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Moving car catches fire on Shamshabad road

Hyderabad: A moving car caught fire at Shamshabad road on the city outskirts on Wednesday night.

According to reports, the car was moving when the driver noticed smoke inside the vehicle and stopped it immediately. Soon, the vehicle was engulfed in flames. Traffic on the NH-44 came to a standstill following the incident.

Telangana HC clears NOC grant to Minister for passport

Hyderabad: Justice Nagesh Bheemapa of the Telangana High Court has clarified that grant of a No Objection Certificate (NOC) is limited only for the purpose of obtaining a passport and does not automatically permit foreign travel, while dealing with a writ petition filed by Minister Adhuri Laxman Kumar. The Court was hearing a plea filed by Adhuri Laxman challenging the refusal of the Passport Authority to issue him a passport on the ground of multiple pending criminal cases. T

PM Appeals to People to Take 9 Pledges on Health, Conservation of Nature, Service, Others

BENGALURU, APRIL 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday advocated 9 resolutions such as water conservation, planting saplings/environment, maintenance of cleanliness, domestic tourism, embracing indigenous products, usage of millets, practice of yoga/sports to be fit and rendering service for the needy to reach the goal of "Vikasit Karnataka (a developed Karnataka)" and "Vikasit Bharat (a developed India)" faster.

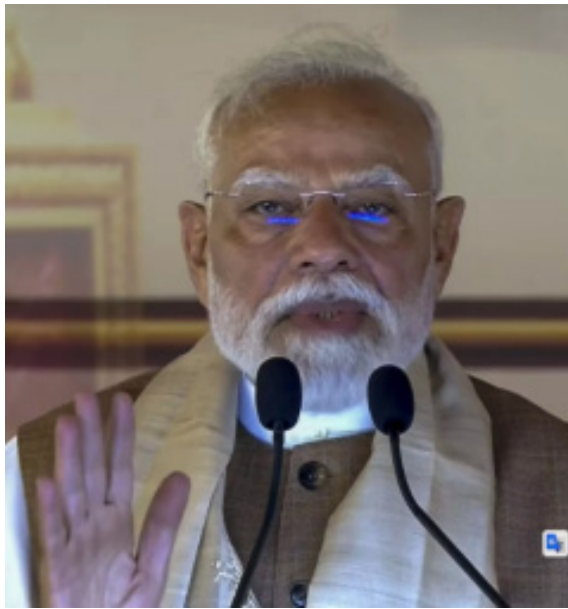
The PM was talking at a function held at the Adichunchanagiri Mutt, Nagamangala of Mandya.

Elaborating on the 9 steps he advocated, Modi said people of Mandya know the value of water conservation better than other districts of the state. The district is blessed by river Cauvery and a resolution is needed for water conservation and better utilization of water, he said. The PM urged everyone to plant a sapling in the name of their mother to save Mother Earth from destruction.

Modi asked people to attach cleanliness whether in devotional places/cities or rural areas and stressed that all areas need to be maintained cleanly. The Prime Minister wanted a "collective leadership" to maintain cleanliness at all costs.

The people should embrace products made in India which are needed to strengthen the country, Modi said, and asked the people to travel to every nook and corner of the country to encourage domestic tourism. In an appeal particularly to the farmers in Mandya, Narendra Modi asked them to practice agriculture free from chemicals.

Referring to former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, Narendra Modi said that Deve Gowda popularized ragi balls (finger millet) usage and wanted youths to include use of millets in their diet. He termed obesity a challenge for the country to deal with and appealed to people to cut down use of oil by 10 percent to fight obesity. Modi asked people to practice yoga/sports to be part of everyday life to keep their fitness levels high. Modi wanted service for



the needy.

Lauding the services rendered by Adichunchanagiri Mutt, Narendra Modi, the Mutt has been a centre of spiritual and technological abundance. The Mutt was appreciated for its legacy of about 2,000 years and continuing to service the society in technology, spiritually, moral values and guiding the society.

Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot Union Minister of Large Industries and Steel H.D. Kumaraswamy, Leader of Opposition R. Ashok, Minister of Agriculture N. Cheluvarayawamy, Adichunchanagiri mutt pontiff Niramalanandanatha Swamiji among others were present.

