion, the residents of the basti honored him by draping a traditional shawl over his shoulders. Speaking at the event, Anjaneyulu Sagar stated that our traditions and culture serve as a strong foundation for our society, and that temples stand as symbols of devotion and unity. He remarked that festivals such as this foster a spirit of camaraderie among us and further strengthen the community. He called upon everyone to participate in such spiritual events to seek the blessings of the Goddess, and urged them to work together towards the development of society. “Congratulating the residents for organizing the Bodrai Festival with such grandeur, he expressed his hope that the grace and blessings of the Goddess would always remain upon everyone. P. Lakshmaiah Sagar, along with leaders Allakunta Tirupathiah, Golusula Narsimha, Narra Sayulu, P. Pandu, P. Yadiiah, P. Venkateswarlu, P. Dasharath, E. Raju, K. Jogulu, G. Ramu, D. Yadiiah, D. Srinu, B. Venkatesh, A. Mallesh, and others, participated in this program.

Invitation to Uppal Congress In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy for Ambedkar Jayanti Celebrations in Chilkanagar on April 14

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 12 (Indian Chronicle).” An invitation has been extended to Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge, Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, to attend the birth anniversary celebrations of the architect of the Indian Constitution, Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, which will be held on April 14 in Chilkanagar Division. The celebrations will take place near the Indira Gandhi statue in Chilkanagar under the leadership of Division President Mulakalapati Rajesh Mudiraj, organized by the Scheduled Caste Seva Sangham. On this occasion, Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy stated that the Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations will be conducted in a grand manner under the aegis of the organization. He also urged the members of the association to work collectively to make the event a



success. “Chilkanagar Division Congress Party In-charge Aakiti Agam Reddy, Kurelli Yadagiri, Pongari Ramachand, Pallati Krishnaiah, Pallati David, Ranchorla Balaram, Kondra Ramulu, Pagidam Ram Narasaiah, and others participated in the program.

Ministers Visit, But Roads Remain Neglected – Public Outcry



“Indian Chronicle. Jade Srinivas. April, 12. “Leaders of left-wing parties expressed concern that the district road from Jainoor to Uttoor in Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district has deteriorated badly, causing severe inconvenience to commuters. CPM district secretariat member Durgam Dinakar criticized that although ministers frequently visit the district, there is no visible development. He pointed out that the road from Jainoor Mandal to Utnur X Road is filled with potholes and has become highly dangerous, leading to frequent road accidents. He further stated that both public and private vehicles traveling on this road are getting damaged, and people’s lives are at risk. In emergency situations, even ambulance travel has become like risk-

ing lives, he added. “Despite public representatives and government officials regularly traveling on this road, neglecting the responsibility to repair it is unfortunate, he said. He demanded that concerned authorities and public representatives respond immediately and take up road repair works without delay. Leaders who participated in the program include CPI (ML) district secretary Gogarla Tirupati, CPI district assistant secretary Atmakuri Chiranjeevi, CPM district committee members Godisela Karthik, Gedam Tikanand, Jadhav Rajender, and district leaders Durgam Raj Kumar, Nikhil, among others.

Nagar Kurnool District Yuvashakti Foundation under the auspices of Yuvashakti Foundation supports a young man suffering from anemia

Wanaparthy correspondent indian chronicle “Kagithala Madhu, founder president of Yuvashakti Foundation, said to save lives by donating blood to a fellow man. A young man named Anjaneyulu from Kollapur mandal of Nagar Kurnool district was admitted to wanaparthy District Government Hospital suffering from anemia and after the blood tests, the doctors told the family members that they should immediately transfuse positive blood, as there was no blood in the blood banks. When the family members informed Kagithala Madhu, the founder president of Yuvashakti Foundation, they immediately responded and donated blood with the foundation member Ramesh and stood by their lives. He said that healthy young men and women should donate blood every three months. Kagithala Madhu said that there should not be any misconceptions about blood donation, life, donation of blood. Kagithala Madhu, founder president of Yuvashakti Foundation, foundation members and lab technicians participated in the program.



Distribute Bhoodan Lands to the Poor Immediately CPI Leader E.T. Narasimha Demands



...“Calls for protection of government lands, urges issuance of land titles to hut dwellers...” Zaheerabad April 12 (Indian Chronicle): “CPI State Assistant Secretary E.T. Narasimha has strongly demanded that the State Government immediately distribute Bhoodan lands to all eligible poor families. He made these remarks after launching the “Intintiki CPI” (CPI Door-to-Door) campaign in Zaheerabad town of Sangareddy district. Addressing the media, Narasimha expressed serious concern over the large-scale encroachment of government and Bhoodan lands across the state. He criticized the authorities for failing to safeguard these lands, which were originally meant for the welfare of the poor. He alleged that such lands are increasingly falling into the hands of influential individuals, depriving the needy. He urged the government to take strict measures to protect these lands and ensure that they are allocated to genuinely eligible beneficiaries. Narasimha emphasized that land is a crucial asset

for the livelihood and dignity of poor families, and the government must act with urgency and responsibility. Further, he demanded that land ownership titles (pattas) be granted to people who have been living in huts on Bhoodan and government lands for years. Ensuring housing rights for the underprivileged, he said, is the fundamental duty of the government. Several CPI leaders and activists participated in the programme, including CPI Sangareddy District Secretary Syed Jalaluddin, District Assistant Secretary Rehman, Zaheerabad Constituency Secretary Narasimhulu, Syed Aziz, Sheikh Mubashir Shareef, Syed Tajuddin, Rubina Begum, Lakshmi, Bipasha, Poolamma and others.

Grand Reception for KTR in Mancherla; Party Strength on Display

“Indian Chronicle (Taj Khan), April 12, BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao Visits Mancherla, As part of his visit to Mancherla, former minister and BRS Working President K. T. Rama Rao attended a party workers’ meeting held under the ??????ship of BRS district president Balka Suman. “The key meeting was also attended by Asifabad MLA Kova Lakshmi and Boath MLA Anil Jadhav. “On the occasion, KTR felicitated the newly elected Asifabad Municipal Chairman, Vice Chairman, and councillors. “Former MLAs, municipal chairpersons, vice chairpersons, public representatives, senior leaders, and a large number of party workers participated in the event, making it a grand success.



Carnatic Vocal Concert and Bharatanatyam Performances Enthrall at Uppal Mini Shilparamam

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 12 (Indian Chronicle).” As part of the weekend cultural programs at Uppal Mini Shilparamam, a Carnatic vocal concert and Bharatanatyam performances were presented on Sunday evening by the students of Satvika School of Carnatic Vocal and Bharatanatyam Dance School, under the guidance of gurus Kamala Nemani and Dr. Satya Nemani. The Carnatic vocal concert featured renditions of Geetam, Swarajati, Varnam, “Paluke Bangaramayena,” and “Sharada Ashtakam.” The performances were delivered by Shreya, Gayatri, Archita, Vedam Samhita, Jeevika, Dheeraj, Aaradhya, and Lasya, among others. In the Bharatanatyam segment, students presented items such as Pushpanjali, “Ganapati Ganapati,” Teesra Alarippu, “Shyamala Meenakshi,” Ganapati Kautham, “Vande Mataram,” “Muddugare Yashoda,” and “Alarulu Kuriyaga.” The performers included Ragini, Vinisha, Sadvika, Nandini, Brahmini, Veda Samhita, Soumya, Nitya, Vaishnavi, and Vandita, who captivated the audience with their graceful performances.



Singireddy Padma Reddy Attends Opening of Suribabu Hotel

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR) Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, April 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE).” A new food outlet, Surya Fish Pulusu Bhojanam and Kodi Kura Bagara Buva Hotel, was inaugurated in Chinna Kranti Colony, Chengicherla under Boduppal Circle of Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation. The hotel is being run under the leadership of Suribabu. Former corporator Singireddy Padma Reddy attended the event as chief guest and formally inaugurated the hotel. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the hotel should provide tasty and quality food to food lovers and grow successfully in the coming days. He conveyed his best wishes to the organizers for their future progress.



Government Whip Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah inaugurated paddy purchase centers in Aleru Mandal

“(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. April 12):- Telangana State Government Whip Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah inaugurated paddy purchase centers in Aleru Mandal, Golanukonda, Kollur village, Mandanapalli, villages as well as in the market yard of Aleru town in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the welfare of farmers is the main goal of the state government. He said that the government has taken special steps to purchase the paddy harvested by farmers at the right price. He said that justice will be done to the farmers by purchasing the paddy as per the Minimum Support Price (MSP). “He said that they are implementing the policy of directly collecting paddy from the farmers without intermediaries.” He also said that drinking water, weighing machines, gunny bags and transportation facilities have been made available at the purchase centers so that the farmers do not face any difficulties. He advised the farmers to bring their grain cleanly and with the right moisture content. He said that steps are being taken to ensure that the money is deposited in the accounts of the farmers who sold the grain as soon as possible. He clarified that the government is always committed to the welfare of the farmers. Local public representatives, officials and farmers participated in this program.



MLA Malothu Ramdas Naik Attends Tea Gathering at Edunuri Srinu’s Residence

“Arvapalli Nagesh khammam bureau April 12 Indian Chronicle.” Wyra MLA Malothu Ramdas Naik paid a courtesy visit to Edunuri Srinu, Vice Chairman of the 3rd Ward in Wyra Municipality. On this occasion, a tea gathering was organized at Srinu’s residence in honor of the MLA. The MLA attended the gathering and spent some time interacting with Srinu and other members present there. Edunuri Srinu’s wife Rajyalakshmi, his son, and other family members also took part in the event.

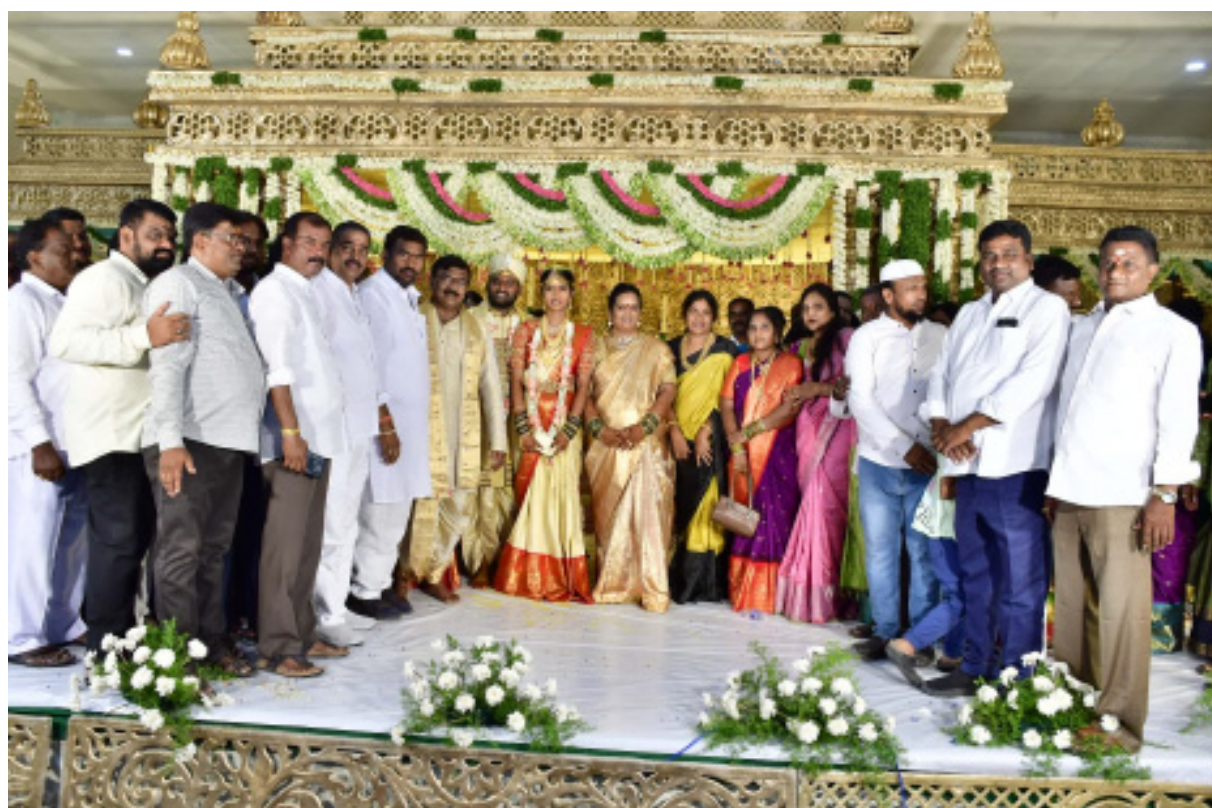
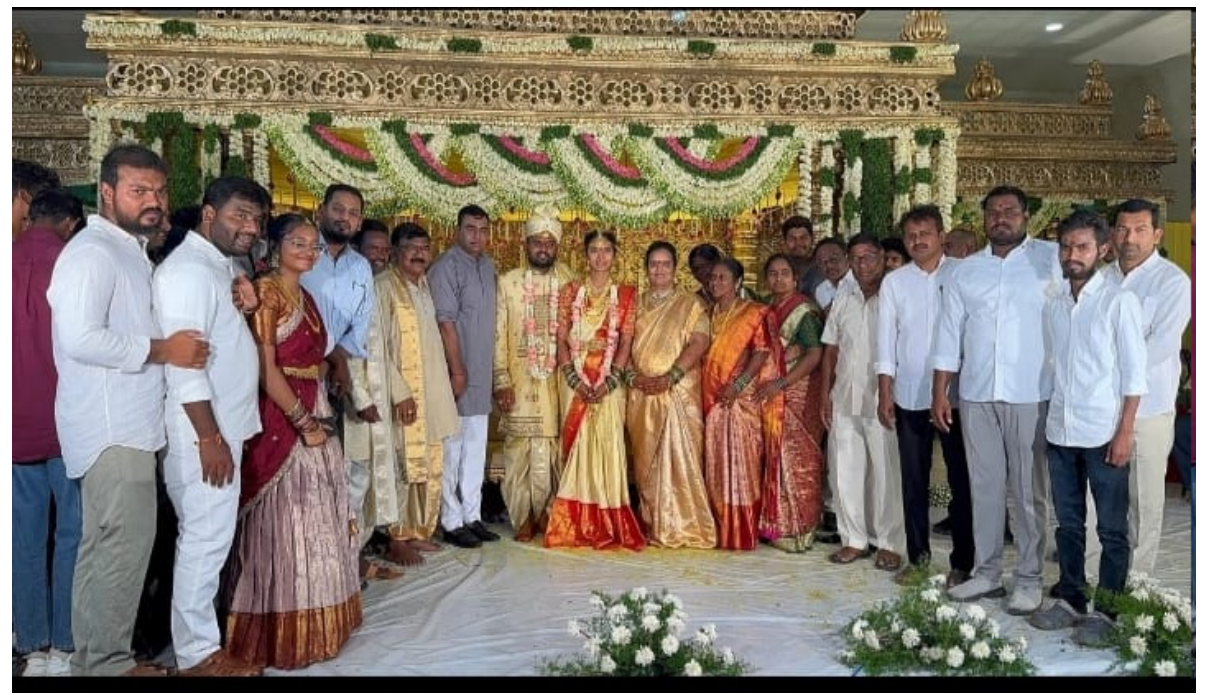


Photo Right P Only: “(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. April 12):- A view of Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbha Anil Kumar Reddy visiting the wedding of the daughter of former Bhuvanagiri Municipal Chairman nuuvula Prasanna Satyanarayana at the Sri Sai Convention in Bhuvanagiri town and blessing the newlyweds and conveying their best wishes.



Former MLC Samineni Himavantha Rao's Statue Unveiled in Khammam

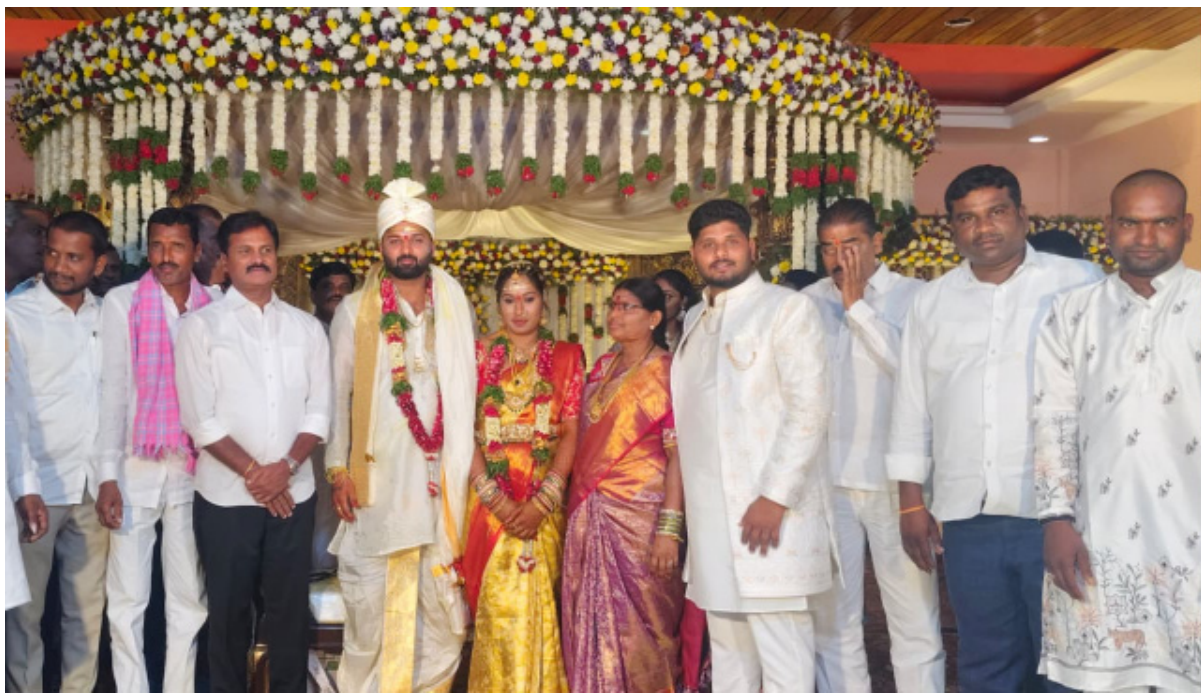
“Arvapalli Nagesh khammam bureau April 12 indian Chronicle:”The statue of former MLC and PRTU founder, late Samineni Himavantha Rao, was unveiled at the PRTU ??? in Khammam. The ceremony was attended by Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao and State Warehousing Corporation Chairman Rayala Nageswara Rao. “Speaking on the occasion, Chairman Rayala Nageswara Rao praised the late Himavantha Rao as a symbol of discipline, dedication, and integrity during his service as a teacher. He highlighted that, as a Teachers’ MLC, Himavantha Rao played a key role in addressing and resolving various issues faced by teachers.”The event witnessed the presence of several leaders, educators, and well-wishers who paid tribute to the contributions of the late leader.



“(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle..April 12):- A view of Bhuvanagiri Parliamentarian Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy and others attending the wedding of former Municipal Chairman Pothamsetty Venkatesh's nephew held at the Sai Convention Hall on Hyderabad Road in Bhuvanagiri town and blessing the newlyweds.

A review meeting on the implementation of the Indiramma Housing Scheme in Khammam constituency

Arvapalli Nagesh khammam bureau April 12 indian chronicle:”A review meeting on the implementation of the Indiramma Housing Scheme in Khammam constituency was held today by Telangana State Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao along with officials of the Housing Department. “During the meeting, the Minister conducted a detailed review of the progress of house construction under the scheme in the constituency. He instructed the officials to expedite the construction of all sanctioned houses and to take immediate action wherever delays are observed. He directed that all houses should be completed by the end of May and arrangements be made for housewarming ceremonies for the beneficiaries.”The Minister also emphasized the need to focus on beneficiaries who have not yet started construction despite receiving sanction. He suggested that such cases be reviewed and, if necessary, opportunities be provided to truly deserving poor families who are still living in huts. He stressed that the scheme should be implemented transparently so that benefits reach the genuinely eligible.”He stated that providing housing facilities to the poor is a key objective of the government and advised officials to work in coordination to achieve the targets within the stipulated time.”The meeting was attended by Raghunathapalem Mandal Parishad Development Officer Ashok, Housing Department engineers Srinivas, Khammam Constituency In-charge Ramakrishna, and other officials.



“(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle..April 12):- A view of Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbha Anil Kumar Reddy visiting the wedding of the daughter of former Bhuvanagiri Municipal Chairman nuvula Prasanna Satyanarayana at the Sri Sai Convention in Bhuvanagiri town and blessing the newlyweds and conveying their best wishes.

Sri Bhavigi Bhadreshwara Swamy Jathara Rathotsavam held grandly in Tandur

“Indian Chronicle Babar Tandur (April 12)“The famous Sri Bhavigi Bhadreshwara Swamy temple Jathara festivities in Tandur town, Vikarabad district, are being celebrated with great grandeur. “Under the auspices of the Veerashaiva community and the Endowments Department, the Rathotsavam program was held on Saturday. Tandur MLA Manohar Reddy, former united Rangareddy district MLC Patnam Mahender Reddy, Municipal Chairperson Neeraja Balreddy, AMC Chairman Patlolla Narsimlu, state Arya Vysya federation chairmen kalva Sujatha and other leaders participated as chief guests. They had darshan of Lord Bhadreshwara and performed special pujas at the Rathotsavam. “After the puja, the chariot procession of Lord Badrishwara was held in a spectacular manner amid the beats of dappu drums and the chanting of the Lord’s name by thousands of devotees. The entire Tandur area was immersed in devotion. “The Jathara Rathotsavam concluded peacefully amid tight security arrangements by the police. Thousands of devotees, along with leaders of various parties, women, and devotees participated in large numbers in this Jathara festival.



Giri Pradakshina in Swarnagiri on the occasion of Sravana Nakshatra... Special arrangements in the temple for the convenience of devotees Swarnagiri's Divya Vimana Rathsavam on a grand scale.

“(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle..April 12):- On Sunday, in the famous Vaishnava shrine of Telangana, Yadadri Tirumala Swarnagiri Devasthanam, in honor of the birth star of Lord Venkateswara Swamy, the temple priests performed special pujas at the feet of the Swamy in the Swarnagiri temple at 6:30 am. After that, the temple founder trustee Manepalli Rama Rao and chairman Manepalli Muralikrishna explained the speciality of Giri Pradakshina to the devotees who had come and started the program as per the instructions of the temple founder trustee Manepalli Rama Rao and chairman Manepalli Muralikrishna Gopikrishna. About 250 devotees participated in the program They circumambulated the mountain while chanting the names of the Lord Govinda. Later, they received the divine blessings of Lord Venkateswara along with Sridevi Bhudevi. At 6:30 pm, the Divya Vimana Rathsavam of Lord Venkateswara along with Sridevi Bhudevi was inaugurated by the temple EO Amarnath, temple CPRO Sai Baba and security officer Srinivas by breaking coconuts. A large number of devotees participated in this program and pulled the Lord's chariot and enjoyed great joy and bliss. On this occasion, the temple administrators distributed fresh water and buttermilk to the devotees who circumambulated the mountain without any inconvenience. Also, in view of the upcoming summer season, cooling pavilions have been set up in the temple premises for the convenience of devotees, as well as feeding rooms for mothers of infants, and paint has been installed around the temple premises to keep devotees' feet cool so that they do not get sunburned, according to the temple administrators.



Let's make the Bhim Yatra a success on April 14:- Former Municipal Chairman Barre Jangir

“(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle..April 12):- Wishing that the Bhim Yatra to be organized in Bhuvanagiri town on the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti on April 14 will be a success, SC, ST, BC minority people, democrats, leaders of public organizations, Ambedkarists, Ambedkarists, all have gathered in thousands for the Bhim Yatra, which will start



from Hyderabad Square at 8 am on April 14, and requested that it be a success. Dalit United Forum District President Battu Ramachandraiah, former Municipal Chairman Barre Jahangir, Kartala Srinivas, MD Sajaudin, Kuthadi Suresh, Itukala Devender, Nagaram Shankar, Botla Ramesh, Kasapaka Mahesh, Chintala Shiva, Gayapaka Shraavan and others participated in this program.

UK deployed military to deter Russian submarines from its waters



LONDON, Britain deployed its armed forces to deter Russian submarines from attacking its cables and pipelines when they spent around a month in British waters earlier this year, defence minister John Healey said on Thursday. Healey said British forces and allies

including Norway tracked and deterred malign activity by the Russian vessels, and said "he was making the operation public so President Vladimir Putin would know that they had been detected. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. He said the submarines had now left British waters and headed north, and there were no signs of damage to underwater infrastructure.

"To President Putin, I say 'We see you. We see your activity over our cables and our pipelines, and you should know that any attempt to damage them will not be tolerated and will have serious consequences.'" "Our armed forces left them in no doubt that they were being monitored, that their movements were not covert, as President Putin planned, and that their attempted secret operation had been exposed". Healey said the Russian operation involved an Akula class attack submarine and two specialist submarines from Moscow's Main Directorate for Deep Sea Research (GUGI).

Israel launches fresh strikes on Lebanon after huge attacks jeopardise truce



DUBAI/BEIRUT, Israel bombed more targets in Lebanon on Thursday, putting the Middle East ceasefire in further jeopardy after its biggest attacks of the war on its neighbour killed more than 250 people and threatened to torpedo Donald Trump's truce from the outset. Iranian negotiators were expected to set off later on Thursday for Pakistan for the first peace talks of the war, due to meet a U.S. delegation on Saturday. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.

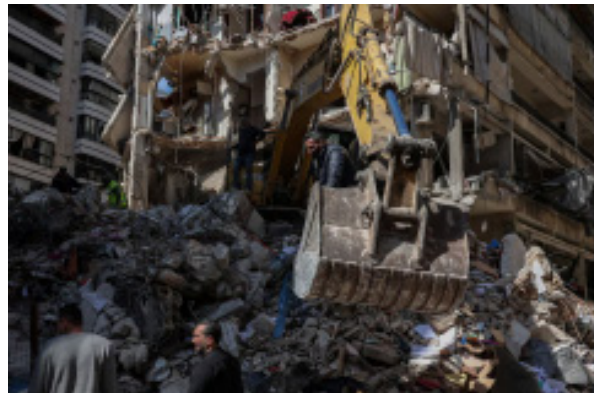
But there was no sign Iran had lifted its blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, which has caused the worst disruption to global energy supplies in history. Tehran said there would be no deal as long as Israel was striking Lebanon. Daily shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz fell to less than 10% of its historical average after the start of the U.S.-Israel war. The shortage drove the price that European and Asian refineries pay for oil to record levels near \$150 a barrel, with even higher prices for some products such as jet fuel. Israel, which invaded Lebanon last month in parallel with the war on Iran to root out the armed group Hezbollah, Tehran's ally, says its actions there are not covered by the ceasefire announced late on Tuesday by Trump. Washington has also said Lebanon is not covered by the truce, but Iran and Pakistan, which acted as mediator, say it was explicitly part of the deal. A host of countries, including Britain and France, said the truce should extend to Lebanon.

A Pakistani source with knowledge of the discussions said Pakistan was working on ceasefires for Lebanon and Yemen: "It will be discussed during the (upcoming) talks and we will settle it." The Israeli military said on Thursday it had killed the nephew of Hezbollah's Secretary-General Naim Qassem, who had served as his personal secretary, and had struck river crossings in Lebanon overnight. Israel struck Beirut's southern suburbs just before midnight and at dawn, and hit towns across the south on Thursday morning, Lebanese state media said. For its part, Hezbollah, which had initially said it would pause attacks on Israel in line with the ceasefire, said it was resuming them on Thursday morning and had fired once across the border and twice at Israeli forces in southern Lebanon. Families gathered on Thursday at Beirut hospitals to identify slain loved ones, and rescuers worked through the night to try to save those trapped under rubble from attacks that hit populated areas without customary warnings to civilians. "This is my place, this is my house, I've been living here like more than 51 years. So, everything destroyed. See?" said Naim Chebbo, sweeping shattered glass and debris from his home in Beirut

Four dead as migrants try to board dinghy off northern France

Four people died after a group of migrants attempted to board an inflatable dinghy and cross the Channel from France to Britain, prompting a rescue operation off the coast of Calais, authorities said on Thursday. Local mayor Christian Fourcroy, who said he had been briefed by emergency services, said a group of about 30 migrants had waded out into the water to reach the dinghy between the beaches of Equihen and Ecault at about 7 a.m. (0500 GMT) when they got into trouble. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. "They tried to board the boat. Things went wrong and, let's just say, they floundered in the water. Among them were two women and two men who died," Fourcroy told Reuters. A fifth person was in a critical condition, he said.

The dinghy motored into deeper waters and continued its journey to Britain, the local authorities said. Earlier the prefecture, the local office of the interior ministry, had said the dinghy had sunk. Over the past year, traffickers seeking to evade police have increasingly used inflatable dinghies—dubbed 'taxi-boats' by the authorities—to cruise along the coasts of northern France and Belgium, picking migrants up from along the shore. The Boulogne prosecutor has opened an investigation into the incident, a police source said. Southern England lies just 21 miles (33 km) from France at the narrowest point of the Channel, and Britain remains a favoured destination for many migrants due to family links, language, and the belief in better employment prospects. Some 4,776 migrants crossed the Channel, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, between January 1 and April 4, according to UK government data.



About 41,500 people crossed it last year. The influx of migrants has helped drive support for the Reform UK party led by Nigel Farage, a right-wing populist and long-time immigration hard-liner. In France, Marine Le Pen's National Rally party has become the single-biggest party in parliament on the back of a tough anti-immigration stance. Last year, Britain and France agreed on a "one in, one out" scheme, under which migrants arriving in Britain by small boat can be returned to France, with an equal number allowed to enter Britain via a legal route. The measure aims to deter dangerous and illegal crossings from France. "Policing the Channel alone is not enough to prevent dangerous crossings," Imran Hussain of the UK's Refugee Council said in a statement reacting to Thursday's deadly incident, adding safer pathways needed to be created.

Trump threatens 50% tariffs on countries supplying Iran with weapons



WASHINGTON, U.S. President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that imports from countries supplying Iran with military weapons will face immediate 50% tariffs with no exemptions, threatening the move just hours after agreeing to a two-week ceasefire with Tehran. After more than five weeks of strikes against Iran's missile launchers, military sites and weapons industry, Trump reverted to tariffs as leverage, using a social media post to warn China and Russia against restocking Tehran's arsenals. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. Beijing and Moscow have denied supplying any weapons recently, although allegations against Russia have persisted. But the U.S. Supreme Court stripped Trump of his fastest and broadest tariff authority, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, in February, ruling that his broadest global tariffs imposed under the 1977 law were illegal. "A Country supplying Military Weapons to Iran will be immediately tariffed, on any and all goods sold to the United States of America, 50%, effective immediately. There will be no exclusions or exemptions! President DJT," Trump wrote on the Truth Social site, without naming any countries. China and Russia have helped Iran build military capacity to counter U.S. and Israeli pressure, including by supplying missiles and air-defense systems. That support appeared capped during the U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran. Reuters reported in February, prior to the first U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran, that Tehran was considering a purchase of supersonic anti-ship cruise missiles from China, had sent chipmaking tools to Iran's military, according to two senior Trump administration officials. "This is a China-related threat, the way I read it. And China will read it that way," said Josh Lipsky, vice

president and chair of international economics at the Atlantic Council. Although drone and missile parts routinely flow from Chinese entities to Iran, evading U.S. sanctions, Lipsky said Trump was unlikely to follow through with new tariffs in the near term because that would derail his planned trip to Beijing to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

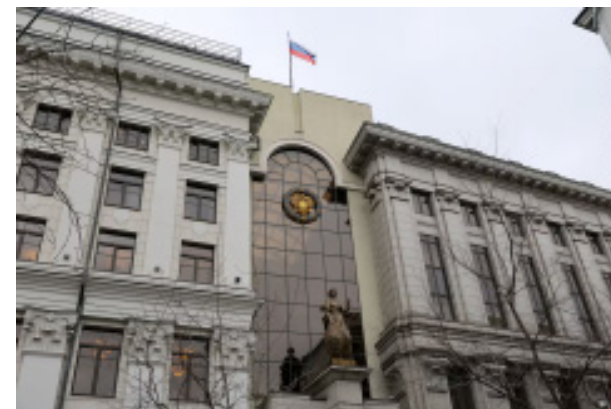
China's defense ministry spokesperson Zhang Xiaogang on Thursday denied reports of Chinese firms providing Iran with chip equipment and satellite imagery. "China has always been open and above board on the Iran issue, maintaining an objective and impartial stance, and has consistently worked to promote peace talks while never engaging in any activities that could fan the flames or add fuel to the fire," Zhang said in a statement. "The international community can clearly see who is saying one thing and doing another, and who is creating war and conflict everywhere." On Tuesday, U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said Trump wanted to preserve stability in U.S.-China ties, safeguarding U.S. access to Chinese rare-earth minerals while maintaining prior tariff levels and avoiding a "massive confrontation" with Xi.

Of Trump's still available trade tools, an active "Section 301" unfair trade practices action against Chinese goods from his first term would be the most likely vehicle for adding new tariffs quickly, Lipsky said. A more limited tool would be Section 232 of the Cold War-era Trade Expansion Act of 1962, aimed at protecting strategic domestic industries on national security grounds, but it would limit duties to specific sectors. Trump's tariffs on Chinese goods over nearly eight years already have cut U.S. imports from China sharply, from a peak of \$538.5 billion in 2018 to \$308.4 billion in 2025, with further declines in January and February. Russia has been another source of arms technology for Iran, but U.S. imports of Russian goods also have shriveled since the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and financial sanctions imposed on Moscow as a result of that move. U.S. imports from Russia, one of the only countries not subject to Trump's now-cancelled "reciprocal" tariffs, jumped 26.1% to \$3.8 billion in 2025. These imports are dominated by palladium used in automotive catalytic converters, fertilizers and their ingredients, and enriched uranium for nuclear reactors. The Commerce Department is moving to impose punitive tariffs on Russian palladium after an anti-dumping investigation. Reporting by Susan Heavey and David Lawder in Washington; Additional reporting by Beijing newsroom and Jessie Pang in Hong Kong; Editing by Sharon Singleton, Matthew Lewis, Paul Simao and Bernadette Baum

Russia brands Nobel-winning rights group Memorial an extremist movement

LONDON, Russian human rights group Memorial was designated an "extremist" movement on Thursday in a closed-door hearing of the country's Supreme Court, state news agency TASS said. The ruling - the latest in a sweeping, years-long crackdown on free speech in Russia - provides a legal mechanism for authorities to prosecute anyone who contributes to the work of the Nobel Prize-winning organisation or shares material that it publishes.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. Memorial said shortly before the judgment was announced that it had no doubt about the outcome. "The case against Memorial is yet another attempt to intimidate all dissent in the country and force civil society into silence," it said in a statement. Memorial was founded in the late 1980s to document political repression in the Soviet Union. It has defended freedom of speech and recorded human rights abuses from the time of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin to the present. In December 2021, less than two months before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the authorities banned two of Memorial's flagship organisations, alleging that their work had "justified terrorism and extremism" - charges the group called absurd. Memorial has continued to operate, however, mostly from outside Russia, and provide support to what it says are more than 1,500 political prisoners in the country. The Kremlin says Russia is rightly enforcing its laws against people who commit crimes. Thursday's ruling is directed against "the international public movement Memorial". Memorial said that no such organisation exists and that the vague designation was deliberately designed to enable prosecutions of anyone speaking out on human rights or historical crimes. It said the effort would not succeed, and "Memorial will outlive the Putin regime and will be able to openly return to Russia" one day. Once the ruling comes into force, supporters within Russia should not donate money or show support for its activities online to avoid attracting the attention of the authorities, it warned. Memorial shared the



2022 Nobel Peace Prize jointly with Belarusian activist Ales Bialiatski and the Ukrainian Centre for Civil Liberties, in an award widely regarded as a condemnation of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine earlier that year. Memorial leader Oleg Orlov was sentenced to prison in 2024 for "discrediting the armed forces" by protesting against the war in Ukraine and accusing President Vladimir Putin of leading a descent into fascism. He was freed later that year in a major prisoner swap agreed between the United States and Russia. Anticipating Thursday's court ruling, the Norwegian Nobel Committee said on Wednesday it was alarmed by the application from Russia's justice ministry to label Memorial as "extremist". "If the claim is upheld, all activities of Memorial will be criminalised. Anyone taking part in, or funding, Memorial's work — or even sharing its published materials — will risk imprisonment," it said in a statement. Chief writer on Russia and CIS. Worked as a journalist on 7 continents and reported from 40+ countries, with postings in London, Wellington, Brussels, Warsaw, Moscow and Berlin. Covered the break-up of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. Security correspondent from 2003 to 2008. Speaks French, Russian and (rusty) German and Polish.

Hindu American Foundation challenges California caste discrimination approach in US court

Washington: The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) has approached a US appeals court, arguing that California's civil rights regulator has wrongly linked caste discrimination to Hinduism and targeted Indian and South Asian communities, in a case that could shape how caste is addressed in US workplaces. In a reply brief filed on April 6 before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, HAF urged the court to remove what it called procedural hurdles that led a lower court to dismiss its lawsuit against the California Civil Rights Department (CRD). The foundation said the district court erred by not examining the substance of its claims.

HAF argues that the CRD's enforcement approach "explicitly and implicitly links 'caste' to Hinduism and people of Indian or South Asian descent," effectively singling out a minority community.

The case traces back to a high-profile complaint filed by the CRD against Cisco Systems and two managers, alleging caste-based discrimination. The regulator publicly stated it had "Sue(d) Cisco Systems, Inc. and Former Managers For Caste-Based Discrimination" and filed action under California's Fair Employment and Housing Act. According to HAF, the CRD "doubled down" on its theory that Cisco should have prevented caste discrimination "occurring within its South Asian Indian workforce." The foundation noted that the term "caste" appears repeatedly in the agency's active complaint. HAF contends that the CRD's framing relied on "racist and demonstrably false tropes" about Indians and Hindus. It cited the department's earlier claim that "India's caste system" is "a strict Hindu social and religious hierarchy." The CRD has since removed

that phrasing and argued that the issue is now moot. But HAF maintains that the core problem persists.

Removing the phrase 'Hindu social and religious hierarchy' doesn't change the fact that the CRD is attempting to direct 'caste' policies solely at the company's Indian, South Asian, and Hindu workforce," the foundation said. Needhy Shah, HAF Senior Legal Director, warned that the implications extend beyond a single case. The Hindu American, Indian American, and South Asian American communities are concerned, and if they aren't, they should be," Shah said. "The CRD is attempting to wield its enforcement powers by singling out the very minority groups it is charged to protect. Californians are paying attention, and so are employers and businesses regulated by the CRD," Shah added. She further said, "The CRD is playing caste cop, blaming caste discrimination on Hinduism, and it's only a matter of time until they identify their next Hindu target." HAF is represented by lead counsel Tim Travelstead of Narayan Travelstead Ku P.C. The Ninth Circuit's decision on whether to revive the case could have broader implications for how US civil rights law interprets caste and its association with religion or ethnicity, particularly for Indian-origin communities. Caste has emerged as a contentious issue in parts of the United States, especially in technology sector workplaces with significant South Asian representation. Some advocacy groups have pushed for explicit caste protections, while others argue such measures risk stereotyping entire communities.

Mumbai's Metro network gets bigger: What commuters need to know



After years of delays, two new Metro stretches open in Mumbai on Tuesday, giving Mira Bhayandar its first Metro connection and adding a fifth operational line to the city's rapidly expanding urban rail network. Here is what to expect. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, along with Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Pawar, will kick off proceedings at Dahisar at 10 am. The inauguration covers four stations on Line 9, running 4.5 km from Dahisar to Kashigaon on Mira Road, and five stations on Line 2B, covering 5.53 km from Diamond Garden in Chembur to Mandale. Tuesday will also see the launch of tunnelling works for the Thane-Borivali Twin Tunnel project and a ground-breaking ceremony for the pod taxi project at Bandra Kurla Complex.

If you live in Mira Bhayandar, Line 9 is the big one for residents of Mira Bhayandar, an area that has until now had no Metro connectivity at all. The four stations opening Tuesday, Dahisar, Pandhurang Wadi, Miragaon and Kashigaon, run along the Western Express Highway, offering a faster and cheaper alternative to the perpetually congested Dahisar checknaaka. Commuters travelling to and from Mira Road will not need to change trains to connect

with Line 7, which runs between Dahisar East and Andheri East. At Dahisar, there is also an interchange with Line 2A for those heading to Andheri West, and at Gundavali, commuters can switch to Line 1. A future connection to Line 6 at JVL is also planned. Authorities expect between 50,000 and one lakh people to use the line from day one. The remaining four stations on Line 9 are expected to open within six months. The line will eventually extend further as Line 7A, connecting to the international airport, though that is not expected before 2027. If you live in eastern suburbs, five stations of Line 2B open Tuesday, making it the fifth metro line in Mumbai. The stations, Diamond Garden, Shivaji Chowk, BSNL Metro, Mankhurd and Mandale, span 5.53 km through Chembur and into Mandale in the east.