Puligundala Project to Be Developed as a Major Tourist Destination: Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka

“Khammam, Penuballi, April 15 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka announced that the Puligundala Project, located at Brahmallakunta village in Penuballi mandal, will be developed into one of the country's tourist destinations. On Wednesday, the Deputy CM, along with State Minister for Revenue, Information and Housing Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, senior forest officials, district authorities, and local MLAs, inaugurated and inspected the Puligundala Eco-Tourism Project at the Puligundala tank. During the visit, facilities such as boating, waterfalls, and jungle safari were officially launched. The Deputy CM appreciated local officials and leaders for identifying and promoting this scenic location. He stated that the state government is giving top priority to eco-tourism and aims to showcase Telangana's natural beauty to the world. He directed officials to immediately begin development works at Kanakagiri Hills. An amount of ₹4 crore from CSR funds has been sanctioned for the construction of cottages on both sides of the Puligundala water body. Officials were instructed to prepare a detailed action plan with clear timelines for the commencement and completion of the works. To improve accessibility for tourists, he also ordered the preparation and submission of proposals for constructing a double road to the site. The Deputy CM emphasized that developing eco-tourism in this region would generate significant employment opportunities for local people. He reiterated the government's commitment to promoting tourism across the state and expressed confidence that Puligundala would soon emerge as a leading tourist destination in India. Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said that places like Kanakagiri Hills are naturally beautiful and have great potential for tourism development. He added that the government aims to develop Puligundala into one of the top three eco-tourism destinations in the state. He further stated that a comprehensive development plan is being prepared and assured that all necessary infrastructure and facilities will be developed. He also promised immediate approvals for upgrading the access road into a double-lane road. The minister mentioned that the ongoing Sitarama Lift Irrigation Project,



which was left incomplete by the previous government, is now being expedited. He added that the feasibility of supplying continuous water to this region from the project would be examined. Local MLA Matta Ragamayi Dayanand highlighted the importance of forests and trees, stating that human life depends on them. She appreciated the government's efforts in forest conservation and tourism development. She also noted that funds have been allocated for eco-tourism development at Kanakagiri Hills and temple tourism at Neeladri Hills.

Women's Bill in Lok Sabha!

New Delhi: The government and Opposition are set to be at loggerheads from Thursday when the amendments in the provisions for women's quota bill is tabled during the three-day special session. The government will also move to fast-track other delimitation reforms needed to see through the women's reservation law.

It is actually this delimitation law that is at the centre of dispute as all political parties while giving their support to 33% reservation to women in Parliament and state/UT assemblies have raised red flag against delimitation and timing of the enactment of the new law.

Leader of Opposition and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said, "Congress party unequivocally supports Women's Reservation. Parliament unanimously passed the bill in 2023, it is already part of our Constitution. What the government is proposing now has nothing to do with women's reservation. This amendment is an attempted power grab using delimitation and gerrymandering. We will not allow 'Hissa Chori' from OBC, Dalit and Adivasi communities by ignoring the caste census data. We will also not allow Southern, North Eastern, North Western and smaller states to be treated unfairly."

Ahead of the Bill, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India stands on the brink of making one of the most significant decisions of the 21st century as Parliament meets to end "decades of waiting" by amending the Women's Reservation Act for its implementation in 2029.

Former president Pratibha Patil, ex-Lok Sabha speaker Meira



Kumar and BSP chief Mayawati have welcomed the initiative but the Opposition claimed that the northern states where the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has higher consolidation of vote bank will get more seats in Lok Sabha while the southern states will get fewer seats due to the population size. Opposition has also questioned the principle being planned for delimitation saying "when the intent behind a bill is mischievous and the content of it is devious, the extent of damage to parliamentary democracy is enormous."

Ahead of the special sitting, top Opposition leaders on Wednesday met at the residence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to discuss and evolve a joint strategy on the women's quota law. Already two prominent non-BJP chief ministers from the south, M. K. Stalin (Tamil Nadu) and A Revanthy Reddy (Telangana), have sharpened their attack against the Centre over delimitation, with the Tamil Nadu chief minister warning of "massive agitation" if the state was harmed and his Telangana counterpart flagging "injustice".

The government has countered this by saying there will be no injustice to any state, seats will be increased proportionately and there will be 50 per cent increase of current seats for every state. Sources in government said the language of the bill is very clear and straight forward and any wrong interpretation of this bill should be avoided. Sources added all issues and doubts will be clarified during the discussion on the bill in the Parliament.

"Our democracy will become stronger and more vibrant if the 2029 Lok Sabha elections and various Assembly elections that year are held with women's reservation fully in place," said PM.

NDA sources explained that the final number of seats will be determined by the Delimitation Commission, hence, the bill does not specify an exact seat count or a fixed percentage (such as 50 per cent). The figure of 850 represents only the upper limit for the total number of Lok Sabha seats and seat allocation will be based on proportional representation and southern states are likely to benefit under this

formula, sources claimed. For this the 2011 Census is being used as the reference point. Sources claimed due to more effective population control in southern states, they could see a relative advantage in seat allocation compared to northern states, where population growth has been higher.