Of these, Mankhurd is the only station with a direct interchange with the suburban railway network. The MMRDA hopes to operationalise the Chembur station, which connects with the monorail, once that service resumes in the coming months. Given the limited stretch and connectivity at this stage, ridership is expected to build gradually. The real transformation will come when the full 23.643 km line across 20 stations is complete, connecting Mankhurd through Chembur, Kurla, BKC, Bandra, Khar and all the way to Andheri West. That deadline is 2027. The bigger picture

Once complete, Line 2B will be one of the most significant east-west corridors in Mumbai's metro network, with interchanges with Line 3 at BKC, Line 1 at DN Nagar, and with the suburban railway and Line 4 at Kurla. Daily ridership on the full line is projected at 8.9 lakh, rising to 10.5 lakh by 2031. The line's total cost is Rs 10,986 crore. For Line 9, daily ridership across the full corridor is projected at 11.12 lakh by 2031, with a combined project cost of Rs 6,607 crore for Lines 9 and 7A together.

Panchayat elections in HP: District administrations begin issuing reservation rosters

In view of the upcoming panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) elections in Himachal Pradesh, district administrations in Shimla, Kangra and Sirmour have begun issuing reservation rosters for various local bodies, including nagar panchayats and zila parishads, accelerating the election process across the state. In Shimla district, Deputy Commissioner Anupam Kashyap issued the reservation roster for 25 zila parishad wards in the district, of which 13 have been reserved for women. The number of wards in Shimla has increased to 25 with the creation of a new ward, Kwar. The issuance of the roster has also brought clarity regarding the number of panchayats in the district. A total of 441 panchayats are currently included under the 25 wards, down from 446, following a recent court order that annulled the formation of five panchayats. Further clarity is expected once the panchayat roster is officially released.

Meanwhile, in Sirmour district, Deputy Commissioner Priyanka Verma has issued the reservation roster for the posts of gram panchayat pradhans across eight development blocks. In Kangra district, the administration has also notified the reservation roster for the upcoming PRI elections. The district, which has 18 development blocks and a total of 847 gram panchayats, has declared the roster for 846 panchayats, as the reconstitution of one panchayat



remains sub judice. As per the roster, reservation has been finalised for 846 gram panchayat pradhan posts, 54 zila parishad wards, and the posts of chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of panchayat samitis. Of these, 423 gram panchayats, 27 zila parishad wards, and nine panchayat samitis chairperson posts have been reserved for women. On April 1, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu had said in the House during the Budget session that PRI elections in the state will be held before May 31.

Latest bomb threats target Mohali courts; complexes evacuated, work suspended



Panic gripped Mohali district after all court complexes in Mohali, Kharrar, and Dera Bassi received bomb threats via email, prompting an immediate evacuation and suspension of judicial work for the day. The administration cleared all court complexes as a precautionary measure. Police imposed strict barricading across the area and launched an extensive search operation. Bomb disposal squads and dog units carried out thorough checks to rule out any potential threat.

SP (City) Dilpreet Singh said the threatening emails

were not limited to Mohali alone but were sent to multiple locations across Punjab. "We have intensified security and initiated a detailed search operation. Every possible step is being taken to ensure public safety," he stated. Given the seriousness of the situation, courts were ordered shut for the day, and all proceedings were suspended. Notably, this is not the first such incident. Earlier this year, Mohali courts received similar threats on January 7 and 8. On both occasions, emails warning of bomb blasts led to evacuations and prolonged search operations. Speaking on the origin of the emails, SP said, "The messages were sent to official court email IDs. Preliminary technical analysis indicated that some emails were traced to locations outside India, particularly Dhaka in Bangladesh". The emails reportedly contained references to Khalistan and related narratives. Investigators also found that the senders used VPNs and the dark web to conceal their identity, routing messages through servers in countries such as the Netherlands and Norway. Despite the threats turning out to be hoaxes, authorities are not taking any chances. "Every threat is treated as real until proven otherwise. Security at court complexes has been further strengthened," Singh emphasised.



total of Rs 5,54,610 was transferred from her bank account to other fraudulent bank accounts, through multiple online transactions without her consent. She then approached the police and filed a complaint against the online fraudsters. Police said after the woman submitted her information on the link provided by the fraudster, and paid Rs 5 on Google Pay, the cyber criminals got access to her mobile phone linked to her bank account. The cyber fraudsters then transferred money from her bank account to mule accounts, police said. Police have booked the unidentified accused in this case under (BNS) section 318 (4), 319 (2) and sections of the Information Technology Act. Senior police inspector Girisha Nimbalkar is investigating the case.

Woman seeking ENT doctor's appointment lost Rs 5.5 lakh to cyber criminals

Later, on March 18, March 28 and March 29, a total of Rs 5,54,610 was transferred from her bank account to other fraudulent bank accounts, through multiple online transactions without her consent. Later, on March 18, March 28 and March 29, a total of Rs 5,54,610 was transferred from her bank account to other fraudulent bank accounts, through multiple online transactions without her consent. (Image generated using AI) While seeking an appointment with a doctor online, a 63 year old woman residing on the Law College Road in Erandwane, lost Rs 5.54 lakhs to cyber fraudsters. The victim woman lodged the first information report (FIR) in this case at the Deccan police station on Sunday. Police said the woman was suffering from sinus issues, and so she searched online for the contact number of a doctor. She came across a mobile phone number for seeking appointment for a well known ENT specialist from Pune. Police said the woman called on the mobile phone number on March 14. But the phone call was received by a cyber fraudster posing as a hospital staffer. The fraudster asked the woman to pay Rs 5 through Google Pay for the doctor's appointment. He also forwarded a link on her mobile phone number. He asked her to open the link and submit the patient's information. Police said the woman paid Rs 5 online, but then found it suspicious and cut the phone call with the fraudster. Later, on March 18, March 28 and March 29, a

Baramati by-election: Can't support BJP? ally in a bypoll, says Congress as Akash More files nomination



Congress leader Akash More on Monday filed his nomination for the April 23 by-election in Baramati even as his party maintained that it cannot support an ally of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in a bypoll. Congress said that its decision to contest is more about upholding constitutional and democratic values destroyed by the BJP than to contest against Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar.

"There is significant deliberation and criticism regarding our move, suggesting that Congress should let the election go unopposed as per tradition. But was an election not held after the death of Vasant Chavan in Nanded? Was an election not held after Bhagirath Bhalke's death in Mangalwedha? Many such examples can be given where the BJP has played politics as per its convenience," said party chief spokesperson Atul Londhe. He said that unfortunately, following the death of former deputy CM Ajit Pawar, his family felt there should be an inquiry, and consequently, deputy CM Sunetra Pawar requested a CBI probe. "What happened to that

reminder? Rohit Pawar was running from pillar to post to file an FIR in Maharashtra, and his efforts finally succeeded in Karnataka. Is this your sensitivity? Even today, our candidate and the Congress party maintain that you should file the FIR in Maharashtra, in Baramati," he said.

Congress sources said that nobody from the ruling NCP ever tried to contact party state leadership throughout previous month to reach to a consensus. Speaking in Baramati, NCP working president Praful Patel said that he tried to connect with Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge but was unsuccessful. "The decision to contest was taken by Maharashtra leadership. Was there any attempt to contact us? As far as our knowledge is, Kharge ji has left the decision on state unit regarding the bypoll," a senior Congress leader told. Party sources also mentioned that the Congress had already clarified to its allies in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) that it has no intention of making this poll unopposed as it cannot be seen on the same side as of the BJP. Commenting on Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut's criticism in its mouth piece Saamana over the decision, AICC secretary Sachin Sawant said, "Honorable Sanjay Raut often confuses his dual roles as a journalist and a political spokesperson. While performing the journalistic duty of highlighting others' flaws and the political spokesperson's habit of pointing fingers at other parties, he constantly forgets that four fingers are pointing back at him. Unfortunately, he has fallen under the delusion that whatever he says is the absolute truth." "He does not seem to feel the need to acknowledge that other parties in the alliance may have their own opinions, or that prior consultation with them is essential. Is it appropriate in the ethics of an alliance to announce decisions unilaterally and then go looking for Congress leaders," he said.

FIR, counter FIR filed in clash during basketball tournament

Shimla police Monday filed FIR and counter FIR after members of two basketball teams clashed during a tournament at Government College Kotkhai on March 25. At least seven people from both the groups got injured in the brawl. Police said the condition of all the injured people is stable. Police said that the first case was registered on the complaint of Shivansh of Kotkhai. According to the complaint, an argument broke out during the sports meet, and later around 6 pm, more than a dozen persons allegedly reached his PG accommodation and assaulted him, causing injuries to his head and left arm.

The suspects identified in the case are Rohit (19) of Sundernagar in Mandi, Mauryan (20) of Rajgarh in Sirmour district, Sahil (19) of Karsog in Mandi, Abhay Thakur (19) of Sarkaghat in Mandi, Honey Rokta (23) of Theog in Shimla, Pankaj (19) of Dhatwal in Hamirpur, and Sahil Dhadwalia (21) of Dhatwal in Hamirpur. In the second FIR, Mauryan, who currently resides in Shimla, alleged that following a verbal altercation during the basketball tournament, the accused allegedly assaulted him and his friends outside the college premises around 5 pm, causing injuries. The suspects named in the second FIR are Sahil Rathore (20) of Jogindernagar in Mandi, Abhay Singh Rana (20) of Sarkaghat in Mandi, Ritansh (21) of Rampur Bushahr in



Shimla, Shivansh (20) of Rampur Bushahr in Shimla, Shivansh Thakur (20) of Ghumarwin in Bilaspur, and Vikas (20) of Dharamshala in Kangra district. So far, we have not arrested any of the involved persons. The medical reports of all the injured suggest they received minor injuries. We have summoned and joined all the named persons in the two FIRs to join the investigation under Section 35(3) of the Bharatiya Nayay Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023," a police officer said.

Promoting healthier cities: SPPU students examine global studies to formulate recommendations for policymakers



Students at Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU)'s department of health sciences have undertaken a unique exercise by examining diverse case studies and research from cities across the world to formulate recommendations for policymakers in promoting healthier and resilient cities. The students, who assessed 30 major studies across cities in Africa, USA and Europe, have called for long-term thinking that includes active people participation in developing new approaches to urban health.

Ahead of World Health Day (April 7), which observes the theme 'Together for Health, Stand for Science', experts at SPPU's department of health sciences urged it is time to think about the health of people and the health of our city. "This is the time when policy planning can also happen in classrooms by involving young minds with fresh ideas. Instead of bookish instructions, learning on the field is

required to get a real life experience," Dr Girish Tillu, Assistant Professor at the department, who conducts the course on urban health, said. "The course provides exposure to real life situations of urban environments, infrastructure and people's needs in a fast changing world. Students learn about factors affecting people's lives, known as determinants of urban health," Dr Tillu explained. This relatively new course has been part of the curriculum for the last six years and teaches students about urbanisation as a determining factor for health and how various aspects like transport, overcrowding and pollution can affect the city's healthcare. Students evaluated 30 studies from across the world, including developing countries. "For instance, there are unique innovations like sugar tax, which has been introduced in Africa to reduce beverage consumption in children. After assessing various studies, students have also drawn up perspectives on how some of the global examples can be relevant to local conditions in Pune," Dr Tillu said. What has emerged strongly is that people should be actively consulted in decision-making and encouraged to participate, rather than remaining passive and expecting the government to handle everything. "Our department was established to develop public health practitioners for promotion of health at different levels ranging from individuals to planetary health. The programmes at the department are designed to expose students to real life experience in diverse aspects of public health. This is an apt implementation of the national education policy," Dr Abhay Kudale, head of the department, said.

Public squares of Mumbai likely to get upgrade soon

bmcOver the past two months, the civic body has launched a crackdown against encroachments and hawkers in a bid to improve pedestrian comfort. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is set to explore the possibility of developing major public squares of Mumbai with public amenities ranging from food stalls to malls while building pedestrian friendly zones along railway tracks. The proposal has been mooted by Shiv Sena corporator Yamini Jadhav. In her resolution dated March 3, Jadhav flagged concerns over impediments faced by tourists owing to encroachment on footpaths, increased vehicular flow, traffic hurdles among others. "Considering the situation, the BMC is of the opinion that major squares and historical places of Mumbai should be provided with facilities such as shopping malls, catering centres, toilets, seating facilities, good lighting, and landscape gardens which are artistically arranged to strike a

balance between culture and nature," she said. Jadhav has also called for development of comfortable pedestrian friendly zones along railway tracks in a bid to improve air quality, improve tourist experience as well as generate new income streams for the BMC. The resolution has been presented before the civic body, and is likely to be tabled for discussion in the general body this month. If cleared, the civic administration will commence works to earmark possible high footfall tourist places to implement the project. Meanwhile, in a further boost to tourism, Jadhav also called the BMC to implement amenities like modern toilets, changing and locker rooms across Mumbai's seven beaches. Over the past two months, the civic body has launched a crackdown against encroachments and hawkers in a bid to improve pedestrian comfort. Alongside, the civic body has also launched a pilot project to remodel footpath along a span of 16.5 km.

Gas what, the chullah may just see a comeback



AS a species, we humans have been on our planet for only a flash in its long history and yet, somewhere in our heads, we think we are going to be around for a while. We even plan for this. Even though we seem to have a mental geometric progression in seeing how much damage and destruction we can cause in the least amount of time. Just take a look around. The conflict in West Asia has impacted just about everything. Across the world, the pinch has been felt in numerous ways. Way down on the scale of lies, pointless deaths, destruction, misery and discomfort, is our fear of running out of cooking gas cylinders. The way toilet rolls were gathered and hoarded in the western world at the start of the Covid pandemic, a similar status may be accorded to LPG cylinders in India. Even if the toilet roll is easier to handle (or hoard). Even if it has a nastier purpose. Short of giving the standard blessing, "May you live long", to the cylinder every morning, one has done just about everything to be as miserly and respectful as possible with its use. Hot water is taken from the electric geyser and only then used over a cooking gas flame. Like several others across the country — who I'm sure are also doing this — the evening ends by building both muscle and stress by manipulating the gas cylinder to and fro. This is not to pretend that the cylinder or I are yoga masters or chiropractors, but this is to try and gauge how long it shall continue to grace us with its benign presence.

The solitary electric plate can hardly suffice for a family and a dog whose appetite belies its small size. It has been mentioned that we may have to move to another city and a PNG connection. At the same time, yet again, for no fault of theirs, my friends in the tourism-hospitality industry are looking worriedly at the months ahead. Summarising what all of them sense, one said: "We are always the first to suffer and the last to recover." For cooking, many have been compelled to shift to electricity and even kerosene. Rows

of induction stoves stand parked like a reserve force that is all ready to sally out when summoned. Those who are in rural areas, in some measure, have reverted to wood.

To state the obvious, here, the earnings of summer are expected to act as a buffer for the lean months in the tourism-dependent economies of Kashmir, Himachal and Uttarakhand — and several other places. While the severe impact of the Covid years is still rattling around, on wings of cretins, this 'summer buffer' seems to be flying out of the window. It's not without reason that the industry has minimal faith in government support where utterances of help have turned out to be just promises in the wind. The shrapnel of this blast will go far and wide. From hoteliers and transporters to porters to dhaba-wallahs, everyone will be impacted. Even the government won't get its chunk of luxury tax. While we are at it, a splinter or two is likely to find its way to 'Yours truly'.

Before our family had a gas connection, which was a prized item in the late 1960s and early 1970s, we had a massive coal-burning chullah and electric hotplates in the kitchen. Through the good offices of a family friend, a cooking gas connection and stove arrived. That set of gas burners held a measure of trepidation as, in those early days of something that is indispensable today, apprehensions flew thick and fast about its safety. In our neighbourhood, we were pioneers of sorts and were to be held responsible should any mishap take place. Quickly, that old coal-burning stove wound its way out of our kitchen and lives. But while it lived and burned, this was a thing to behold. For one, it took over a good chunk of kitchen space. The coal used in the grates was not the 'steam coal' which went into the fireplaces, but was something called 'coke'. This had nothing to do with the drink or drug, but was something like processed coal that yielded greater heat and lesser smoke. This monumental chullah was made of brick and cement with mud plastered over — and the plastering took place on a regular basis. It had five burners on top, one in the centre which was flanked by a pair on either side. Just below the centre one was an iron-encased oven and from what may sound like a primitive device emerged some wonderful bakes. At night, coal dust, keri, was poured over the centre burner and a small hole pierced in the centre. A large cooking pot full of water was placed over the smouldering fire, which would be resuscitated in the morning. There was nothing romantic and lovable about that chullah. It just happened to be there in the absence of other cooking methods. As far as I'm concerned, there is very little lovable about piles of ash, soot-blackened walls and smoke-filled rooms. Well, for all you know, we may end up going back to them.

150 crore Kotak Mahindra Bank scam: Deputy V-P bought Wrangler Rubicon, Mercedes GLS with siphoned funds

In the Rs 150 crore Kotak Mahindra Bank scam, a Panchkula court on Thursday remanded the bank's Deputy Vice-President, Pushpender Singh, to five days' police custody. Pushpender Singh was the branch manager of Kotak Mahindra Bank, Sector 11, Panchkula, where funds of Municipal Corporation, Panchkula, were siphoned off. He had surrendered before the State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau, Haryana, on Wednesday, and was later arrested. During a hearing in the court, the SV&ACB submitted that Rs 30-35 crore had come in Pushpender Singh's share, from which "a Wrangler Rubicon, a Mercedes GLS, and a Harley-Davidson motorbike were purchased." It added that they needed to be recovered from Delhi. It further said that three mobile phones, a laptop, a printer, stamps used to forge FDs, and related documents needed to be recovered from the branch manager, who had kept them in Narkanda, Himachal Pradesh. "He needs to be interrogated about the whereabouts of the other co-accused and a similar fraud, if any. It is a multi-layered fraud of a complex nature," said the investigating agency.

He is the sixth accused arrested in the case. As per the FIR in the scam, the MC was maintaining 16 FDs, amounting to Rs 145.03 crore, with a maturity value of Rs 158.02 crore, in the bank's Sector 11 branch in Panchkula. Of the 16 FDs, 11, amounting to Rs 59.58 crore, matured on February 16.

When the MC contacted the bank, officials provided statements that neither matched one another nor the MC's records, particularly with respect to the FDs. As per earlier submissions of SV&ACB before the court, ex-Senior Accounts Officer of the Municipal Corporation, Panchkula, Vikas Kaushik, allegedly in collusion with Pushpender Singh, fraudulently opened two accounts of the MC, Panchkula, and transferred funds from genuine



accounts. On the account opening form for one account, Kaushik allegedly affixed the official seals of the Commissioner, MC Panchkula, and the Senior Accounts Officer. Furthermore, he and Pushpender Singh forged the signatures of the then Commissioner, MC Panchkula, IAS Sumedha Kataria, and the then Senior Accounts Officer, Sushil Kumar, over these seals. For the second fraudulent account, Kaushik allegedly signed in the capacity of Senior Accounts Officer and affixed a forged seal of the Deputy Municipal Commissioner (DMC). Over this seal, he and Manager Pushpender Singh also allegedly forged the signature of the then DMC, Deepak Sura. After allegedly fabricating fraudulent debit notes (RTGS/NEFT notes) purportedly issued by the MC Panchkula, Kaushik would allegedly affix his own signature as one of the signatories, while forging the signature of the second signatory. Using fraudulent debit notes, Pushpender Singh allegedly transferred funds from these two fraudulent accounts into the accounts of individuals such as Rajat Dahra, Swati Tomar, and others.

Google and Back Market launch ChromeOS Flex Kit to revive old PCs and Macs

Hyderabad: Hundreds of millions of computers faced a critical challenge last October when Microsoft Windows 10 reached its end of support, leaving devices vulnerable to security risks and obsolescence. Users were faced with a choice: buy a new computer or continue using an outdated, potentially unsafe system.

To offer an alternative, Google has partnered with Back Market, a leader in refurbished electronics, to launch the ChromeOS Flex USB Kit. The kit allows users to install ChromeOS Flex, a fast, secure, and free operating system, on their existing PCs or Macs. Back Market provides simplified guides and video tutorials to make the installation process straightforward, although ChromeOS Flex is also available for free download from Google's website. "Just because an operating system reaches its end-of-support doesn't mean the hardware is obsolete," a Google spokesperson said. "ChromeOS Flex helps extend the useful life of devices, offering a sustainable alternative to buying new computers."

Google has already extended software support for Chromebooks to 10 years and Pixel phones to seven years, and ChromeOS Flex is another step toward sustainability. Using existing hardware reduces e-waste and carbon emissions from manufacturing new devices. On average, ChromeOS consumes 19% less energy than other com-



Google, in partnership with Back Market, launches ChromeOS Flex USB Kit to modernize PCs and Macs reaching Windows 10 end-of-support. The free, energy-efficient OS extends device life, reduces e-waste, and makes older computers fast, secure, and sustainable.

parable operating systems. Priced at around \$3 (*3), the ChromeOS Flex USB Kit is reusable, and Google's partnership with Closing the Loop further reduces electronic waste, helping make older devices safer, faster, and greener.

CBI registers FIR in Rs 590-crore IDFC First and AU Small Finance Bank scam



The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered an FIR in the Rs 590-crore IDFC First and AU Small Finance Bank scam. The CBI FIR was registered on April 8 against "unknown" as per the original FIR, registered by the State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (SV&ACB) on February 23.

The CBI FIR mentioned offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, and cheating, forgery, criminal conspiracy, fraudulent or dishonest use of a forged document and criminal breach of trust under the BNS. On March 25, in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946, the Haryana Government accorded its consent to the extension of powers and jurisdiction of the members of Delhi Special Police Establishment (Central Bureau of Investigation) to the whole of the state "for the purpose of investigation into the case involving serious allegations of misappropriation of government funds and a large-scale, organised, and multi-layered fraud". Related News: Haryana suspends 2 IAS officers in Rs 590 crore IDFC First-AU Small Finance Bank scam

As per the letter sent from Haryana Government to Secretary, Ministry of Personnel, "the case pertains to fraudulent banking operations and fictitious transactions allegedly undertaken in a systematic manner to siphon off Government funds into the accounts of shell entities, including Swastik Dosh Project, SRR Planning Gurus Pvt

Ltd, Cap Co Fintech Services, RS Traders, and other associated firms/individuals, resulting in a substantial loss to the public exchequer, estimated to exceed Rs 550 crore." For recommending the CBI probe, Haryana Government reasoned that "considering the magnitude, complexity, and gravity of the case, including its inter-state ramifications, the possibility of transnational diversion of proceeds of crime, involvement of multiple entities, including public servants and banking officials, and the significant impact on public finances and institutional integrity, the state government is of the considered view that the investigation requires to be entrusted to a specialised central agency to ensure a comprehensive, impartial, and credible probe." The Ministry of Personnel accorded its approval for CBI to investigate the case on April 8. In the scam, 12 bank accounts across the eight Haryana departments were affected: 10 at IDFC First Bank and 2 at AU Small Finance Bank. In the SV&ACB probe so far, 15 persons have been arrested in the case, including bank officials and four government officials. More than 25 electronic devices, including mobile phones and laptops, have been seized and sent to Cyber Forensic Laboratory for examination. The agency has also seized six luxury vehicles, including three Toyota Fortuners, two Innovas, and one Mercedes, which are suspected of having been purchased with illicit proceeds. Over 100 bank accounts suspected of being linked to the fraudulent transactions came under the agency's scanner. Additionally, 10 properties have been identified as reasonably suspected of having been purchased with the proceeds of crime. The probe has uncovered that the accused allegedly manipulated banking records by preparing fake debit memos or transferring funds without any valid debit memo or cheque authorisation. Investigators have further found that forged bank statements were allegedly prepared to facilitate the transfer of funds to multiple accounts directly or indirectly linked to the accused and their relatives. Some of the fictitious companies identified during the probe that allegedly received over Rs 250 crore include Cap Co Fintech Services, SRR Planning Gurus Pvt Ltd, and Swastik Dosh Project. According to SV&ACB's submission before the court, the former regional head of AU Small Finance Bank allegedly received Rs 10 crore in connivance with other accused.

Indian-origin couple jailed for operating UK companies despite ban

An Indian-origin couple has been sentenced for breaching a disqualification order to operate companies in the UK for over five years despite a ban following tax fraud claims. Bharat Jogia, 71, from England's West Midlands region was disqualified as a company director for 13 years in 2014 after not disputing that he caused Jogia Jewellers (UK) Limited to wrongfully claim more than 2 million pounds from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

The UK's Insolvency Service discovered that he ignored that ban to continue to control pharmaceutical companies Diamond Pharma Limited and BHJ Consulting Ltd. His wife, 57-year-old Louise Jogia, was found to have "aided and abetted" him in breaching the disqualification and acted as the official director of BHJ Consulting. "Bharat Jogia showed complete contempt for the law by breaching his director disqualification ban for more than five years," said Mark Stephens, Chief Investigator at the Insolvency Service. "Louise Jogia acted as a front to shield her husband, providing signed documentation and support where needed." Ignoring a disqualification is a serious criminal offence that undermines the entire system designed to keep rogue directors out of positions where they can cause further harm to creditors, employees and the wider economy," he said. Stephens explained that director disqualifications exist to protect the public and maintain confidence in UK businesses. "When someone is banned from running companies, it is because they have proven themselves unfit to do so," he added. Jogia's disqualification order ought to have prevented him from running, managing or promoting any company until 2027. His breach of the ban resulted in a sentence of nine months in prison, suspended for 18 months, when he appeared at Birmingham Crown Court last week.

He was also ordered to complete 100 hours of unpaid community work and disqualified as a company director for another 10 years. His wife was sentenced to seven months in prison, also suspended for 18 months, at the same hearing and disqualified as a company director for 10 years. The suspended sentence means the couple has avoided immediate custodial terms, provided they commit no further offences and comply with court-imposed community requirements. Jogia, based in Streetly near Birmingham, signed a disqualification undertaking or an agreement where company directors suspected of misconduct voluntarily disqualify themselves instead of taking the case to court in June 2014. In the signed document, Jogia did not dispute that he caused Jogia Jewellers (UK) Limited to par-



ticipate in transactions which formed part of a scheme to defraud HMRC. The undertaking meant that Jogia could not be a director of any UK-registered company or be involved in forming, marketing or running a company. However, he continued to run Diamond Pharma Limited and BHJ Consulting Ltd in all but name from the day of his disqualification up until August and July 2019 respectively, just before liquidators were appointed to both companies. Investigations by the Insolvency Service revealed that Jogia instructed lawyers on conveyancing matters, approved company accounts, authorised agreements with customers and suppliers, managed staff and received more than 80,000 pounds in consultancy services, all for Diamond Pharma Limited. "Under Jogia's management, Diamond Pharma Limited also racked up more than 445,000 pounds in tax debts, leading to HMRC applying to have the company wound-up," stated the Insolvency Service. "For BHJ Consulting Ltd, Louise Jogia provided the trading history to the liquidator by email, noting that she and her husband set up the company 'as a consultancy service to the pharmaceutical industry'. However, matters which as a director Louise Jogia would be expected to deal with such as instructions to lawyers on conveyancing matters, the company's IT decisions and payment to creditors, were all dealt with by her husband," it noted. Their analysis of BHJ Consulting Ltd's bank account showed it was used to pay personal bills for Bharat and Louise Jogia. The Insolvency Service said it is now seeking confiscation of funds against the Jogias under the UK's Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

SC piqued over delay; asks CBI, ED to conduct fair probe against Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group companies

Expressing displeasure over "unexplained delay" in investigations, the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the CBI and the ED to conduct a "fair", "prompt" and "dispassionate" probe into alleged massive banking and corporate fraud of Rs 40,000 crore involving Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG), Anil Ambani and group companies. A Bench led by CJI Surya Kant sought fresh status reports in four weeks from the two probe agencies on the progress made in the ongoing probe against Ambani and ADAG companies. "Both ED and CBI have already taken time, and we, therefore, expect that both agencies will act promptly," the Bench said, directing the ED to constitute an SIT of senior officers to promptly take the probe against ADAG and others to a logical conclusion. The Bench disapproved of the CBI's procedural approach, pointing out that the probe agency registered only one FIR in 2025 based on a complaint from the State Bank of India, despite receiving subsequent complaints from various other financial institutions. "The approach adopted by the CBI does not seem to be in conformity with procedural law," the CJI said, adding each bank's complaint constituted a separate transaction and warranted an independent FIR.

The top court asked the CBI to expand the scope of its probe to include the potential "collusion" of bank officials. As PIL petitioner and former bureaucrat EAS Sarma's counsel Prashant Bhushan expressed an apprehension that Anil Ambani may flee, senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi, representing the industrialist, told the Bench that



he will not leave India without its prior permission. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed the bench that "Look Out Circulars" had already been issued against Ambani. The total amount allegedly siphoned off through various ADAG companies is approximately Rs 40,000 crore, he said. Referring to the affidavit of the ED, the Bench said the loans of Reliance Communications exceeded Rs 40,000 crore and the probe agency assessed the "proceeds of crime" at over Rs 20,000 crore. Assets worth Rs 8,078 crore have already been provisionally attached, the ED said. The Supreme Court had on January 23 issued fresh notices to industrialist Anil Ambani and the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG) on Sarma's PIL seeking a court-monitored probe into alleged large-scale banking and corporate fraud involving the group and its associated entities.

Expert Explains Iran-US ceasefire: What each side was fighting for, and what they have won or lost



The United States' and Israel's war on Iran was halted early today on April 8, as US President Donald Trump announced a two-week ceasefire. All US attacks on Iran were "suspended", hours after Trump threatened to end Iranian "civilisation" if Iran did not accept a deal, after 38 days of war. Both Trump and the Iranian Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, asserted that the US and Iran would now negotiate on the basis of Iran's '10-point' demands (deemed "workable" by Trump), sent as a response to Washington's '15-point demands'.

The latter includes the need for Iran to dismantle nuclear facilities in Fordow, Isfahan, and Natanz; commit to not build nuclear weapons; hand over enriched uranium to the IAEA and allow inspectors full access; limit Iran's missile programme; and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, in return for the removal of US and UN sanctions on Iran and US support for nuclear power production in the Bushehr nuclear plant. Iran's 10 points require the US to commit to non-aggression, recognise Iran's control of Hormuz, accept Tehran's sovereign enrichment rights, lift all primary and secondary sanctions and terminate punitive UN and IAEA resolutions, withdraw US forces and compensate Iran, and end Israel's war on Lebanon. What is the logic behind either side's position? What this war meant for Washington

Across 38 days, US war aims have shifted inconsistently, including (at varying points in time) regime change, an end to Iran's ballistic missile programme, destruction of Iran's Navy and Air Force, ending Iran's relationship with regional non-state armed actors, among other objectives. However, amid these, a core truth about US strategy has remained — every round of escalation that the US pursued, including bombing Iranian universities, energy sites, and infrastructure, has been focused not on Iranian capitulation at any scale but rather to force Iran back to the table. This is consistent with Trump's continued reluctance to mount any largescale war like that in Iraq in 2003, which would require large force concentration and ground troops staged in US-allied states in the Gulf. That Iran was at the table as of February 27, 2026, and was willing to offer more favourable terms to Trump than the Obama-era nuclear deal the JCPOA, was overshadowed by the reality of the US President already having walked into a commitment trap (since he was using incrementally escalating military threats to force maximalist diplomatic ends).

This war, despite its needless destruction and high cost, ultimately became a manifestation of those threats for the same diplomatic ends. This was categorically evident in the 15-points which Washington offered to Iran on March 24, most of which were largely similar to US demands from Iran in May 2025, before the 12-Day war in June. That the US President remains eager for a deal (stamped with his seal rather than Obama's, and after a self-proclaimed "victory" through weeks of massive bombardment) was evident in his Truth Social post immediately after announcing the ceasefire, which claimed that — "...this could be a Golden Age of the Middle East", "...Iran wants it too!", "...Big money will be made. Iran can start the reconstruction process." "What this war meant for Iran/Iran has long understood Trump's preferences and weaknesses. In the first half of 2025, Iranian officials took care to praise Trump's "pro-peace" image, invited American businesses to Iran, and chastised the Joe Biden administration's failings. Most importantly, Tehran took care to blame Trump's failings on his advisors, rather than the President himself.

Even as Iran was attacked twice while negotiations were on, Tehran kept up its focus of blaming Steve Witkoff

and Jared Kushner as inexperienced, pro-Israel, "real estate" agents who misled Trump (although, alongside a barrage of memes and AI-led videos mocking Trump). However, given that Trump's military threats had moved from potential to kinetic, and included the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader, Tehran identified a carte blanche to pursue a multi-pronged strategy to prove its ability and tolerance to absorb costs (no matter the tonnage of US/Israeli bombs, assassinations, or special forces action), its ability to impose costs through widespread horizontal escalation that was reciprocal and proportionate to US/Israeli choice of targets in Iran (except for educational institutes, which Iran did not reciprocally strike), and Iran's character as a conventionally powerful civilisational state which needed to be engaged on equitable terms, thus also dispelling any illusion of a Venezuela-like outcome for any US campaign. By April 8, after US/Israeli strikes on Iranian railway infrastructure, bridges, as well as the South Pars gas field, Iran's retaliatory strikes on Kuwaiti and Saudi petrochemical plants proved all three abilities for the 99th time in the war. This is the official number of retaliatory "waves" of drones and missiles that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps launched, announcing each wave as they struck (each with varying effectiveness). Combined with Iran's decisive chokehold of the Strait of Hormuz, except to US/Israel linked shipping, the growing international costs of the war eventually breached Washington's tolerance threshold (compounded by pressures from key allies). To fully drive home the imperative of the US treating Iran as a respectable negotiating partner (and with the assumption that Tehran was always theoretically open to discussing the USA's 15-points), Iran had to convey its own set of demands; to give steadier legs to a historically wobbly negotiating table. These demands necessarily included both old and new asks, including the possibility of Iran and Oman jointly charging a fee for passage through Hormuz (a maximalist aim but designed to be deemed acceptable in lieu of reparations/war damage compensation). Until this table was steered, there was arguably little room for any mediator to make headway — whether Oman (the traditional mediator between Washington and Tehran), Turkey, Pakistan, China, Russia, or Qatar. Until the Trump Administration reconciled itself with the reality of Tehran's resilience and the high improbability of state collapse or Iranian surrender to Washington's terms, these actors remained only as "mediators-in-being".

More importantly, on one hand the US President at several points attempted to force Iran into quick negotiations by claiming that Tehran was already talking (which Iran denied), and on the other, Iran itself was categorical in its efforts to refuse Trump any off-ramp. The latter was important to prevent Washington from relapsing into the old view that the US could attack Iran at will; "Bridges can be built but the opportunity to discipline America will not come again" as Iranian FM Abbas Araghchi wrote on April 3.

Across the five days since, as US (and Arab) limits became clear, more space opened up for key states such as Pakistan/China to act as passive messengers between Washington and Tehran, but not as traditional proactive mediators (such as Oman). As Trump issued a threat to end Iranian "civilisation" if Tehran did not make a deal, it became largely evident that the US President was preparing ground to claim victory (since Iran's acceptance of the ceasefire could be highlighted as a concession). Should this cessation of hostilities hold, it is only now that Iran under Mojtaba Khamenei and Washington under Donald Trump will hold sincere negotiations arguably for the first time.

Even as Israel remains an unpredictable variable, Tel Aviv arguably also has little to lose/gain by immediately breaching the Trump-induced ceasefire. Its 38 days of bombing, including assassination of key Iranian leaders, simply followed its historic logic of striking "the head of the Octopus", most prolifically by former PM Naftali Bennett. Israel might strike again when a window presents itself (its likelihood is uncertain). Already, Tel Aviv has removed itself from the US-Iran ceasefire by rejecting Iran's demand that Israel halt its ongoing fifth invasion of South Lebanon and its fight against Hezbollah. It is the intensity of these Israeli operations which are a key test for Iran's adherence to the ceasefire. Indeed, Iran has said it will withdraw from the ceasefire agreement if Israel continues to attack Lebanon. It is undeniably true, however, that the conduct of US-Iran negotiations will now determine the broader future of the Middle East, which is already a changed landscape after Iran's categorical military dominance over the Gulf. This lattermost fact is Tehran's strategic victory.

Pause welcome but path ahead forbidding: Five key minefields amid US-Iran chasm



Trump Iran Ceasefire 2026 Explained: The two-week pause in the US-Iran War announced early Wednesday morning by Washington and Tehran has set off a wave of relief across the world tempered by the recognition that bridging the deep contradictions between the two sides will be hard. The pause is welcome; the path ahead remains forbidding.

Optimists argue that US President Donald Trump's transactional instincts might help Washington pull off what has eluded his many predecessors in the White House: a comprehensive peace settlement with Tehran. They point to Iran's own need to end the prolonged conflict with America, rebuild its battered economy, and reclaim what many in the region still see as its natural leadership role. Iran Demonstrators chant slogans after the announcement of a two-week ceasefire in the war with the United States and Israel, at the Enqelab-e-Eslami, or Islamic Revolution, Square, in Tehran, Iran, Wednesday, April 8, 2026. Pessimists worry the pause may prove only a brief interlude in a contest that has stretched across five decades—ever since the 1979 revolution recast Iran's relations with the West and the region and set the stage for a long, bitter rivalry.

As US-Iran talks open Friday in Islamabad, there is enough room for both hope and despair. That both sides have declared victory points to the prospect of successful talks. But the massive divergence between the declared positions of the two sides—Washington's 15-point proposal and Tehran's 10-point counter — frames the challenge ahead. These are not technical differences that can be finessed by clever drafting. They reflect fundamentally opposed worldviews and incompatible readings of the sources of their conflict. Whether Islamabad produces a framework for peace or merely sets the stage for renewed confrontation will depend on how the two sides navigate five entrenched contradictions. The first concerns Iran's nuclear and missile questions. At the heart of the American plan is the demand for the complete dismantling of Iran's national enrichment programme—the core of what Washington sees as Tehran's latent nuclear weapons capability. Iran's counterproposal insists on its inalienable right to enrichment for peaceful purposes under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Here is the bad news. In a social media post Wednesday, Trump reaffirmed his tough position that there will be "no enrichment of uranium" in Iran and insisted that the two sides will work together to remove the existing stockpile. But the good news is that these issues have been negotiated for years, and just before the current hostilities, a compromise seemed within reach. The missile question, however, is far more intractable. Washington seeks limits on Iran's ballistic missile programme—the one conventional deterrent Tehran has consistently refused to place on the negotiating table. For Iran, the massive missile arsenal is central to its strategy of deterrence. For the US and its regional allies, they are the most dangerous threat. That proposition has been evident in Tehran's relentless missile attacks on Israel and Arab neighbours.

The second contradiction lies in the Strait of Hormuz. Trump's ceasefire announcement demanded the "complete, immediate, and safe opening" of the strait—language that

implies a return to the pre-war status quo of free international navigation. Tehran's acceptance of talks did not concede this point. Iran has instead described the arrangement as "safe passage" under the "coordination of Iran's Armed Forces." Underlying this position is Tehran's ambition to bring the international waterway under its national control. But Trump has also mused about a joint US-Iran toll booth in the strait to make money and exercise leverage over rival powers. In the last few days, Iranian officials have floated the idea of charging a transit fee—reportedly around \$2 million per vessel—with proceeds shared with Oman. Institutionalising such a fee would effectively transform one of the world's most critical maritime commons into an Iranian-regulated toll corridor. Given that a fifth of global oil supplies pass through the strait, this would be unacceptable to much of the international community, including Delhi. In welcoming the peace talks on Wednesday, India underlined its expectation that "unimpeded freedom of navigation" would prevail in the Strait. The third issue is economic. Iran demands the lifting of all US primary and secondary sanctions—four decades of accumulated economic pressure—as well as the termination of multilateral sanctions regimes. Tehran sees sanctions relief as the essential first step in any settlement. Washington, however, treats sanctions relief as the final reward for Iranian compliance across all fronts. The question of sequencing—whether relief precedes or follows Iranian concessions—will be one of the trickiest issues in the Islamabad talks.

The fourth contradiction concerns Iran's network of regional allies—often labelled "proxies" in Washington. The US sees these groups as a core security threat and demands that Tehran cease support for Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis, halt their cross-border operations, and stop providing them with military capabilities. Tehran, in contrast, sees these relationships as essential instruments of deterrence and regional influence. Iran's ten-point proposal emphasises an end to Israeli and US attacks on Hezbollah and other allies as a precondition for peace. Israel has been ambivalent about ending these attacks.