The Constitution (131st amendment) Bill 2026 also known as Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (Women's Reservation Act), is to ensure reservation of one-third seats of the House for women lawmakers. Accordingly, the amendments, when passed, will ensure an increase in the number of Lok Sabha seats from present 543 to 850.

A bill on delimitation law and an enabling bill to apply the proposed law in Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir and Puducherry -- three Union territories with legislature -- will also be passed to fast track implementation of the women's reservation Act of 2023. The reserved seats will be rotated after every delimitation exercise. The reservation is set for a period of 15 years, which may be extended by Parliament.

Hyderabad, April 15

Telangana Chief Minister Revanthy Reddy is scheduled to depart for Delhi on Wednesday evening. He is actively seeking support for a "hybrid model" concerning the delimitation exercise, aiming to strengthen the southern states' position at the national level. Revanthy Reddy has been coordinating with other Chief Ministers in the south to oppose the "pro-rata" formula, having already written letters to all of them on the issue.

His visit to Delhi has garnered significant attention, as he continues to press the Central Government to adopt the hybrid model. Notably, Revanthy Reddy has also sent a letter to Prime Minister Modi advocating this stance. During his visit, he is expected to meet with key officials and political leaders



to push his agenda.

In related news, Ven Narender Reddy is scheduled to take his oath as a Member of the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, with Revanthy Reddy anticipated to attend the ceremony.

Meanwhile, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC)

Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud is set to meet with Revanthy Reddy at 11:00 AM on Wednesday at the Chief Minister's residence in Jubilee Hills. Attending the meeting will also be AICC In-charge for Telangana, Meenakshi Natarajan. The discussions are expected to cover the current party

situation, including issues related to nominated posts, discontent among MLAs, and recent allegations against certain ministers. There is also speculation that the party's strategy regarding delimitation activities will be a key topic during the meeting.

Kavitha warns of Telangana agitation-like stir over 'unfair' delimitation

Hyderabad: Telangana Jagruthi president K. Kavitha on Wednesday warned of a movement on the scale of the Telangana agitation if the BJP-led Centre attempts to weaken the state's democratic representation under the guise of delimitation.

The former MP said that the South, which led the nation in economic growth and family planning for decades, should be rewarded and not punished.

"The voice of the people of Telangana cannot be diluted under the guise of delimitation. Our position is non-negotiable: the proportional representation of Telangana and by extension, South Indian states must be protected," Kavitha posted on 'X'.

"For decades, the South has led the nation in economic growth and family planning; we should be rewarded for this progress, not punished with political disenfranchisement," she said.

"Currently, Telangana holds a 3.13 per cent share in Parliament. While we already find this representation to be at the bare minimum, our way forward is centred on one core demand: this 3.13 per cent must be the



floor, not the ceiling," she said.

"If the BJP-led Centre attempts to weaken our democratic stake, let it be known: they are inviting a movement of the same scale and intensity as the Telangana Agitation. We will take this fight from the halls of Parliament to every street in our state. We will fight this demographic injustice tooth and nail, and we will not retreat until the political sovereignty of Telangana is fully secured," Kavitha added.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Tribunals must expedite adjudication in Bengal

THE clock is ticking for lakhs of people whose appeals against the deletion of their names from West Bengal's electoral rolls are pending in appellate tribunals. The Supreme Court has refused to issue directions allowing aggrieved residents to vote, saying that their petition is premature and they must exhaust their remedies before the appellate authorities. The tribunals have their work cut out as two-phase polling will be held in the state on April 23 and 29. From the outset, the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state has been marked by a bitter confrontation between the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Election Commission of India (ECI). The entire exercise has been under judicial scrutiny over the past few months amid allegations of "politically motivated" deletions of voters' names. The onus is on the tribunals to expedite the adjudication process. Even though many claims have already been dealt with, the scale of omissions and the anxiety among affected voters cannot be dismissed lightly. The right to vote, as the apex court noted, is not merely constitutional but deeply "sentimental" — a marker of belonging and citizenship. When individuals fear disenfranchisement or, worse, detention, the issue transcends procedural technicalities. Transparency in deletions and swift disposal of appeals are essential to ensure that no eligible voter is left out. Making matters worse, the Centre-State conflict has not remained confined to the SIR row. The arrest of Vinesh Chandel, co-founder of the Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC) — a consultancy firm working for the TMC — by the Enforcement Directorate in a money-laundering case has emerged as a new flashpoint. With political tensions mounting by the day.