The fifth and most consequential contradiction concerns the regional security architecture. Iran is calling for the full withdrawal of US combat forces from all bases and positions across the region—a demand that would dismantle the American security system in the Gulf built since 1991. This, when it was Iran's regional domination that in the first place led the Gulf states and Israel to rely on the US security presence in the region. Over the longer term, it is conceivable that a new regional security architecture could be negotiated—one in which Iran pledges support for regional status quo and non-interference in the internal affairs of its Arab neighbours, and the US and other major powers provide broader security guarantees to all. But constructing such an ambitious framework is impractical in the near term. Yet without addressing these structural questions, peace will remain fragile. Any attempt to finesse these contradictions will require not only bridging the gap between Washington and Tehran but also navigating divisions within each capital, and between the US and its regional allies. There is already much grumbling in Israel and the UAE about the terms of the pause that Trump has agreed to. Put simply, there are many constituencies that will be threatened by any peace that is seen as favouring Iran. Similarly, there will be sections of the Iranian establishment that will wonder if their leadership is giving away too much. Yet optimists insist that negotiations can open unexpected possibilities. Some argue that Trump's "flexible realism"—his ability to swing between radically opposed positions—might, paradoxically, help. On Tuesday morning, he declared that he could destroy Iran's ancient civilisation in one night. By evening, he had announced the pause and was speaking of a potential "golden age" of cooperation in the Middle East. The political distance between those two positions is vast. Whether Trump's famed "art of the deal" can bridge that distance in Islamabad, or even take a crucial step towards that, remains to be seen. Similarly the gap between Tehran's bold proclamations of anti-American defiance and the imperatives of peace and economic reconstruction is large.

As digital campaigns rise, Chennai muralists see work dry up ahead of polls

On a ride from Chennai's Anna University to Adyar or Mylapore, it is hard to miss the murals of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin near the Gandhi Nagar bus stop. At times, portraits of his father and former chief minister M Karunanidhi accompany them. For over 35 years, this wall has remained a dedicated canvas for Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) leaders, not just during election season, but year-round. The murals are the work of 56-year-old Parimalam Perumal, who has spent decades documenting political shifts through his art. "I was a construction worker before I became a full-time political muralist... Small projects came my way in my early twenties. Since then, I have never looked back," he says. But this election season, typically the busiest time for muralists, has been unusually dry. Artists attribute it to the rise of digital campaigns and political parties' growing reliance on attention-driven marketing. From mass communication to fading medium

Political murals in Tamil Nadu trace their origins to the Self-Respect Movement of the 1940s, when social reformer EV Ramasamy's followers used public walls to spread his messages challenging caste discrimination. Over the decades, murals became a powerful tool for political communication, shaping public memory. A mural featuring a portrait of late Tamil Nadu chief minister M Karunanidhi (Photo: Nithya Pandian) A mural featuring a portrait of late Tamil Nadu chief minister M Karunanidhi (Photo: Nithya Pandian) Dravidar Kazhagam is the first political movement that used public spaces for political messages across the state. It was one of the ways to carry the radical messages of EV Periyar on the Self-Respect Movement," says art director Trotsky Marudu, noting their later use during anti-Hindi agitations. "When printing press technology evolved in cinema, the painters found alternative livelihoods as letter artists, signboard artists, political muralists, banner and poster artists for small businesses," he adds. In most localities, walls are informally "owned" by political parties, regardless of who is in power. Local leaders secure both public and private walls, often paying lease amounts ranging from Rs 10,000 for a 10x10 ft space to Rs 20,000 annually for a 30x10 ft wall.

The wall used by Parimalam in Adyar, for instance, was secured by a local DMK functionary in 1989. "This is a mutual understanding between parties. We don't cross each other's paths," he says. Any walls that are poorly maintained or left unused for over two years can be claimed by other parties for their political messaging. Once secured, murals

typically take two to three days to complete. One day is needed for the background, and two days for sketching and painting. However, this system is beginning to change. In some places, artists now paste digitally printed images and add hand-painted election campaign messages, says Krishna Kumar, an artist from Vyasarpadi. Fewer orders, shrinking opportunities. But today, the very walls that once carried political messaging are losing relevance. Vasudevan, a 47-year-old muralist from Vyasarpadi, says he received nearly 30 orders in the three months leading up to the 2016 assembly elections. By 2021, that number had dropped to three, partly due to Covid restrictions. This year, he says, he has received none. "I used to paint (portraits of) leaders from DMK and Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK). This election, I have not received a single order."

After three decades in the profession, Vasudevan now supplements his income by painting school walls and taking up corporate projects. According to Vijay Krishna, Deputy President of the Tamil Nadu Artists Association, this has been one of the worst election seasons for muralists. "Not just portrait painters, even letter artists who write political messages or announcements of Maanaadu (general meetings) have stopped getting assignments," he says. "A significant number of artists today are either unemployed, forced to take up alternative jobs, or have reduced their practice to a part-time pursuit due to lack of consistent opportunities." Parimalam Perumal has spent decades documenting political shifts through his art. Artists say political murals are more common in north Chennai than in the city's south and central parts, where private property dominates, and residents are less receptive to political imagery. Vasudevan, who painted a wall near a hotel in Nungambakkam in central Chennai for nearly 30 years, lost that space after redevelopment. Parimalam, who once painted at five locations in Adyar, an upscale neighbourhood in Chennai, now has only three. People here are reluctant to see such artworks in residential areas," says Naveen, Vasudevan's son. "But in North Chennai, even small homeowners would let us use their walls for political murals." Artists are typically paid per square foot — up to Rs 40 — with materials such as paints and brushes supplied by local party workers. Naveen says his father earned Rs 300 a day two decades ago; today, it is about Rs 1,200, a modest increase given inflation. "Unlike conventional studio-based work, our artists undertake physically demanding assignments that require extensive travel and long working hours under harsh weather.

Louis Vuitton drops 'water can' bag worth Rs 4.3 lakh, fashion expert weighs in on its practicality

Louis Vuitton has time and again stunned fashion enthusiasts with their off-the-wall collections. This time, the luxury fashion brand has transformed a basic watering can into an accessory. The reimaging of a common gardening tool as a striking handbag worth Rs 4.3 lakh has caught the Internet's eye. At first glance, the bag resembles something you would spot in a garden shed. However, it is clearly a designer creation. Wrapped entirely in Louis Vuitton's signature LV monogram canvas, the bag recreates the shape of a traditional watering can, complete with a spout, a sturdy top handle, and a detachable leather strap for carrying it over the shoulder.

The bag is part of the Men's Spring/Summer collection, created under the direction of Pharrell Williams. The collection follows the theme of "nurturing growth." "The Watering Can bag is made from signature Monogram coated canvas: a statement piece that blends playful design with everyday functionality. The main compartment fits essentials like a wallet, phone, and keys. Carry it by the top handle for a polished look or attach the adjustable shoulder strap to wear cross-body," Louis Vuitton's official website reads. Meanwhile Pharrell's new Louis Vuitton collection includes a watering can bag for ₹3,800, a mesh hat for ₹710, socks for ₹225, and a teddy bear bag charm for ₹1,100. I genuinely do not know who is buying this outside of crypto bros, rappers, and professional athletes. pic.twitter.com/OgkQhSjVxZ

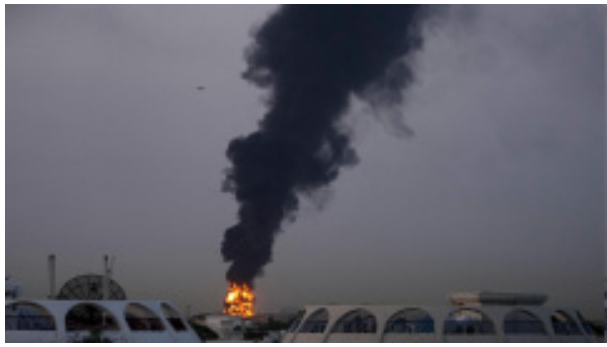
According to Rinkoo Tulsian, a fashion expert with over 15 years of experience, the appeal of novelty luxury pieces like this lies less in craftsmanship and more in the attention they command. "I think the LV water can bag is so appealing to consumers today because of the attention it brings. It's an attention-seeking idea. It's not necessarily something where you say, 'Wow, there's a lot of creativity here.' People today want something different, something that instantly diverts attention," the expert said. She added that brands understand how to tap into the psychology of modern consumers, especially those who are drawn to exclusivity and statement-making purchases. "They are playing with the psyche of the consumer. Some buyers just want something differ-



Louis Vuitton watering can bag priced at Rs 4.3 lakh has gone viral for its quirky design, sparking debate on novelty fashion and luxury trends.

ent for its own sake. If they have the money, they buy it as an addition to their wardrobe, even if it doesn't really have creative depth or aesthetic value," Tulsian explained. Tulsian also believes that bold accessories like the LV watering can bag are part of a strategy by luxury houses to remain relevant and constantly in the spotlight. "Luxury brands today have huge teams working behind these ideas. Under creative directions like Pharrell Williams, there is always pressure to think out of the box. But for me, fashion should be sustainable and timeless. Anything that is not timeless is not true fashion," she said. As for what the popularity of such a bag says about Gen Z and millennial fashion choices, the expert argued that younger consumers are far from a monolith. "Gen Z has two kinds of categories: those who are very focused, who are into sustainable fashion, who are into ethical fashion, and who are into value addition. And then there are some people who are like, they just want to buy for the heck of it. So nowadays, we are running two extremes in society, one buying just for the heck of it, and one adding value to the design," Tulsian explained. "So then Gen Z will see to it, and I don't think this product is going to go a long way. It is just an attention-seeking gimmick," she added.

India's Iran stance does fuel a foreign policy debate



A debate, for the most part civilised, is going on in India about foreign policy. The provocation for the debate is the ongoing Israeli-American war on Iran, now in its third week and India's response to it. I belong to the tribe of 'professional' diplomats. We consider ourselves experts with special skills to propound on foreign policy issues. It is true that we are trained to read between the lines and to research whatever issue occupies the attention of the international community at a given time. However, it is not as if we are born with a particular gift for foreign policy; the gift or expertise is cultivated over a period of time. Almost anybody can handle foreign policy with experience and exposure to the issues. Everyone has an opinion on foreign policy, and it would not be correct to dismiss those opinions as ill-informed or irrelevant.

The debate is argued between those who generally support the government's stand on the war, which began on February 28, and those who criticise it as weak-kneed or surrendering to the Americans, or as hostile to Iran, a close and civilisational friend. The deliberate decision not to condole the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has come in for particular criticism. Foreign policy is an instrument in the hands of the government to protect and promote the country's national interests. It follows that it is within the province of the government of the day to define what the national interests are and how to protect them. Some interests are sui generis, such as defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. For a country such as India, the improvement in the standard of living of its citizens is an extremely important objective.

In a highly globalised and interdependent world, this task imposes on the government the duty to chart its policy with deliberation and calculation. A government led by one party may take one position whereas a government led by another party may take another. The same party may take one position when in opposition but might pursue that very policy when in power. The Congress-led government under Manmohan Singh decided that obtaining the nuclear deal with America was in India's interest whereas the Bharatiya Janata Party at the time opposed the deal. Once in power, it went beyond what even the previous government had not agreed; it absolved the suppliers of nuclear reactors from any liability, for accident or defect in the reactors.

Foreign policy often is, but should not be, influenced by the ideological orientation of the ruling party. If it is to adhere strictly to the objective of promoting national interest, it cannot afford to be too concerned about principles or rights and wrongs. At times, a particular position might offend our sense of justice or morality, but the government of the day will have to make an objective decision, even if it is

not popular. Equally important, the government must explain to the people the rationale for its decision. In a democracy, this is extremely important. People, certainly the Indian people, are fully capable of understanding and approving or disapproving of the government's actions.

Much time and intellectual energy is spent on giving a label to foreign policy. The one currently in fashion is 'strategic autonomy'. By adding the word 'strategic', it sounds profound and gives the impression of a concept beyond the understanding of ordinary citizens. But then, why 'autonomy'? Why not 'independent'? Is not independence more precious than autonomy? P.V. Narasimha Rao used to say that Kashmiris can have as much autonomy as they want, but not independence. In any case, why give any label at all? How many countries have given adjectives to their foreign policy? If a name has to be given, just call it 'independent'.

The best definition of foreign policy was given by Jawaharlal Nehru in a letter to Einstein written a few weeks before India's independence. Foreign policy, Nehru wrote, essentially is selfish. The only principle it follows is the principle of national interest. The Narendra Modi government is essentially following Nehru's foreign policy, that is 'selfish' foreign policy. Its approach to the Iran war seems to be based on a cold calculation that India has too much at stake with America and the Gulf states. America is India's largest trading partner, and India needs its support for state-of-the-art technology, especially for developing India's defence capabilities. As for the Gulf countries, nearly 10 million Indians are working there. Their welfare is of overriding concern. They send hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of remittances back home. Collectively, the Gulf countries are a most valuable source for India's energy needs.

Application of 'strategic autonomy' These are valid considerations. Nevertheless, within the parameters of these factors, the government could and should have shown some 'strategic autonomy'. No harm would have been done if the assassination of Ayatollah Khamenei had been condoned or if the External Affairs Minister rather than the Foreign Secretary had signed the condolence book in the Iranian Embassy in Delhi. Since the Prime Minister did speak to the Iranian President to press for the safety of the 9,000-strong Indian community in Iran, would it not have been proper for him to also express condolences for the assassination? His telephone conversations with the leaders of the Gulf states would surely have ensured their support to take care of India's citizens living there. The fact that Iran has allowed oil tankers destined for India safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz speaks not so much to the success of India's diplomacy as to the graciousness of the Iranians. Despite India's unfriendly attitude, Iran took a friendly approach towards India. In the final analysis, India needs to be on the winning side. The government has obviously concluded that the Israeli-American coalition will come out the winner and that Iran will be defeated or surrender. There is also the question of the Prime Minister's visit to Israel (February 25-26, 2026), its timing more than the visit per se. It was evident from watching his address to the Israeli Knesset that he was deeply moved by the warm reception that was accorded to him by its members. His visit was a demonstration of the ideological affinity that he feels with Israel and, more so with its Prime Minister. That Israel and the U.S. were going to attack Iran any day was known to all those following such matters. The timing of the visit was unfortunate.

Gulf dreams turn sour for Konaseema women



With dreams of building a better life for themselves and their families, Kamala (32) boarded a sleeper-class private bus on May 12, 2025, along with her younger sister Raji (30), from Amalapuram—the administrative headquarters of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district—bound for Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad. Along with the sisters were several other women on board the bus, all sharing the same destination: Muscat. The group arrived at Muscat International Airport (MCT) in Oman the following evening via Mumbai.

Recalling the initial excitement of taking the first step towards her dream, Kamala said that their Muscat-based agent, who was also a native of Konaseema, had sent a driver to pick them up from the airport. The driver identified the sisters using their photographs, collected their passports immediately after the introduction, and then dropped them off at the agent's office. For the next fortnight, the sisters, along with other young women, were trained by the agent to work as "housemaids." "Like us, there was another group of 13 young women, mostly from our area, who were brought by our agent with the promise of the same work—as housemaids," said Kamala, a mother of two boys aged 7 and 5.

Kamala, who had worked as a nurse in a private hospital, quit her job, while Raji, an intermediate dropout, gave up tailoring for their shared dream—to fly to the Gulf, earn money, and return to build their own house in their village. Kamala and Raji, also a mother of two children, live in separate rented houses with their families in the same village on the outskirts of Amalapuram, part of Konaseema district—a land of coconuts in Andhra Pradesh, where the river Godavari meets the Bay of Bengal. The sisters said that an opportunity came their way after their husbands supported their decision and helped them find agents recruiting women for jobs in the Gulf.

"By December 2025, nearly 15,000 unemployed workers from Dr B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district had migrated to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. More than 70% of them were young women, most of whom found employment as housemaids," said G. Ramesh, Manager, Konaseema Centre for Migration (KCM).

Overwork and isolation Kamala said that her ordeal began within a fortnight after their grooming session ended. "Once our grooming session was over, all of us were presented to visitors who came to select women of their choice to be appointed as housemaids. My sister Raji was the first to be chosen by a sponsor for a five-day trial assignment in his house before being offered full-time work," said Kamala. However, Kamala added, "Five days after the first assignment, which tested my sister's physical endurance, Raji decided not to continue. Frightened by the labor involved, she returned to India within a month." As per an unwritten condition observed by both agents and employers, the sponsor is entitled to retain the woman as a housemaid if satisfied with her work. At the same time, she is allowed to reject the offer if she is unwilling to continue.

Kamala, who chose to stay back, was hired by another sponsor under a two-year work agreement with a monthly salary of 100 Omani rials (₹24,152). The sponsor obtained a 'Resident Card' (issued by the Oman government) and a two-year work visa for Kamala by signing a 'guarantee of responsibility,' as mandated. By November, however, Kamala began to suffer repeated illnesses, reportedly due to overwork, and was also subjected to isolation. "When I complained of sickness, my sponsor gave me medicines meant for body pain. Suspecting that I might quit, he cut off my internet access to prevent communication with my family. I had to continue working while on medication," said Kamala. "When I asked my sponsor to return my passport, he told me that I had to pay money for my freedom. It was then that I learned my agent had supplied me to him for a commission of ₹1.5 lakh, which I was required to repay in order to secure my freedom and retrieve my passport. I never knew such a transaction existed between my agent and the sponsor," she said. Migrants turn on-site agents

Allegedly, this is the modus operandi of unregistered agents recruiting young women aspiring to work in the Gulf

T.N. government amends maternity leave rules to benefit women employees

The Tamil Nadu government recently amended the service-related rules governing its women employees to allow relaxation in availing of maternity leave. Under the amendment, maternity leave of 365 days may be granted for one additional delivery, even if a married woman government servant already has two surviving children born as twins in her first delivery. Earlier, in such cases, maternity leave of only two weeks could be granted, and no more than six weeks could precede the expected date of delivery. The Tamil Nadu government's decision, issued through a G.O. dated March 13 this year, followed orders of the Supreme Court dated May 23, 2025, and the Madras High Court dated January 21, 2026.

However, as per the amendment, in the case of a married woman government servant having two or more surviving children, maternity leave on full pay shall be limited to a period not exceeding 12 weeks, which may be availed of from pre-confinement rest to post-confinement recuperation, at the option of the government servant.

"Based on the observation made by the Supreme Court of India, it is clear that the restriction of grant of maternity leave to women employees is violative of Article 21 of the Constitution of India and entitlement of maternity benefits without restricting the number of children, by the women employees are recognised by the various International treaties and Conventions," the G.O. issued by Chief Secretary N. Muruganandam for the Human Resources Management Department said. Referring to the Supreme Court order, the Tamil Nadu government said it carefully considered the order and the provisions under the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, and has further decided to grant maternity leave to the

countries. The price for housemaids varies depending on the duration of employment, ranging from one month to two years. Officials highlight that many unauthorised agents are personally known to the victims. Complaints reveal that job offers often come through relatives or acquaintances settled in Gulf countries. Many former migrants themselves act as on-site agents, offering commissions to local contacts to recruit women. Referring to the e-Migrate portal data of the Ministry of External Affairs, the KCM stated that about 1,100 agents are registered to recruit people from Andhra Pradesh for overseas jobs. However, in Dr B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district alone, at least 165 unauthorised agents—including 30 women—are active, none of whom are registered on the portal. A deposit of ₹5 lakh and a registered office are basic requirements for authorisation.

The KCM repatriated Kamala on December 18, 2025. The process began after her sponsor returned her passport once the ₹1.5 lakh commission was arranged and paid by her family. Her one month's salary is still pending, she said. The Government of Andhra Pradesh established the KCM in Amalapuram in March 2025, after District Collector R. Mahesh Kumar urged the government to set up the centre following several online appeals for repatriation from victims in GCC countries. KCM Manager G. Ramesh said, "Since March 2025, we have secured the repatriation of 78 victims from GCC countries. Of these, 76 are women whose families approached us to free them from the clutches of unauthorised agents. Seven bodies of workers, including two women who died due to accidents or illness, were also brought back." "Most repatriated workers reported excessive workloads beyond their contracts, health issues due to lack of rest, and physical abuse. They are often abandoned by both local and on-site agents," he added.

Most victims are not repatriated through Indian embassies. "We try to facilitate repatriation through the recruiting agent. In this model, the agent is required to return the commission to the sponsor in order to retrieve the victim's passport. This makes the process faster; otherwise, the victim has to repay the commission," said Mr. Ramesh. Of the 76 victims repatriated since March, only two were assisted through Indian embassies. Currently, the KCM is handling nearly 180 grievances related to fraud and workplace abuse. Awareness

Another victim, G. Padma, 36, a mother of two children aged 16 and 14, was repatriated on March 13, 2026. A native of Uppalaguptam mandal, she had flown to Muscat in June 2023 and completed a two-year term. "My sponsor forcibly renewed my contract for another year. I was not allowed to contact my family after the renewal. I was finally freed after my family approached the KCM. However, I was not paid for four months, during which I was also subjected to physical abuse," she said. Padma's husband works as an agricultural labourer. Suma, who was repatriated from Oman, said, "In my sponsor's house, I survived on one meal for nearly two months. My agent blocked my number, leaving me alone."

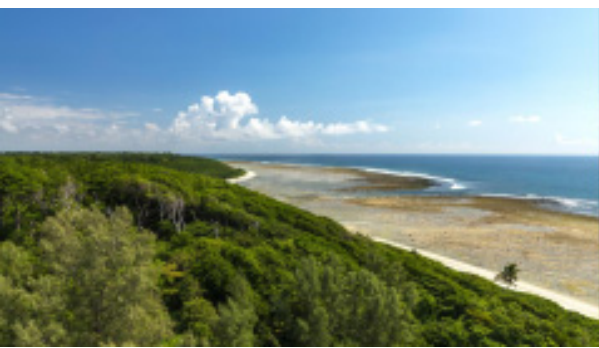
According to the Special Branch of Konaseema police, at least 48 cases have been registered against unauthorised agents in the district under the Emigration Act, 1983. Over the past 12 months, ten such cases have been filed. District Superintendent of Police Rahul Meena said that many repatriated victims were unwilling to pursue legal action against the agents. Police personnel are part of the KCM and help trace agents and facilitate repatriation based on complaints filed by victims' families. According to an official release by District Collector R. Mahesh Kumar, the Protector of Emigrants (PoE), Hyderabad, has been approached to strengthen coordination with Indian embassies. PoE official D. Anand and his team have conducted awareness programmes on safe overseas recruitment practices. Andhra Pradesh Non-Resident Telugu Society (APNRTS) president Vemuru Ravi Kumar said that the State government had prohibited recruitment of housemaids through private agents and mandated hiring through OMCAAP for better protection. "Over 90% of abuse complaints come from those not recruited through OMCAAP," he said, adding that contracts are often in Arabic, making them difficult to understand. Surge continues amid tensions He noted that migration from Konaseema is largely driven by economic need, with many women entering on tourist visas and later struggling to obtain work permits.

Even as agents temporarily slow recruitment due to the war, the Post Office Passport Seva Kendra in Amalapuram is witnessing a surge in applications. Passport Verification Officer G. Yuga Kiran said, "We receive around 600 applications every month. Over 90% are from women aspiring to migrate to Gulf countries." Meanwhile, the KCM continues to receive distress calls daily from migrant workers seeking help. Even as the repatriation of 11 victims, including nine women, has been delayed due to disruptions in airport operations in GCC countries due to the ongoing tensions in the West Asia.

'Undemocratic' politics in Great Nicobar over land

On January 18 this year, a Great Nicobar Island based online news portal, www.nicobartimes.com, published an important news item related to the mega-infrastructure project on the island that has been headline news across the country for many months now. This particular issue has, however, barely been noticed, leave alone creating anything close to even a ripple. The report, "DEF-GNI Objects to Low Minimum Circle Rates Fixed for Villages of Campbell Bay Tehsil, Seeks Revision Ahead of Airport Land Acquisition", highlighted the grievances of the Great Nicobar's settler (non-tribal) community in the matter of the compensation being awarded for their land that is being acquired for the mega-project under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (RFCTLARR) Act, 2013. About 300 families of ex-servicemen were settled in Great Nicobar between 1969 and 1975 for which about 40 square kilometres were de-notified from the Tribal Reserve. The descendants of these settlers now form the majority of the population here. "The Dependents and Ex-Servicemen Forum for Equitable Negotiation, Compensation & Entitlements – Great Nicobar Island (DEF-GNI)", the report noted, "has raised strong objections to the minimum circle rates fixed for villages under Campbell Bay Tehsil, terming them unreasonably low and unjust." Inadequate compensation At the heart of the matter is the low rates of compensation, ranging from ₹113 to ₹180 per square metre, they are being offered as against the ₹11,370 - ₹20,500 per square metre offered in the Andaman islands when land is acquired for tourism projects. The forum requested that the rates be fixed in a manner that ensures a minimum compensation of not less than ₹1 crore per acre of agricultural land to affected landowners.

The matter has also been raised regularly by the lone Member of Parliament (MP) from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Bishnu Pada Ray of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In December, he had written to the Prime Minister and the Home Minister making a number of related points: that the land was being acquired from ex-servicemen settler families who were originally brought here by the government to serve strategic and national security purposes; these families had already faced two major displacements, one during the initial settlement and then again after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami; there were major procedural violations in the land acquisition process; there were serious deficiencies in the social impact assessment carried out for this land, and that compensation being offered should be ₹32 lakh per hectare as against ₹9 lakh being offered currently. There are two things that stand out: first the claim makers—the MP included—are explicit that they, the settler families, are not opposing the project. Their only request is adherence to due process and ensuring that no family is left without land or livelihood. The second is the deep contradiction at the heart of (un)democratic representation and politics here: the settler community and their representatives, while seen seeking fairness and justice over their own land, are also collaborating with the same authorities in alienating land, livelihood and the resources of Great Nicobar's tribal communities (the Shompen and the Great Nicobarese)



to make it available for the same project. Alienating tribal lands

In a process marked by serious substantive and procedural impropriety, nearly 84 sq.km of legally notified tribal reserve is sought to be denotified and handed over to project authorities. Everyone from local agencies such as the Andaman and Nicobar Tribal Welfare Department, to the local settler communities, to national level bodies such as the Union Ministries of Environment and of Tribal Affairs have been complicit. Evidence of this can be seen in the near-complete absence of the Shompen in discussions, the pressure being exerted on the Nicobarese to 'voluntarily' surrender their lands for the project, the public and vociferous support expressed by settlers and authorities, and the explicit violation of provisions of the Forest Rights Act, in which representatives of the settler community have signed documents freeing up tribal reserve land for the project.

Pertinent issues being ignored No one can deny the right of the settlers to adequate compensation. But what about the original islanders such as the nomadic hunter gatherer Shompen that is notified as a particularly vulnerable tribal group, a PVTG? They may not want compensation because they have no use for the money we offer. What about the Nicobarese who wish to return to their traditional pre-tsunami lands and settlements but are not being provided the means to do so? And what of the impact on lives, livelihoods and cultures of these communities that are completely dependent on the sea and the forests? What also of the pristine forests and unique biodiversity that will be lost forever? This situation underlines multiple things at the same time. On the ground it highlights the stark nature of (un)democratic local politics as adjacent communities are forced into competition and conflict over land and resources. At the macro level, it highlights how local communities and rights to resources are only minor pawns in the larger geopolitical and development agendas of the state, of its larger political economy, and indeed the rhetoric of national sovereignty and strategic autonomy. The contradictions might not be visible to the local settler communities or perhaps they do not have the agency or the choice. The same surely cannot be said for the state, the nation and for society at large. There is much for us to think about and ponder over. Pankaj Sekhsaria is the author/editor of seven books on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the latest being '

West Asia War Fallout: Premium petrol price hiked by Rs 2 a litre, bulk diesel up Rs 22



With the West Asia war leading to a surge in international crude oil and fuel prices and burdening India's public sector refiners and fuel retailers, prices of premium petrol and bulk diesel consumed by industrial users were hiked Friday. The price of regular petrol and diesel remained unchanged. The price of premium 95-octane petrol was hiked by Rs 2 per litre in Delhi to Rs 101.89 per litre, with corresponding changes in other parts of the country. The price of industrial diesel went up by around Rs 22 per litre to Rs 109.59 in Delhi, from Rs 87.67 per litre.

According to a senior government official, the premium petrol caters to a minuscule segment of Indian consumers, and the interests of the common consumer have been so far protected. Sources indicated there was no immediate plan to increase retail prices of regular petrol and diesel, with public sector fuel retailers continuing to absorb the losses. International crude oil benchmark Brent had touched \$119 per barrel Thursday and as of Friday evening, it was around \$108 per barrel, still 48% higher than the last price before the start of the West Asia war on February 28. Crack spreads, or margins between oil and petroleum products, have also surged globally for fuels like diesel, petrol, and aviation turbine fuel.

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the country's largest refiner and fuel retailer, in a post on X, said, "As global crude prices surge, stability at home matters more than ever. Indian Oil has ensured no increase in regular automotive fuel prices in India, even amid rising international costs. A limited revision applies only to premium petrol XP-95, with minimal impact on overall consumption. Through evolving global conditions, the focus remains clear:

consistent supply, responsible pricing, and service you can rely on." Petroleum Ministry Joint Secretary Sujata Sharma told reporters: "Some increase is reported in the premium category which hardly makes up for 2-4% of the entire petrol (consumption)... There is no increase in price for the common man." She declined to comment on whether retail prices of regular petrol and diesel will remain at the current levels despite the volatility in global prices. The government's current priority, she said, is to ensure energy availability for consumers amid a "concerning" global situation, and the public-sector fuel retailers have resisted increasing fuel prices so far.

According to IOC, premium petrol sales account for just about 5% of total petrol sales. As for regular petrol and diesel, they continue to be priced at Rs 94.77 per litre and Rs 87.67 per litre in Delhi. Fuel prices vary across states due to different levels of state taxes. Normal petrol usually has an octane rating of around 92, while premium petrol has an octane rating of 95 to 98, which helps increase performance particularly in luxury cars with high-performance engines. Public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) IOC, Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) have a cumulative market share of around 90% in India's fuel retail market, giving them undisputed control on fuel pricing. India depends on imports to meet over 88% of its crude oil requirement, which makes the Indian refiners extremely vulnerable to global oil price volatility. A continued freeze in pump prices is expected to blunt the inflationary impact of the oil price spurt. Petrol and diesel prices have effectively been flat since April 2022, with the public sector oil retailers taking losses when global prices jump, and recouping them when they fall. "The OMCs have done well financially over the past few years and they are in a comfortable position to take some temporary pain to protect the Indian consumer from high energy prices... Is the price of petrol or diesel at the retail outlet going to rise in the foreseeable future? It is unlikely to happen," a senior government official had said earlier this month. 2 Indian LPG carriers ready to sail Two Indian-flagged LPG tankers are preparing to sail through the Strait of Hormuz in coming days after a pause in voyages with no crude oil tankers leaving the waterway in the past 24 hours, according to shipping data and sources. The two tankers were currently anchored in Gulf waters, according to data from Kpler and shipping sources. —

'Aaj toh main gaya': Karan Tacker opens up about experiencing panic attacks; experts react



The urban environment presents significant psychological challenges. As competition within the global job market intensifies, professionals are increasingly susceptible to chronic stress and anxiety—conditions that often manifest in a spectrum of physiological health issues, most notably panic disorders. Recent data suggests these episodes are no longer confined to specific demographic cohorts or high-pressure industries; rather, they have become a pervasive cross-sectoral phenomenon affecting a diverse range of age groups. Over the years, several celebrities and public figures have also come out to talk about it, sharing their own experiences. Recently, actor Karan Tacker opened up about panic attacks, stressing that such episodes are temporary and are not life-threatening. Speaking at We Are Yuva, hosted by Nikhil Taneja, Tacker shared his "biggest" learning from his experience. "Panic attacks almost mimic that you are dying," the actor said, adding, "You cannot die from it. The biggest fear when you are getting a panic attack is like 'aaj toh main gaya', this is it."

"You will find yourself checking into an emergency, which you only saw, a very elderly person doing," the Special Ops actor added. Based on his experience, Tacker said, "The one thing that I want to leave everybody with is you can't die of it. If you're getting a panic attack, you'll live through it. Having that chord in your hand, knowing that this won't kill you is so-so important." Experts shared their insights into panic attacks, shedding light on their causes, symptoms, and myths, and, above all, ways to manage them. Verifying the claims made by Tacker, Dr Murali Krishna, Consultant — Psychiatry & Counselling Services, Aster RV Hospital, Bangalore, said panic attacks are extremely distressing, but not life-threatening. "The body's response during a panic attack is essentially an exaggerated 'fight or flight' reaction, driven by the autonomic nervous system," he explained. "The symptoms may feel like a serious condition, like a heart attack, which is why many people

fear they might die. However, panic attacks do not cause physical harm. That said, recurrent episodes should not be ignored, as they may indicate conditions like Generalised Anxiety Disorder or panic disorder, which benefit from professional support," he added. Dr Pavitra Shankar, Associate Consultant, Psychiatry, Aakash Healthcare, noted that rising stress levels and constant pressure often take a toll on mental health, triggering panic attacks. She explained that a panic attack is fuelled by intense fear or discomfort that escalates within minutes. These sudden episodes occur without warning.

"Panic attacks and anxiety-related issues are becoming increasingly common, yet many people still struggle to understand them. Sudden episodes of breathlessness, racing heart, and intense fear are often mistaken for a heart attack, while in reality, they may be panic attacks," Dr Shankar said. Common triggers of panic attacks include high stress or emotional pressure, lack of sleep, excess caffeine, certain medications, fear of crowded or closed spaces, and past trauma or distressing memories are some of the common triggers of panic attacks, Dr Shankar shared. Panic attack vs. anxiety attack: What's the difference? Many people confuse panic attacks with anxiety attacks. Dr Krishna explained that one can distinguish the two episodes simply by observing the symptoms. While a panic attack is intense and peaks within minutes, an anxiety attack is a gradual build-up of worry and distress. "Panic attacks are often accompanied by physical symptoms such as chest pain, breathlessness, dizziness, or a sense of impending doom," he said, adding, "An anxiety attack is not a formal clinical term but is used to describe a gradual build-up of worry or distress, typically linked to a specific stressor. Anxiety tends to be more prolonged, whereas panic attacks are sudden and episodic."

Dr Shankar stressed that managing a panic attack is crucial, using simple techniques: deep breathing, reminding oneself that it is temporary, shifting focus to something else, and splashing cold water on the face or sipping water. "Focusing on controlled breathing can significantly reduce the intensity of a panic attack. It helps calm the nervous system and brings the body back to balance," she said. Can wellness practices help treat panic attacks? To reduce regular episodes of panic attacks, Dr Shankar advised several lifestyle and wellness practices: Yoga and pranayama, meditation and mindfulness, regular physical exercise, adequate sleep, and reducing caffeine and screen time. "In some cases, doctors may also recommend therapy such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) or medications, depending on the severity," he said.

Aadhaar app's pre-installation proposal faces industry pushback on account of technical infeasibility

UIDAI launches the 'Selective Share' feature on the new Aadhaar app, enabling secure and paperless identity sharing. Know how it works and key benefits. The app enables features such as QR-based offline identity verification, consent-based sharing of limited Aadhaar data, and biometric lock/unlock for security. The Aadhaar agency had pitched smartphone makers to pre-install its revamped biometric identification mobile application to enable a single sign-on feature for all online services that require Aadhaar authentication or identity verification. However, the proposal had received pushback from the industry on account of technical infeasibility.

The new Aadhaar app — launched by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) in January — is designed as a next-generation digital identity platform that allows users to manage and verify their Aadhaar credentials through their smartphones. The app enables features such as QR-based offline identity verification, consent-based sharing of limited Aadhaar data, and biometric lock/unlock for security. It also allows users to manage multiple family Aadhaar profiles on a single device and update certain details such as the mobile number or address directly through the app, reducing the need for physical documents or visits to Aadhaar centres.

"We tried explaining to smartphone companies that having the Aadhaar app preinstalled would be a good thing for them. There are many services which need Aadhaar authentication, and increasingly, some laws like the Data Protection Act require verification of a user's age. We believe the Aadhaar app was a good way to allow such options seamlessly," a senior government official said. The discussion on the pre-installation of the app, which the official quoted above said was "exploratory" in nature and "not binding at all," was met with pushback from Manufacturers' Association for Information Technology (MAIT), an industry body representing manufacturing companies, Reuters had first reported. Queries sent to UIDAI and MAIT remained unanswered until publication. MAIT argued that mandating



the pre-installation of a government application would create manufacturing and operational complications for global smartphone companies. Manufacturers said they typically produce devices for multiple markets using common software builds, and a requirement specific to India could force them to create separate firmware or production lines, increasing costs and complexity.

The association also flagged privacy and security concerns, noting that government-mandated apps tied to sensitive identity data could raise risks if devices are compromised. MAIT further warned that such a mandate could set a precedent for compulsory installation of other government apps, potentially affecting the openness of smartphone ecosystems and user choice. Though these discussions are understood to have moderated, industry executives said it pointed towards a growing point of friction between the government and hardware manufacturers: an increasing insistence to pre-load state-sponsored software on devices. Last year, the Department of Telecommunications had asked smartphone companies in India to preinstall Sanchar Saathi, a state-developed cybersecurity application that allows users to report fraudulent calls and messages, and stolen mobile phones. However, upon facing pushback from smartphone companies, it revoked the direction.

Iran's strikes on Qatar's Ras Laffan could impact some of QatarEnergy's LNG supplies to India

With the Iranian attack on Qatar's Ras Laffan Industrial City damaging part of QatarEnergy's mega liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility there, LNG supplies to India even after the West Asia war subsidies could get impacted. India is a major importer of LNG, depending on the super-chilled gas to meet around half of its natural gas demand. Qatar alone accounts for over two-fifths of India's LNG imports, and almost all of India's Qatari LNG comes from Ras Laffan. "Qatar's (LNG) capacity has been hit, and that will hit us also," said Petroleum Ministry Joint Secretary Sujata Sharma, without elaborating further. According to Commerce Ministry data, India imported 27 million tonnes of LNG in 2024-25, of which 11.2 million tonnes, or 41.4%, came from Qatar. India has long-term LNG contracts totalling 8.5 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) with QatarEnergy; India also buys Qatari LNG from the spot market. QatarEnergy's primary LNG production units, liquefaction plants, and export infrastructure are all concentrated in Ras Laffan, making it the world's largest LNG hub that accounts for roughly a fifth of global LNG supply. The attacks by Iran damaged two LNG producing trains totalling 12.8 mtpa of production, representing approximately 17% of Qatar's LNG exports, and could take up to five years to repair, QatarEnergy said in a statement. Although QatarEnergy has so far not specifically mentioned the impact on supplies to India, there have been concerns that long-term LNG flows to India could be impacted. With LNG from Qatar and other sources in West Asia unable to come to India due to the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz and production suspension by QatarEnergy, India had already cut natural gas supplies to certain industries. "The damage sustained by the LNG facilities will take between three to five years to repair. The impact is on China, South Korea, Italy and Belgium. This means that we will be compelled to declare force majeure for up to five years on some long-term LNG contracts," Saad

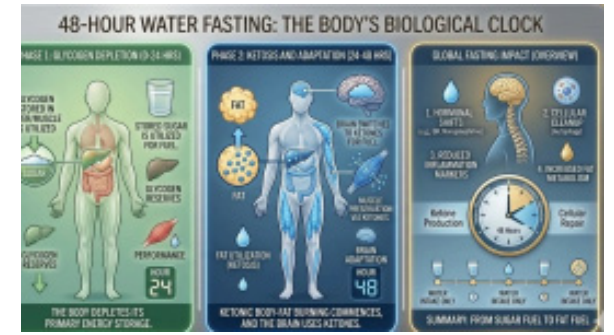
Sherida Al-Kaabi, the Minister of State for Energy Affairs, the President and CEO of QatarEnergy, was quoted as saying in the company statement. Industry sources in India expect the curtailment in LNG supplies, if any, from Qatar to not be too significant, since the specific LNG trains from where LNG is supplied to India were not damaged in the recent strikes. QatarEnergy has an LNG production capacity of 77 million tonnes per annum, which is under expansion. In 2025, QatarEnergy exported around 81 million tonnes of LNG. The strikes on Ras Laffan could cost QatarEnergy about \$20 billion a year in lost revenue, the company said. The attacks also targeted a gas-to-liquids facility, which converts natural gas into drop-in fuels and produces base oils used to make premium engine oils and lubricants, and paraffins and waxes. The attack on Ras Laffan came just hours after Israel hit the world's largest natural gas field South Pars—which Iran shares with Qatar. These attacks have marked a major escalation in the raging conflict in West Asia, with specific energy infrastructure now being targeted, raising prolonged supply disruption risks. LNG production at the facility had already been suspended by Qatar following an attack—evidently smaller in scale than the recent strikes—earlier this month. Experts had been expecting LNG flows from Ras Laffan to be reinstated rather quickly once the conflict subsided, but with the latest strikes by Iran, those hopes have been dashed. Beyond LNG, India, like some other countries dependent on West Asia for a bulk of their energy imports, would be extremely worried at the prospect of escalation in attacks on critical energy infrastructure in West Asia. So far, the supply disruption due to the conflict was largely a supply chain problem due to the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, as numerous tankers carrying energy supplies are stuck in the Persian Gulf with only a few managing to trickle out.