Improving Rural Living Standards is the Government's Goal: Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka



"Khammam, Kalluru April 15 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):"Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka stated that the government is committed to improving the standard of living of people through comprehensive rural development."On Wednesday, the Deputy CM, along with State Minister for Revenue, Information and Housing Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, NPDC CMD Varun Reddy, District Collector Anudeep Durishetty, CP Sunil Dutt, and Sathupalli MLA Matta Ragamayi Dayanand, toured Kalluru mandal in Sathupalli constituency. "During the visit, they laid the foundation stone for a 33/11 kV power substation at Narayanapuram village, to be constructed at a cost of ₹2.75 crore. They also inaugurated a 50-bed Community Health Center built at a cost of ₹10.50 crore under the Vaidya Vidhana Parishad. "Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy CM said the state government is dedicated to the holistic development of rural areas. He emphasized that providing quality electricity, healthcare, and infrastructure to every village is a top priority. He added that development programs are being accelerated in line with public needs. "He noted that the newly inaugurated Community Health Center in Kalluru will provide better medical services to people from Kalluru, Thallada, Penuballi mandals, and nearby villages. He reiterated that the government is working with commitment to make healthcare accessible to every citizen in the state. "The Deputy CM also stated that the new 33/11 kV substation will improve uninterrupted power supply to surrounding villages. He highlighted that having quality healthcare facilities closer to rural populations will play a crucial role in improving their well-being. "Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said the government is committed to public welfare and is giving priority to the development of power and health sectors. "Several officials, public representatives, medical staff, and electricity department personnel participated in the program.

Vikramarka stated that the government is committed to improving the standard of living of people through comprehensive rural development. "On Wednesday, the Deputy CM, along with State Minister for Revenue, Information and Housing Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, NPDC CMD Varun Reddy, District Collector Anudeep Durishetty, CP Sunil Dutt, and Sathupalli MLA Matta Ragamayi Dayanand, toured Kalluru mandal in Sathupalli constituency. "During the visit, they laid the foundation stone for a 33/11 kV power substation at Narayanapuram village, to be constructed at a cost of ₹2.75 crore. They also inaugurated a 50-bed Community Health Center built at a cost of ₹10.50 crore under the Vaidya Vidhana Parishad. "Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy CM said the state government is dedicated to the holistic development of rural areas. He emphasized that providing quality electricity, healthcare, and infrastructure to every village is a top priority. He added that development programs are being accelerated in line with public needs. "He noted that the newly inaugurated Community Health Center in Kalluru will provide better medical services to people from Kalluru, Thallada, Penuballi mandals, and nearby villages. He reiterated that the government is working with commitment to make healthcare accessible to every citizen in the state. "The Deputy CM also stated that the new 33/11 kV substation will improve uninterrupted power supply to surrounding villages. He highlighted that having quality healthcare facilities closer to rural populations will play a crucial role in improving their well-being. "Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said the government is committed to public welfare and is giving priority to the development of power and health sectors. "Several officials, public representatives, medical staff, and electricity department personnel participated in the program.

Fire Services Week Poster Unveiled at Kusumanchi Minister's Camp Office



"Khammam Kusumanchi April 15 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):"As part of the Fire Services Week celebrations being observed from April 14 to April 20, fire department officials in Kusumanchi organized awareness activities focusing on fire accident prevention during the summer season. "On this occasion, a wall poster prepared by the fire department was unveiled at the camp office of Telangana State Revenue, Housing, and Information Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy. The poster was released by Camp Office In-charge Bheemireddy Srinivas Reddy. "The Fire Services Week aims to educate the public on safety measures and precautions to prevent fire accidents, especially during the high-risk summer period. Fire department officials, former Kusumanchi MPP Jukuri Gopala Rao, Congress Party Paleru constituency leader Bajjuri Venkat Reddy, former Sarpanch Chatla Parushuram, and others participated in the event.

Modern Space Laboratory Inaugurated at Little Flower School, Uppal "Inspired by ISRO, set up under NEP 2020



UPPAL , APRIL 15, (INDIAN CHRONICLE)."A state-of-the-art space laboratory was inaugurated at Little Flower School, Uppal, under the leadership of Principal Rev. Bro. Joseph. The inauguration ceremony was held in a grand manner with the presence of distinguished guests including retired ISRO scientist G. Srinivasa Rao, CCMB scientist Dr. Sachin Singh, and School Correspondent Rev. Bro. Arun Prakash. "Speaking on the occasion, the Principal stated that the laboratory has been established with the aim of fostering scientific temperament and enhancing students' interest in space science. He added that the initiative



is inspired by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and aligns with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. "The laboratory features advanced telescopes, rocket models, satellite replicas, and solar system exhibits, making it an engaging and educational space for students. Addressing the gathering, retired ISRO scientist G. Srinivasa Rao emphasized the growing importance of space science in today's world. He expressed confidence that the laboratory would serve as a strong platform for students to develop into future scientists and encouraged them to aim high and sharpen their intellect. "Teachers, students, and parents actively participated in the inaugural event.