This is how your body responds to a 48-hour water-only fast

Fasting for extended periods has gained popularity for weight loss and metabolic health. But what actually happens inside the body when someone stops eating for two days and survives only on water? According to Dr Vijay Negalur, HOD — Diabetology at KIMS Hospitals, Thane, the body undergoes several metabolic changes as it tries to maintain energy levels without food. "When a person consumes only water for about 48 hours, the body begins to shift the way it produces energy," explains Dr Negalur. **DISCLAIMER:** This article is based on information from the public domain and/or the experts we spoke to. Always consult your health practitioner before starting any routine. * Here's what happens during this period.

The body switches its energy source In the early hours of fasting, the body still relies on stored carbohydrates. "During the first 12–24 hours, the body mainly uses stored glucose from the liver," says Dr Negalur. However, once these glucose reserves are depleted, the body looks for alternative energy sources. "As these reserves get depleted, the body gradually turns to stored fat for fuel. During this phase, insulin levels fall, and the body may begin producing ketones, which act as an alternative energy source," he adds. This metabolic shift allows the body to continue functioning even without food. Common symptoms people may experience While the body adapts to fasting, many people notice certain physical and mental changes. "Some individuals may experience tiredness, irritability, headaches, or trouble concentrating as the body adjusts to the lack of food," says Dr Negalur.

These effects often occur because the body is adjusting to lower blood sugar levels and reduced calorie intake. According to Dr Negalur, a 48-hour fast may be manageable for some healthy adults, but it should not be considered universally safe. "A short fast like this may be manageable for some healthy individuals, but it is not suitable for everyone," he explains. The body's response to



fasting can differ depending on several factors such as overall health, hydration levels, and daily activity. "Some individuals may experience dizziness, weakness, low blood sugar, or dehydration during a prolonged fast," he adds. Some people adopt fasting as part of weight management strategies. "During a fast, the body may rely more on stored fat for energy," says Dr Negalur. However, the drawbacks can also be significant. "Going without food for such a long period can lead to fatigue, headaches, mood changes, and difficulty carrying out regular daily tasks," he explains. This is why fasting approaches should be carefully considered rather than followed as a trend.

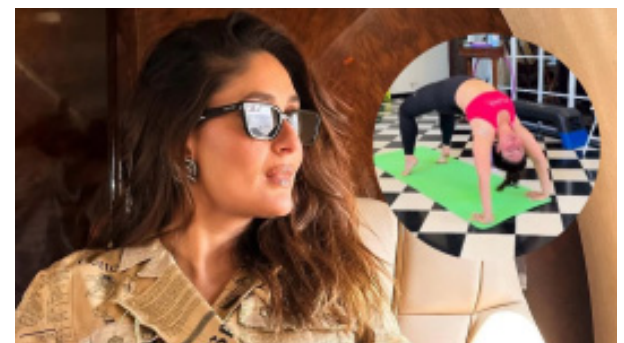
Who should avoid a 48-hour water fast?

Dr Negalur stresses that certain individuals should not attempt prolonged fasting because it can lead to serious health complications. "Pregnant or breastfeeding women, people with diabetes, individuals taking medications that influence blood sugar, those with a history of eating disorders, and people living with chronic health conditions should avoid extended fasting," he says. For these groups, going without food for long hours can disrupt blood sugar balance and create potentially dangerous health risks.

Kareena Kapoor Khan gets into the yoga flow with a 'Chakrasana and a pout'

Kareena Kapoor Khan's fitness trainer, Anshuka Parwani, has shared a peek into the Jab We Met actor's yoga routine, recording all the poses she does regularly to stay fit and healthy. "Yoga flow ?? @kareenakapoorkhan ?????? with a chakrasana and a pout ??," she mentioned in the caption of her Instagram post. We reached out to experts to understand their benefits for the body. Wheel Pose — Chakrasana Tushar Bisht, wellness and yogic science expert at Veda Rehabilitation and Wellness, explained that Chakrasana, or the wheel pose, is a back-bending yoga posture in which the body arches to resemble a wheel. This pose offers several health benefits, including improved flexibility, strengthened muscles, and an open chest. It also stimulates the endocrine system, enhancing overall vitality. According to him, there are a few things to keep in mind while doing Chakrasana (wheel pose), such as avoiding it if you have injuries or conditions, i.e., spinal issues, wrist problems, and shoulder injuries; and maintaining proper alignment. The warrior pose and its variations, in particular, strengthen the chest, lungs, belly, and groin. It also improves the muscular strength of the posterior muscles, the shoulders, and the arms cumulatively. The asana strengthens the thighs, calves and ankles. Tree Pose — Vrikshasana Vrikshasana is a combination of two Sanskrit words, 'vriksha' meaning tree and 'asana' meaning pose; it is also known as the 'Tree Pose'. Since this posture involves leg balance, it is advised to perform it near a wall so one can use it to regain balance and avoid falling to the ground.

Natarajasana, or Lord of the dance, is a difficult pose that requires practice, dedication and consistency. The pose



will stretch your shoulders, chest, hips, and inner thighs and improve body posture. Previously, Parwani had taken to social media to share a glimpse of the Bollywood actor performing Eka Pada Rajakapotasana, which is known for its numerous health benefits. Shruthi Jain, founder of YoniTara Birth, an online yoga and wellness studio, explained that the deep stretch to the hip flexors, thighs, and abdomen can help in flexibility and relieve tension. The posture not only stimulates the abdominal organs, potentially enhancing digestion, but also enhances blood circulation throughout the body, improves posture, strengthens muscles, and aligns the spine," she had said. Beyond the physical benefits, this yoga pose promotes mental well-being, too. "It can help release tension and stress that has accumulated within the body by inducing a state of relaxation and a sensation of serenity," she had added.

Kevin Pietersen backs David Miller after DC's last-over heartbreak against GT in IPL 2026: 'That is sport'

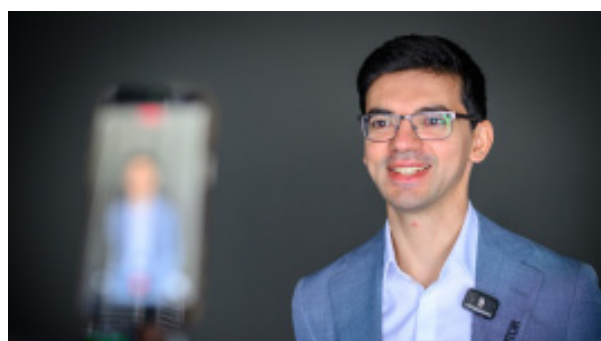


Former England captain Kevin Pietersen has backed David Miller after the South African left-hander came under heavy criticism for not taking Delhi Capitals (DC) over the line in their IPL 2026 match against Gujarat Titans (GT) on Wednesday. The 44-year-old praised Miller for walking out to bat despite nursing a hand injury, adding that his ball striking was "absolutely unreal". "David Miller batted beautifully last night. His ball striking was absolutely unreal. Many wouldn't have gone back out to bat with his hand injury, but he did! The way he was batting, he wanted to finish the game and trusted himself. That is Sport! At least he got us a great finish!" Pietersen wrote on X (formerly Twitter) on Thursday. Miller became the centre of a fierce debate after a moment that split opinion down the middle – a brainfade to

his critics, yet arguably a bold, calculated decision from a batsman who had been in absolute control against GT. He had taken the attack to his former side with authority, timing the ball superbly, only for the final two deliveries to unravel everything in the most breathtaking fashion. With two runs needed in two balls, Miller refused a single in the penultimate ball – backing himself to finish the game with one clean blow. GT pacer Prasidh Krishna, then, delivered a cleverly disguised slower bouncer off the last ball and forced a desperate scramble for a bye that could only level the scores. The final act was swift and brutal: Jos Buttler's throw was pinpoint, Kuldeep Yadav was stranded short of his ground, and DC were gone – beaten by a single run in the most agonising of finishes.

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar was also among others who backed Miller's decision to try and win the match on his own, but admitted that he could have shown more faith in the left-arm wristspinner's batting capabilities. "Yes, he was backing himself to hit the winning runs, but having seen the way Kuldeep Yadav nudged that ball for a single off the first ball, maybe he should have given Kuldeep the strike." "He should have given the strike. This is all being wise after the event, but the fact remains that the way he had been hitting the previous over and that over as well, he believed that he could do it, simple as that. So you can't fault him for that. He had the confidence that he could do it, but it didn't come off because the ball that Prasidh Krishna bowled was an absolutely superb delivery," Gavaskar said.

'Mini Sindarov... my own 50% version': Anish Giri's witty self-praise after beating Fabiano Caruana in Candidates



Dutch Grandmaster Anish Giri never fails to charm his way with his usual quick wit and humour. After beating American Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana in the ninth round of the Candidates Tournament, Anish moved into second place and within striking distance of the top spot, where Uzbek phenom Javokhir Sindarov has almost cemented his place with an extraordinary start to the event. Anish won his second game in a row after beating India's R Praggnanandhaa in the eighth round. He now has 5.5 points from 9 rounds, 1.5 points behind Sindarov, who has seven points. When asked about his two back-to-back wins in the post-match press conference, Anish, with his usual quick wit, called himself "mini Sindarov". "Two wins in a row! Mini Sindarov, yeah! It's my own 50 percent version of Sindarov, I guess," he said, referring to Sindarov's four consecutive wins in the tournament.

While analysing the game he won against Caruana, Anish repeatedly called himself lucky. When Grandmaster Maurice Ashley pointed this out, he said: "I think I'm just being nice. I'm really happy and thrilled to win the game. I don't have any regrets. I'm just really happy to have won." "I think I was a little bit unfortunate that the position after C5 is a draw. Because then it would have been a clean win. After the game, you are already happy that you won, but then you are hoping that maybe it was also a clean win. It was a little annoying that I didn't clinch it here. But I had to win because of his mistake. It's not like I'm going to cry over that for too long," he added. Anish said his victory is good news for both

him and Sindarov. Giving the reasoning behind his thought, he said: "I think it's good news for both me and Javokhir. Well, he was probably more worried about Fabiano because he had more points earlier on, and he was also the pre-tournament favourite. But okay, we will see. I was at some point thinking that he would win today. I don't know. Did you see if he was ever better today?" "So you see, he can make mistakes, but everything is possible. At this point, as long as mathematically you can still win a tournament, you have to go and do your job, as they say. But Javokhir is still in a good situation. He will probably be quite pissed not to have won today because this was... but it was also such a strange game, to be honest. I didn't understand anything. Yeah, it was very strange," said Anish.

The Dutchman said as long as the tournament remains competitive, it is good for the viewers and the players who still have a mathematical chance. With five rounds remaining and a head-to-head clash against Sindarov still to come, Anish could mount a comeback and win his first Candidates tournament in his fourth appearance. He said, "At this point, it gives me too much credit to call it a two-horse race. I think it is like a one-horse race. There is a bunch of losers in the back, and I am slightly ahead of the losers now. Let me win a few more games, and then we can speak of a two-horse race. I would love to take that, but it would give me too much credit. Honestly, I just won a couple of games, and suddenly I am a little ahead of the others. It is early to speak of that. It would be fun if this turned into a two-horse race at some point, but right now it is not yet the case." He continued: "The whole point of the tournament is that as long as you have a mathematical chance, there is still excitement. I remember some championship matches. I was so excited when Vishy was playing against Carlsen. It was already a very bad match for him, and he was losing, but he still had a mathematical chance to come back. I remember with how much excitement I watched the last round. Also, the Kramnik vs. Anand match. It was all hopeless for Vladimir, but then he won one game. In the end, I was watching with lots of excitement. As long as there is a mathematical chance, people really enjoy the tournaments."

'Impact Player rule invaluable for young players,' says Prabhsimran Singh amid increased backlash to rule in IPL



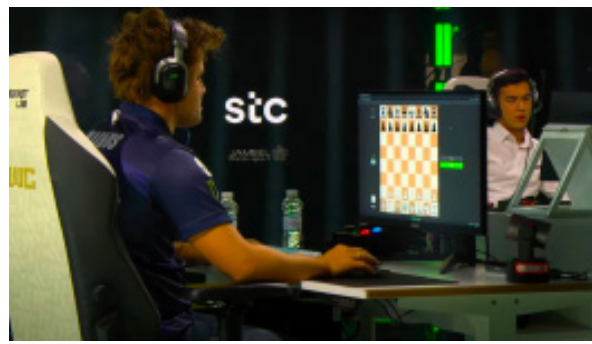
The Impact Player rule has come under heavy criticism from almost every player who is asked about it in the Indian Premier League (IPL) but Punjab Kings opener Prabhsimran Singh has said that it has been invaluable in providing chances to younger players. Prabhsimran acknowledged that while the rule has favoured batters and diminished the role of all-rounders in the team, younger players have a better possibility of getting a chance because of it. "As a youngster, I see the Impact Sub rule as a great opportunity for young players, and I have said this several times. Many don't like it because, obviously, a team can take more high-risk decisions when a player — be it a batter or bowler — is added to the side," Prabhsimran told reporters. "But for young players, it's invaluable. When I joined the (PBKS) franchise, I spent eight years with them, and for four of those years, I didn't get many chances to play. Sitting on the sidelines, I always hoped for a shot, and now, because of the Impact Sub rule, I feel the opportunities for youngsters have increased significantly," the young top-order batter, who scored 500-plus runs last IPL season, added. Sameer Rizvi being a breakout star for Delhi Capitals is an example of a younger player getting an opportunity due to the Impact Player rule. Other lesser known players like Ashutosh Sharma have made their presence felt after coming on as an Impact Player substitute last season. However, a vast majority of established names,

right from MS Dhoni to Shubman Gill, have voiced their displeasure with how the rule has led to players taking more risks and scores thus inflating. Meanwhile, Graeme Smith, the former South Africa captain who is commissioner of the country's SA20 league, said that the tournament won't be implementing the rule to maintain simplicity. "We've chosen to stay away from it at this early stage of the Betway SA20 because we're trying to introduce a whole new audience to the game, and you also don't want to complicate an already complicated sport for a new fan," he wrote in a Betway Insider Column.

Indian women boxers top medal tally at Asian Championships

Hyderabad: The Indian women's team delivered a historic performance at the Asian Boxing Championships in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), finishing on top of the medal charts with a total of 10 medals, including four gold, two silver, and four bronze, underlining their dominance at the continental stage. Under the stewardship of head coach Santiago Nieva, every member of the women's team returned home with a medal, stamping their authority on the continental competition. With Boxing Federation of India President Ajay Singh in attendance, Minakshi (48kg) got things going by claiming the first gold of the day with a commanding 5-0 victory over Mongolia's Nomundari Enkh-Amgalan. Preeti (54kg) continued her sensational run, defeating Chinese Taipei's Huang Hsiao-wen, a three-time world champion and Tokyo 2020 Olympic bronze medallist, by a unanimous 5-0 decision to secure the top podium finish. Priya (60kg) added to India's gold tally with a clinical 3-0 win over North Korea's Won Un-gyong in the final. Arundhati (70kg) also impressed, registering a 4-1 victory against Kazakhstan's Bakyt Seidish to clinch gold in her category.

Following Esports World Cup debut in 2025, Chess to enter Esports Nations Cup 2026 in Riyadh



Magnus Carlsen, who recently won the Esports World Cup title in Riyadh, will be doing analysis on the chess tournament for AI models (Screengrab via Esports World Cup YouTube). Magnus Carlsen, who recently won the Esports World Cup title in Riyadh, will be doing analysis on the chess tournament for AI models (Screengrab via Esports World Cup YouTube). After making its entry at the Esports World Cup (EWC) in 2025, chess is all set to make its way to the Esports Nations Cup 2026. The Esports Foundation on Thursday confirmed the complete 16-game lineup for the ENC, the global nation-based esports competition set to debut in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from November 2 to 29, 2026. More than 100,000 players are expected to compete in hundreds of qualification events across 100 markets throughout 2026 for the opportunity to represent their nation and territory on the global stage. Among the 16 titles, chess is now featured alongside games like Counter-Strike 2, Dota 2, and Valorant.

What is the Esports Nations Cup (ENC)?

The ENC is a nation-based esports competition. Un-

like regular tournaments where private teams compete, the ENC allows players to represent their own country or territory. The event will take place in Riyadh from November 2 to 29, 2026. Qualification events will be held across markets, giving numerous players a chance to earn a spot on the global stage.

Why is ENC Relevant?

The ENC is made to bring structure to international esports. It works to help countries build talent pipelines. The tournament has a \$45 million backing, including a \$20 million prize pool. Every player and coach in the same finishing position earns the same amount. First place gets \$50,000 per player, second gets \$30,000, and third gets \$15,000. For chess players, this means serious prize money and equal recognition alongside other esports athletes. NODWIN Gaming has been named India's National Team Partner and will run qualifiers and team selection across the country. Earlier, the Esports Foundation selected S8UL and GodLike Esports, two of India's leading esports clubs, for its 2026 Club Partner Program. They join 40 global organisations in a \$20 million (approx. INR 189 crore) annual initiative aimed at building a sustainable and connected esports ecosystem. Now in its third year, the program provides participating clubs with up to \$1 million (approx. INR 9.4 crore) in funding, along with strategic support and international exposure leading up to the Esports World Cup (EWC) 2026. The ENC 2026 edition will feature 16 game titles: Apex Legends, Chess, Counter-Strike 2, Dota 2, EA SPORTS FC, Fatal Fury, Honor of Kings, League of Legends, Mobile Legends: Bang Bang, PUBG: Battlegrounds, PUBG MOBILE, Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege, Rocket League, Street Fighter 6, Trackmania, and VALORANT.

Rashid Khan non-committal about playing in Afghanistan's one-off Test vs India: 'There is no target in Test cricket'



Rashid Khan has taken 45 wickets, which is tied with former South Africa pacer Vernon Philander for second most wickets by a player in the history of Test cricket after playing six matches. (Photo Credit: Abu Dhabi cricket) Rashid Khan has taken 45 wickets, which is tied with former South Africa pacer Vernon Philander for second most wickets by a player in the history of Test cricket after playing six matches. (Photo Credit: Abu Dhabi cricket) Rashid Khan remains non-committal about featuring in Afghanistan's one-off Test against India that is scheduled to be played in Mullanpur in June after the Indian Premier League (IPL). The star spinner said that he was advised by his doctor to stay away from red-ball cricket to prolong his career in the sport and that, along with the fact that Afghanistan don't play in the World Test Championship, has resulted in him having to put Test cricket on the backburner.

"It's a little difficult in red ball, because that was the first thing which was told to me by the doctor, 'You have to stay away from red ball.' But I still played a Test against Zimba-

bwe," Rashid told reporters after starring in Gujarat Titan's one-run win over Delhi Capitals in the IPL on Thursday. Rashid had been diagnosed with a back injury before the 2023 World Cup and since then, he has had to ration his appearances in Test cricket. Rashid last played in a Test against Zimbabwe in January 2025. Afghanistan won that match by 72 runs and Rashid was player of the match, taking a total of 11 wickets across the two innings. He bowled a total of 55 overs in that match, something that left his doctor "shocked".

"I bowled 67 (55) overs, which was crazy," said Rashid about the match in Bulawayo. "The doctor told me like, 'if you don't want to play cricket, you keep playing the red-ball cricket' because it's not going to support you. You won't be [there] for longer to play for Afghanistan and I still went and I still played and when he knew I bowled 67 [55] overs in one innings, in two innings, he was shocked. He was 'no, you can't do that to yourself'. I will think about that." "ODIs, yes, I enjoy, and I'm in a good shape to play ODIs for a longer period of time for Afghanistan, but just to be careful with how many I play, and not to put too much load on myself, to be careful if I want to play for a longer period of time," he added. Since becoming a Test-playing nation in 2017, Afghanistan have played 12 matches in the format and Rashid has featured in just six. He has taken 45 wickets, which is tied with former South Africa pacer Vernon Philander for second most wickets by a player in the history of Test cricket after playing six matches. Rashid said that while his immediate focus is on the IPL, his main target remains staying fit for the 2027 ODI World Cup. He said that he couldn't risk injuring himself along the way by playing the Test against India. Rashid also said that there is a lack of a real target in Test cricket with Afghanistan playing as infrequently as they are and not being in the World Test Championship.

'Kid, whoever you are, stop bowling at me, man!': Yuvraj Singh on facing a 16-year-old Jasprit Bumrah in the nets



India's Jasprit Bumrah celebrates the wicket of New Zealand's Matt Henry during the T20 World Cup cricket final match between India and New Zealand in Ahmedabad, India, Sunday, March 8, 2026. (AP Photo) India's Jasprit Bumrah celebrates the wicket of New Zealand's Matt Henry during the T20 World Cup cricket final match between India and New Zealand in Ahmedabad, India, Sunday, March 8, 2026. There are arguably no bigger terrors for batters in the modern-day game than facing Jasprit Bumrah. Over the last few years, the India pacer has become one of the most lethal bowlers of the current era, someone who has earned the respect of batters in all formats of the sport.