CM Relief Fund Cheque Distributed by Uppal Youth Congress President Aakarapu Arun Patel



"UPPAL , APRIL 15, (INDIAN CHRONICLE)."With the support of Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, a cheque of ₹70,000 sanctioned under the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) was handed over to Rajender Babu, a resident of Venkat Reddy Nagar Division, on Wednesday. The cheque was distributed by Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President Aakarapu Arun Patel. "Speaking on the occasion, Arun Patel stated that the Chief Minister's Relief Fund has become a great support for the poor. He expressed gratitude to the leadership for ensuring that government assistance reaches beneficiaries in times of need. "He also noted that since the Congress government came to power, CMRF cheques have been consistently distributed to all eligible applicants over the past two and a half years. "Youth Congress leader Gummula Bhanu, Hanuman Temple Director Raghavendra, along with Prakash, Bhaskar, and others, were present at the event.

There is no shortage of LPG gas in the district – supply at home: District Collector P Pravinya



"Sangareddy, April 15, : There is no shortage of LPG cooking gas in the district and the District Collector P. Pravinya has instructed the concerned officials to provide gas supply to every household without any interruption. "On Wednesday, the District Level LPG Supply Monitoring Committee review meeting was held at the Collectorate Mini Con-

ference Hall along with District Collector P. Praveenya and Additional Collector (Revenue) Madhuri. Officials of the Civil Supplies Department, Police Departments and representatives of gas agencies participated in this meeting. "Speaking on the occasion, the Collector made it clear that ... actions to create artificial gas shortage in the district will not be tolerated. He instructed the officials to take steps to ensure that the cooking gas required by the people is delivered to their homes on time. The Collector, who learned details about the gas supply situation in welfare hostels and government hospitals, suggested that LPG supply should be continued to prevent gas shortage in government welfare hostels. Vigilance officials have been ordered to conduct frequent inspections to prevent irregularities in gas distribution and register cases against illegal stockpiles. He said that in addition to maintaining adequate stock as per demand, an additional 15 percent stock should be made sure to be set up. He also suggested that gas agencies should procure the required stock in advance and carefully check the genuine bookings of consumers. The Collector ordered the officials to take proactive measures to ensure that cooking gas is supplied to every household without any inconvenience to the people. "DM Civil Supplies Ambadas Rajeshwar, District Civil Supplies Officer (In-Charge) Rajeshwar, Transport Officer Aruna, Social Welfare Officer Akhilesh Reddy, BC Welfare Officer Jagadish, DLMO Anil Kumar, LPG Gas Agency Representatives P. Pratap Reddy, J. Muralidhar Reddy, Y. Vinod Kumar, Police Department officials, and Civil Supply staff participated in this program.

Allegations of police harassment... Woman attempts suicide...



"Warangal, April 15 (Indian Chronicle) : An incident has come to light in Warangal city where a woman from Deshapet allegedly attempted suicide, claiming sustained harassment by the police. According to the information available, her husband was reportedly taken into custody, and even after 12 days, the family was not informed about his whereabouts. "In a note left by the woman, she mentioned that the Mamunur ACP, Enumamula CI, and a Sub-Inspector were responsible for her distress. She alleged that false cases had been filed against her and her family members and claimed that certain market traders were behind these developments. "The incident has raised concern locally, with questions being asked about the handling of the case and the woman's allegations. Further details are awaited as authorities look into the matter.

Road Safety Pledge Held in Sircilla

Awareness drive under "Arrive Alive" programme.



"Rajanna Sircilla, April 15:"A road safety pledge was administered to motorists at Nethanna Chowrasta near the old bus stand in the district headquarters on Wednesday. The programme was organized jointly by the Transport and Police Departments as part of the "Arrive Alive" initiative under the Praja Palana – Pragathi Pranalika. Speaking on the occasion, District Transport Officer Laxman said that road accidents can be significantly reduced through self-discipline. He cautioned that even minor negligence on roads can lead to serious consequences and affect families. He emphasized that traffic rules are meant for the safety of all and urged motorists to strictly follow them. Wearing seat belts and helmets is mandatory, and driving under the influence of alcohol should be strictly avoided, he said. Use of mobile phones while driving is dangerous and must be avoided. Parents were advised not to allow minors to drive vehicles, warning that legal action would be taken against them in case of violations. He also highlighted the importance of the "Golden Hour," stating that timely medical assistance during this period can save lives. Officials appealed to the public to cooperate with authorities by following traffic rules and ensuring safe travel. RTA member Sangeetham Srinath, DSP Nagendra Chary, Inspector Srinivas, AMVI Pruthviraj Varma, traffic police personnel, and motorists participated in the programme.

Adepu Ramesh Appointed as Uppal Division BJP Yuva Morcha President

"UPPAL, APRIL 15, (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "Adepu Ramesh has been appointed as the President of the BJP Yuva Morcha for Uppal Division. Uppal BJP President Marineni Phanindra officially issued the appointment orders. "Speaking on the occasion, the newly appointed Yuva Morcha President Adepu Ramesh expressed his gratitude to the party leadership and senior leaders for placing their trust in him and giving him this responsibility. He assured that he would work towards strengthening the Yuva Morcha in the division and take forward all programs decided by the party leadership in a successful manner. "He stated that his appointment itself is an example of how the party recognizes those who work sincerely for it. Emphasizing that youth are the backbone of the nation, he thanked Phanindra for entrusting him with the position. "Ramesh also extended his special thanks to Telangana State Mahila Morcha President Shilpa Reddy, senior BJP leaders Dharma Reddy and Balavanth Chary, Division General Secretary Teega Vithal Rao Mudiraj, Treasurer Duvvala Ramesh, and all his colleagues who supported him in attaining this position.



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Annathula shyam mohan“Tpcc intelectual cell chairmen.“PRESS MEET.Gandhi bhavan



its unity amidst diversity. Any policy, however well-intentioned, must be framed and communicated in a manner that reinforces national cohesion rather than regional disparities. The discourse must remain anchored in mutual respect, shared aspirations, and the overarching goal of national progress. Turning to another matter of national importance, I wish to emphasize the immense potential of Hyderabad as a second capital of India. This is not a new idea, but as a fresh thought, it has gained renewed relevance in the present context. Hyderabad today stands as one of the most advanced urban centres in the country, with world-class infrastructure, robust connectivity, and a thriving ecosystem of innovation and enterprise. The visionary development of the upcoming 'Future City' further enhances its credentials as a city prepared to meet the demands of tomorrow. Hyderabad's geographical and climatic advantages also merit attention. Its relatively stable climate, absence of extreme weather conditions, and location in a seismically stable zone make it an ideal candidate for hosting critical national institutions. Furthermore, its cultural inclusivity and cosmopolitan character embody the very spirit of India. Establishing Hyderabad as a second capital would not only ease administrative burdens but also symbolize a more balanced and inclusive approach to national governance. This will also enable in giving importance to southern state (s). In continuation of this line of thought, I strongly advocate for the establishment of a bench of the Supreme Court in Hyderabad. The southern region of India, with its vast population and growing economic significance, requires greater judicial accessibility at the highest level. At present, plaintiffs from southern states are compelled to travel long distances to seek justice at the Apex Court, which often entails considerable expense and inconvenience. A Supreme Court bench in Hyderabad would significantly enhance access to justice, reduce pendency, and strengthen the federal judicial structure. The upcoming huge High Court Complex, for which recently foundation was laid, may be expanded to accommodate Supreme Court too. Finally, I wish to draw attention to the pressing issue of employment and skill development in Telangana. The state has emerged as a magnet for skilled professionals from across the country, owing to its rapid growth and abundant opportunities. While this influx reflects Telangana's success story, it has also created challenges for local youth, many of whom find themselves at a disadvantage in an increasingly competitive job market. In this context, I earnestly appeal to the Union Government to establish a comprehensive Skill Development Center in Telangana, by suitably taking assistance from TG State Government. Such a centre should be designed to equip local youth with industry-relevant skills, enhance their employability, and ensure that they are able to participate fully in the state's growth story. This is not a call for exclusion, but for empowerment, so that development is inclusive and benefits all sections of society. This will also benefit large number of families. In conclusion, I reiterate that these suggestions are made in a spirit of constructive engagement and larger national interest, as well as Telangana State's interest. As someone who has devoted a lifetime to public service, I remain committed to the ideals of equity, unity, and progress. I am confident that with thoughtful deliberation and collective will, we can address these issues in a manner that strengthens our democracy and secures a brighter future for all. Jai Hind. Jai Telangana