But, now Yuvraj Singh has opened up about how tantalising it was to face off against a 16-year-old Bumrah in the nets. Yuvraj, who was a guest on The Overlap Cricket hosted by Michael Vaughan recently, narrated the incident of facing Bumrah back in 2013. "When I was trying to make a comeback in the Indian team after battling cancer — I was trying to get back into cricket — and Bumrah was about 16 years old and he was bowling rapid in the nets. And I was like, 'I want this kid out of the nets' and 'stop bowling to me'. I was like, 'Kid, stop! Whoever you are.' Because I was just trying to make a comeback from cancer, was just trying to get into my zone. And this guy was just bowling lethal." Yuvraj told Vaughan. Yuvraj added: "Bumrah came and told me this story later on, that I asked him to stop bowling to him. And I was like, 'yeah, because you were bowling too quick.'" Yuvraj was speaking to Vaughan right after the T20 World Cup semifinal against England where Bumrah's 18th over at the Wankhede Stadium had swung the game in India's favour. "To defend on that wicket... If Jasprit didn't bowl a good over at

that stage, we were done." Talking about the difference between the current version of Bumrah and that 16-year-old Bumrah, Yuvraj said: "He definitely had a longer run up. I don't think he would had so much skill, but he was quick. Extremely quick and with his action he's got this deceptive bounce. He just keeps on getting into your ribs all the time. You don't like that!" "If you look at the way the game is evolving, he has to be the best because batsmen are not going after him. They're like scared to go after him; they feel like it's best to just rotate the strike and hit the other bowlers. And the moment they want to go after him, he doesn't allow them. He's just really smart. Obviously he's got a great skill as well and he's got a deceptive action. It's hard to pick his slower one out of his hand."

Ribhav Verma leads Hyderabad Amateur Golf Championship after third round

Hyderabad: Leader Ribhav Verma may have failed to reproduce his opening two-round heroics, but his even-par 72 ensured he stayed ahead of the field on the third day of the IGU Hyderabad Amateur Golf Championship at the Boulder Hills Golf & Country Club here on Thursday.

The 18-year-old from Panchkula took his three-day aggregate to nine-under 207, three shots ahead of Parth Raman Sood (70). Anshul Mishra, like the leader, had a poor day at the office with his level-par 72 and slipped to third place at five-under 211. Order of Merit leader Deepak Yadav got into contention after a strong three-under 69.

Verma's game lacked consistency for the better part of the round. He began with a double bogey after hitting his 4-iron tee shot into the left hazard on the first hole. The teenager, searching for his first amateur victory, did pick up a shot on the second with a 10-foot putt. However, bogeys on the seventh hole (missing a nine-foot putt) and an unfortunate lip-out on the 11th reduced his lead to one shot. But before much damage could be done, a late flourish, he recorded a hat-trick of birdies from the 13th hole, helped Verma take a three-shot lead into the final round.

Ahaan Panday confesses feeling the pressure of Saiyaara success 'day in and day out'; Aneet Padda reveals why she continues to study

Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda made history last year with Saiyaara, the highest-grossing Indian film led by newcomers. In Mohit Suri's romantic drama, they played Krish and Vaani, who have since emerged as the poster couple for Gen Z romance. The actors recently also won the Best Breakthrough New Actor honours at Chetak Screen Awards 2026. In an exclusive interview with SCREEN, Ahaan and Aneet discuss their claim to fame, representing a rebellious generation, upcoming projects, and becoming the new brand ambassadors of Pepsi. The Gen-Z lapped up Saiyaara at a time when action films were doing big numbers. Why do you think they were craving for love on screen?

Ahaan: I honestly feel love stories never really disappeared. They just have a certain moment when they come back. I also strongly feel it had nothing to do with the genre or the type of film. It had more to do with honesty. The audience was craving for honesty, and we were lucky we got the opportunity to show our honesty about love. Saiyaara clicked because it let people sit with those feelings. People are craving something real, and when they see something real, they see themselves in those characters' shoes. Aneet: What people connected with is how emotionally unguarded both Krish and Vaani were because they weren't trying to be ideal versions of love. They were messy, vulnerable, and still figuring things out in real time. Ahaan as Krish had this intensity and persistence that was very raw, while Vaani came from a place of quiet strength and emotional clarity. It's that contrast that made their dynamic feel very real.

Aneet Padda and Ahan Panday's Saiyaara was the surprise hit from last year. Aneet Padda and Ahan Panday's Saiyaara was the surprise hit from last year. What do you think it's about the Gen-Z that everyone gets wrong?

Aneet: For our generation, love isn't always perfect or neatly defined. It's complicated, sometimes even confusing, but still deeply felt. People sometimes assume the Gen-Z are too detached or overly ironic about everything. But beneath that, there's actually a lot of sensitivity and awareness. And this generation cares deeply about authenticity and fairness. They're not afraid to question things that don't make sense to them. Ahaan: Funnily, I can't say much because I feel like I'm the last leg of Gen-Z. I was born in 1997, and was under the impression until a while ago that I was a millennial. From what I know, people assume the Gen-Z are either too serious or too unserious, and chronically online. But honestly, we're a generation who feel too much and have learnt to protect our peace. Even though at times, that may come across as standoffish, it comes from a realization that if you want, you can protect your happiness. Not just our generation, but like any other generation, it's about staying in the moment, seizing it, and not being too occupied with what the future holds and what the past has held. Ahaan, Krish became a poster boy of love that's angsty and persistent yet gentle and chivalrous. How much does that character resonate with you?

Ahaan: I honestly feel we've all had a Krish within us, with all the baggage of over the years. Love is far from perfect. Love is beautiful, yet it's raw and angst-ridden. It's a lot of things that aren't textbook positive. I've been there. You said "poster boy"? The ninth-grade me made six posters to ask out my first girlfriend. We've all been there. Funnily enough, if I have to add, Krish has stayed with me for long even after the film was done and released. When you stay with a character, it's hard to suddenly switch off. Krish feels very intensely and doesn't hide it, and I connected with that emotional honesty. I guess it's true what they all say — your first film, your first character is a memory that stays with you for many, many days later. Suddenly, you're sounding or walking like Krish, and you don't even realize that happened. Did you feel it was a risk to mouth those lines on nepotism in Saiyaara when you're part of a film family yourself?

Ahaan: Honestly, I didn't see it as a risk as much as the character's truth. Films are often a reflection of conver-

When Dhurandhar star Madhavan turned barren land into thriving coconut farm in Tamil Nadu: 'It took 3.5 years'



In the Indian film industry, several actors have nurtured a deep passion for farming and gardening alongside their cinematic careers. While Rajesh Kumar—best known for Sarabhai vs Sarabhai—made headlines for stepping away from acting to pursue farming (a journey that also came with financial setbacks and ongoing debt), actors like Dharmendra, Prakash Raj, and Jackie Shroff have often showcased the more joyful and fulfilling side of working with the land. Amid these stories, Dhurandhar star R Madhavan took on a unique and ambitious challenge. He adopted a barren piece of land in Tamil Nadu's Palani and, through three years of consistent effort, transformed it into a thriving farm of non-hybrid coconuts known for their sweet water and distinctive aroma. The story came to light in 2020, when the actor shared on social media: "Finally, coconut growing project completed at Palani, Tamil Nadu. So satisfying to see a theory proved. Congratulations and much love to the new local owners. May this be as satisfying to them as it was for us. Sad to leave this wonderful holy place. Thank you all at Palani." Referring to it as a "project," R Madhavan later wrote on X, "It was a fantastic project in which we grew super sweet and aromatic non-hybrid, pure dwarf variety



sations happening in the real world. And that dialogue was part of the story we were telling. For me, personally, I feel opportunities can come from where you come from. But what you do with them is entirely on you. Ultimately, it's the audience that gets to decide who gets to stay. Aneet, you continue to study even after your breakthrough with Saiyaara. How important is education to you? Aneet: Education has always been important for me because it keeps me grounded. Acting can be very consuming. Having something outside of it helps me maintain a perspective. Learning also keeps you curious, whether it's through academics or life experiences. Continuing to grow makes you a better artiste as well. Do your classmates look at you differently now that you're a star? Aneet: The people who really know me still treat me the same way. I value that a lot because it reminds me that beyond everything happening professionally, I'm still the same person. They helped me stay grounded, rooted, and keep my eyes on the prize.

Ahaan, how hard is it to shut out the noise after your first film while working on the next one, helmed by Ali Abbas Zafar? Ahaan: It's definitely a learning curve. When your first film releases, there are so many voices and opinions around you, about you. I've woken up with a pressure I never knew of. I felt it day in and day out. But I realized the only thing that keeps me grounded is focusing on my work and the people I'm doing this for — my family and everyone who's shown love. When I'm on set, everything fades into the background, and I'm only focusing on the next moment, what's to come.

Aneet, you'll be headlining Shakti Shalini from the Maddock Horror Comedy Universe. Has the success of Saiyaara given you the confidence of leading such a tentpole? Aneet: It's definitely given me some kind of confidence. It helped me understand how deeply the audience connect with stories and characters. But with every new project, you start from zero. Shakti Shalini is a very different space, and that's exciting because it pushes me to explore a new side to my craft and to myself as an actor. For me to headline a film of this stature and to be trusted by a producer like Dinesh Vijan is truly a dream come true. And I hope I can deliver a performance that people love. I'm too excited to dabble in a genre that I've never done before. You both recently came on board as brand ambassadors of Pepsi, and even got a "trailer". Growing up, what did this brand mean to you? Ahaan: Pepsi has always had this ability to capture the energy of a moment in time, of a certain year or a few months. Some of the older campaigns felt so cinematic. They had this rebellious vibe that stood out. Growing up, they were always very exciting to see because they brought together music, sports, and pop culture in a dynamic way. Being part of that feels very, very surreal. Aneet: Pepsi campaigns have always had this vibrant and energetic quality that makes them so memorable. Growing up, I remember those ads were trying to capture a moment in culture than just promoting a drink. What I love the most is how playful they are, and there's always a sense of fun and spontaneity that's reflective of youth.

coconuts on almost barren land. I will be putting out an article and paper for local farmers soon." In an interview with Mumbai Mirror, Madhavan elaborated on the experience and said: "It was wonderful to see the land rejuvenated and yield what it was meant to be in the first place. From preparing the land with the right mulch to putting the right kind of fish in the well—every bit of learning has been priceless and so worth it." Speaking to ANI, he described the journey as "one of the most satisfying and rewarding experiences" of his life. "It has been one of the most satisfying and rewarding experiences of our lives. It was wonderful to see the land rejuvenated and yield it was meant to be in the first place. From preparing the land with right mulch to putting the right fish in the well every bit of learning has been priceless and so worth it. We will be replicating this on other locations around India and the world." Recently, Rajesh Kumar revealed that his journey into farming has begun to inspire those closest to him. Motivated by his passion and perseverance, his sisters made the bold decision to leave their jobs in the US and Finland and move back to Bihar to support him in his agricultural pursuits.

Rakul Preet Singh begins dubbing for 'Pati Patni Aur Woh Do'

Mumbai: Actress Rakul Preet Singh will soon be seen sharing the screen with Ayushmann Khurrana, Sara Ali Khan, and Wamiqa Gabbi in the eagerly-awaited romantic comedy, "Pati Patni Aur Woh Do". As movie buffs look forward to witnessing the drama on the big screen, Rakul has shared an update on social media, revealing that she has commenced the dubbing for "Pati Patni Aur Woh Do". She took to the stories section of her official Instagram handle and posted a photo of herself from the dubbing session.

The text, along with the still, went like this, "Jab 'woh' do ho jaaye... tab asli story shuru hoti hai... Dubbing for Pati Patni Aur Woh Do (sic)".

Rahul Arunoday Banerjee death: Strike, boycott and SOP push—all that has happened so far

The untimely death of actor Rahul Arunoday Banerjee on March 29 sent shockwaves across the Bengali entertainment industry, quickly evolving from a tragic accident into a larger conversation around on-set safety and accountability. While initial reports suggested that the 42-year-old actor died after drowning in the sea during a shoot, questions soon began to surface about whether adequate safety measures were in place. What followed was a series of strong reactions from within the fraternity. Strikes were called, and several actors associated with Rahul's show chose to step away, citing "emotional trauma." The incident also reignited debates around the responsibility of production houses to ensure robust safety protocols for both artistes and technicians working on location.

Actors-technicians call for strikeln the aftermath, the Artists' Forum drafted two separate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which were submitted to channel authorities as well as the Indian Motion Picture Producers' Association (IMPA). The collective stance was clear: the strike would only be lifted once a consensus was reached between the channel authorities, IMPA, and the Artists' Forum on a revised set of safety guidelines. Until then, the industry would remain firm in halting work—underscoring that safety and structural reform are non-negotiable. The incident also led to a call for boycott. Veteran actor Ranjit Mallick stated that the fraternity would not collaborate with the production house Magic Moments, or anyone associated with the serial Bhole Baba Par Karega, until there is clarity on the circumstances surrounding Arunoday Banerjee's death.

Addressing the media at Technician's Studio in Tollygunge, Prosenjit Chatterjee said: "We will not work with any of the makers associated with the serial or the production banner till we learn how Banerjee passed away," demanding accountability. However, he also clarified that while the boycott of Magic Moments and those associated with Rahul's last show would continue, other productions could resume work from April 8. The meeting and subsequent press conference saw participation from several prominent names, including Dev, Abir Chatterjee, Subhashree Ganguly, Koyel Mallick, Rituparna Sengupta, and Aparajita Auddy, among others—reflecting a unified industry stance. Amid the ongoing boycott, Rahul Arunoday Banerjee's co-star from Bhole Baba Par Karega, Rajannya Mitra, stepped away from the show. Speaking to the media, she said: "From the moment I heard about the accident, I haven't been able to return to normal." She further recalled that the shoot had proceeded like any other day, and she only learned about Rahul's death after pack-up, while on her way home. At the



same time, she also defended the production house, adding: "In 11 years, I have never seen any negligence from Magic Moments. They respect artistes."

Rahul Arunoday Banerjee's wife and actor Priyanka Sarkar also issued a powerful statement, calling for systemic change. Taking to Facebook, she wrote: "Thank you all for standing by us during this difficult time. On the 7th, the entire film family seemed to unite in one voice—with the same thoughts, the same concerns, and endless love. There is no division here, no political color; no conflict of personal interests or egos. There is only one truth here—we are a family. This united fight today is born out of deep affection and compassion for a member of the family. Some loved Rahul as an actor, some knew him as Arunoday, and some loved the writer Rahul Arunoday Banerjee. A death today has united our entire family. But let this untimely death not be just a sad memory; let it be the beginning of a bigger change. Only then will this man remain immortal among us, that will be his true successor or legacy. Let our goal be one—so that such an accident does not happen again in the future. Be it a technician or an artist—so that no one has to fight for their honor and dignity after death."

How did Rahul Arunoday Banerjee die?

According to reports, Rahul Arunoday Banerjee was filming a boat sequence in Digha when he reportedly lost his balance and fell into the sea. Crew members are said to have immediately jumped in to rescue him, but were only able to pull him out after nearly an hour. He was then rushed to a hospital in Digha, approximately 11 kilometres away, where doctors were unable to save him. As the industry continues to grapple with the loss, the focus remains firmly on accountability—and on ensuring that such a tragedy does not repeat itself.

Ahaan Panday confesses feeling the pressure of Saiyaara success 'day in and day out'; Aneet Padda reveals why she continues to study

Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda made history last year with Saiyaara, the highest-grossing Indian film led by newcomers. In Mohit Suri's romantic drama, they played Krish and Vaani, who have since emerged as the poster couple for Gen Z romance. The actors recently also won the Best Breakthrough New Actor honours at Chetak Screen Awards 2026. In an exclusive interview with SCREEN, Ahaan and Aneet discuss their claim to fame, representing a rebellious generation, upcoming projects, and becoming the new brand ambassadors of Pepsi. The Gen-Z lapped up Saiyaara at a time when action films were doing big numbers. Why do you think they were craving for love on screen?

Ahaan: I honestly feel love stories never really disappeared. They just have a certain moment when they come back. I also strongly feel it had nothing to do with the genre or the type of film. It had more to do with honesty. The audience was craving for honesty, and we were lucky we got the opportunity to show our honesty about love. Saiyaara clicked because it let people sit with those feelings. People are craving something real, and when they see something real, they see themselves in those characters' shoes. Aneet: What people connected with is how emotionally unguarded both Krish and Vaani were because they weren't trying to be ideal versions of love. They were messy, vulnerable, and still figuring things out in real time. Ahaan as Krish had this intensity and persistence that was very raw, while Vaani came from a place of quiet strength and emotional clarity. It's that contrast that made their dynamic feel very real. Aneet Padda and Ahan Panday's Saiyaara was the surprise hit from last year. Aneet Padda and Ahan Panday's Saiyaara was the surprise hit from last year.

What do you think it's about the Gen-Z that everyone gets wrong?

Aneet: For our generation, love isn't always perfect or neatly defined. It's complicated, sometimes even confusing, but still deeply felt. People sometimes assume the Gen-Z are too detached or overly ironic about everything. But beneath that, there's actually a lot of sensitivity and awareness. And this generation cares deeply about authenticity and fairness. They're not afraid to question things that don't make sense to them.

Ahaan: Funnily, I can't say much because I feel like I'm the last leg of Gen-Z. I was born in 1997, and was under the impression until a while ago that I was a millennial. From what I know, people assume the Gen-Z are either too serious or too unserious, and chronically online. But honestly, we're a generation who feel too much and have learnt to protect our peace. Even though at times, that may come across as standoffish, it comes from a realization that if you want, you can protect your happiness. Not just our generation, but like any other generation, it's about staying in the moment, seizing it, and not being too occupied with what the future holds and what the past has held.

Ahaan, Krish became a poster boy of love that's angsty and persistent yet gentle and chivalrous. How much does that character resonate with you?

Ahaan: I honestly feel we've all had a Krish within us, with all the baggage of over the years. Love is far from perfect. Love is beautiful, yet it's raw and angst-ridden. It's a lot of things that aren't textbook positive. I've been there. You said "poster boy"? The ninth-grade me made six posters to ask out my first girlfriend. We've all been there. Funnily enough, if I have to add, Krish has stayed with me for long even after the film was done and released. When you stay with a character, it's hard to suddenly switch off. Krish feels very intensely and doesn't hide it, and I connected with that emotional honesty. I guess it's true what they all say — your



first film, your first character is a memory that stays with you for many, many days later. Suddenly, you're sounding or walking like Krish, and you don't even realize that happened.

Did you feel it was a risk to mouth those lines on nepotism in Saiyaara when you're part of a film family yourself?

Ahaan: Honestly, I didn't see it as a risk as much as the character's truth. Films are often a reflection of conversations happening in the real world. And that dialogue was part of the story we were telling. For me, personally, I feel opportunities can come from where you come from. But what you do with them is entirely on you. Ultimately, it's the audience that gets to decide who gets to stay.

Aneet, you continue to study even after your breakthrough with Saiyaara. How important is education to you?

Aneet: Education has always been important for me because it keeps me grounded. Acting can be very consuming. Having something outside of it helps me maintain a perspective. Learning also keeps you curious, whether it's through academics or life experiences. Continuing to grow makes you a better artiste as well.

Do your classmates look at you differently now that you're a star?

Aneet: The people who really know me still treat me the same way. I value that a lot because it reminds me that beyond everything happening professionally, I'm still the same person. They helped me stay grounded, rooted, and keep my eyes on the prize. Ahaan, how hard is it to shut out the noise after your first film while working on the next one, helmed by Ali Abbas Zafar?

Ahaan: It's definitely a learning curve. When your first film releases, there are so many voices and opinions around you, about you. I've woken up with a pressure I never knew of. I felt it day in and day out. But I realized the only thing that keeps me grounded is focusing on my work and the people I'm doing this for — my family and everyone who's shown love. When I'm on set, everything fades into the background, and I'm only focusing on the next moment, what's to come. Aneet, you'll be headlining Shakti Shalini from the Maddock Horror Comedy Universe. Has the success of Saiyaara given you the confidence of leading such a tentpole? Aneet: It's definitely given me some kind of confidence. It helped me understand how deeply the audience connect with stories and characters. But with every new project, you start from zero. Shakti Shalini is a very different space, and that's exciting because it pushes me to explore a new side to my craft and to myself as an actor. For me to headline a film of this stature and to be trusted by a producer like Dinesh Vijan is truly a dream come true.