At this advanced stage of my life, having witnessed the evolution of our great nation through decades of trials, transformations, and triumphs, I feel both a responsibility and a deep sense of humility in placing before the people and the Union Government a few considered thoughts that are rooted in fairness, unity, and national progress. My views are aligned with the inclusive and forward-looking vision consistently articulated by our leader Shri Rahul Gandhi Ji and resonate with the progressive approach of the Telangana State leadership under the dynamic stewardship of Honourable Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy Garu. The question of delimitation has once again come to the forefront of national discourse. While the principle of equitable representation is fundamental to democracy, the methodology adopted must also reflect contemporary realities and not inadvertently penalize states that have demonstrated progress, discipline, and commitment to national development. Southern states, and particularly Telangana, have shown commendable performance in areas such as population stabilization, economic growth, and governance efficiency. It would therefore be unjust if delimitation based on outdated or static parameters disproportionately disadvantages such states. In this regard, the reliance on the 2011 Census as a sole or primary basis for delimitation appears increasingly irrational in today's dynamic socio-economic context. Over the past decade and more, significant demographic, economic, and developmental shifts have taken place. Telangana, as a young and vibrant state, has rapidly evolved, contributing substantially to the Nation's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and setting benchmarks in sectors such as information technology, infrastructure, and social welfare. It is only fair that states contributing more robustly to national growth are accorded not merely equal representation but, where justified, additional weightage in recognition of their contributions. I wholeheartedly support the innovative 'Hybrid Model' proposed by the Honourable Telangana Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy Garu, which seeks to balance population-based representation with performance-based incentives. Such a model reflects both the spirit of cooperative federalism and the need to encourage responsible governance. It offers a pragmatic path forward that neither undermines the democratic principle of representation nor discourages states from pursuing progressive policies. At the same time, I urge all stakeholders to exercise utmost caution in handling this sensitive issue so that no perception of a North-South divide is allowed to deepen, which I am afraid in case the proposed formula of delimitation takes shape. India's strength lies in

Kalvakuntla Kavitha stages dharna in Vikarabad in support of farmers Sat on the road along with farmers Police arrested



"Indian Chronicle Vikarabad (April 15)"Telangana Jagruti president and former MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha extended full support to the farmers' dharna protesting the forcible acquisition of land from farmers in the Parigi constituency of Vikarabad district in the name of setting up industries, and joined the agitation. On Wednesday, she staged a protest along with farmers in front of the RDO office in the town. Speaking on the occasion, Kavitha lashed out, saying that the government is destroying farmers under the guise of industrialization. She strongly condemned the acquisition of fertile agricultural land in the Parigi constituency for industries. She said it is unjust to push farmers who

depend on ancestral lands for their livelihood onto the streets and demanded that the land acquisition notification be withdrawn immediately. She warned that if the land acquisition process is not stopped, the movement will be intensified across the state. She said that the acquisition of agricultural land for the proposed industries in the Parigi area should be halted and not a single acre of land should be taken without the consent of farmers. Later, when Kalvakuntla Kavitha staged a dharna on the road along with hundreds of farmers in front of the RDO office in the district headquarters, the police stopped them. This led to a tense situation in the area for a while. Subsequently, she was arrested and shifted to the Dharrur police station.

Make the Most of Free POLYCET, Gurukul Coaching: Collector Haritha



"Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, April 15: District Collector Haritha has urged students who have completed

Class 10 to make the best use of the free coaching camps being organized for entrance examinations such as POLYCET and Gurukul admissions. On Wednesday, she visited the coaching centre set up by the School Education Department at the Divisional Educational Resource Centre in Kagaznagar town. She was accompanied by Sub-Collector Shradha Shukla and District Education Officer Lalitha. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector appreciated the initiative taken by the Education Department to provide coaching to Class 10 pass students for securing admissions into Polytechnic colleges and Government Gurukul institutions. She emphasized that such opportunities should be utilized effectively by students to achieve their academic goals. Later, the Collector, along with the District Education Officer, visited the Zilla Parishad Boys High School in the town. During the visit, they reviewed the feasibility of establishing a Model School at the premises. Officials were instructed to submit detailed reports at the earliest.

State seeds must reach every farmer, says TS Seed Corporation Chairman

Review in Karimnagar focuses on quality, supply chain strengthening, and new seed law.

Karimnagar, April 15 (Correspondent): Chairman of the Telangana State Seed Development Corporation (TSSDC) Anvesh Reddy on Wednesday directed dealers and agencies to ensure that only government-certified seeds are supplied to farmers, stressing that "seed quality is the benchmark for agricultural success." Addressing a review meeting at the Collectorate auditorium here, Mr. Reddy said the State's priority was to prevent any shortage of seeds during the ensuing kharif (monsoon) season. The meeting was attended by seed dealers, cooperative society representatives, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), and officials of Agro Rythu Seva Kendras (ARSKs). Highlighting systemic reforms, he said the corporation was strengthening last-mile delivery by streamlining procurement, testing, and distribution. "Seeds produced by farmers are procured, tested in advanced laboratories, and supplied back only after quality certification, ensuring parity with private sector standards," he said.

Referring to logistical constraints faced in Karimnagar over the past three years due to the relocation of TSSDC warehouses, Mr. Reddy said the government had sanctioned eight acres at Rangapat for a modern seed processing centre. The new facility would become operational from the current season and cater to farmers across the erstwhile district, he added. According to official estimates, paddy cultivation in the district is expected to cover about 2.8 lakh acres, with a seed requirement of nearly 60,000 quintals. The government aims to supply at least 25,000 quintals of certified seeds through official channels.

Mr. Reddy said adequate stocks of popular fine varieties such as BPT 5204, RNR 15048, KNM 1638 and JGL 27356, as well as coarse varieties like KNM 118 and MTU 1010, were available. Green manure seeds would also be supplied to improve soil health, he added. Expressing dissatisfaction over the limited sale of subsidised seeds by some agencies, he directed that all licensed dealers must



stock and promote TSSDC seeds. "Government seeds should be visible and accessible in every outlet," he said. On the proposed new seed legislation, Mr. Reddy said it would protect farmers from spurious seeds while safeguarding the interests of genuine dealers. He called for coordinated efforts among stakeholders to ensure a successful agricultural season. He also encouraged women's self-help groups to participate in the seed business, noting that their involvement would contribute to the State's broader goal of enhancing farmers' incomes. District Collector Chitra Mishra, Agriculture Officer Bhagyalakshmi, Rural Development Officer Sridhar, and other officials, along with representatives of cooperatives, FPOs, and women's groups, were present.

Good governance for the state is possible only under KCR's leadership

"— Former Narsampet MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy (Narsampet/Warangal, April 15 (Indian Chronicle) : Former Narsampet MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy said that a rebellion has begun within the Congress party and that the downfall of the Congress will start with the "Janagarjana" public meeting in Jagtial. On Wednesday, he attended as the chief guest a meeting organized in Kandimalla and Boyinapalli mandals of Choppadandi constituency under the leadership of former Choppadandi MLA Sunke Ravi Shankar. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the Jagtial meeting would be a historic turning point in state politics and predicted that KCR's meeting would change the political landscape of Telangana. He stated that the people have only one desire: "Revanth must go – KCR must come." He added that the state would once again receive good governance only under KCR's leadership. He alleged that there is strong public opposition to Revanth Reddy's governance and that the entire Telangana is waiting for KCR. Criticizing the Congress government in Telangana, he said that Revanth Reddy has set aside welfare schemes and is instead engaged in "scams" and a hunt for money. He also accused the government of initiating a massive financial loot worth thousands of crores in the name of the Musi River rejuvenation. He called upon the people of Choppadandi constituency to come in large numbers and make successful the public meeting to be addressed on the 20th of this month in Jagtial by the BRS chief and former Chief Minister



KCR. He advised party workers and leaders to work in coordination and make plans to mobilize large numbers of people from every booth to attend the meeting. "Peddi Sudarshan Reddy said that the Jagtial meeting would be the first step towards ending what he termed as the "misrule" of the Congress and expressed that people wish to see KCR as Chief Minister again. He stated that if Telangana is to shine like "Rama Rajyam" again, KCR must become Chief Minister once more, and urged party workers to work like soldiers towards that goal.

promise to regularise these workers. He also noted that K. T. Rama Rao and T. Harish Rao extended support to the protests and even participated in dharnas. "Vinay Bhaskar

“Electric shock to the Congress Government” (BRS) Former MLA Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar

"Hanamkonda on April 15, (Indian Chronicle) : speaking at protest sites near the TGNPDCL office at Nakkalagutta and the TG Transco office on Mulugu Road, former Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar expressed solidarity with electricity artisans and unskilled workers agitating for their rights under the banner of the Telangana Electricity Artisans Employees Joint Action Committee. He said the K. Chandrashekar Rao-led BRS had always stood by power workers and assured that the party's ranks would support nearly 26,000 electricity employees and their families. Alleging that there have been retirements but no fresh recruitments in the power department, he said that while employees bring "light" to Telangana's people, "darkness" is creeping into their own lives. "Calling himself someone who understands artisans' hardships and the son of a power employee, Vinay Bhaskar promised continued support. He credited electricity workers for Telangana's leading position in power generation and per-capita consumption. He recalled that during a large electricity workers' meeting in Hyderabad, K. Chandrashekar Rao had promised regularisation and later increased salaries, and made efforts to recognise artisans. He alleged that the present Congress government had failed to keep its



demande: "Regularisation of artisans and timely promotions" "Leave benefits as per labour laws" "Recognition of unskilled workers as artisans" "Wage hikes for piece workers, watchmen, and spot billers" "Provision of EPF and ESI facilities" "Corporators and local leaders, including Soda Kiran, Bongu Ashok Yadav, former corporator Jorika Ramesh, and others, were present at the programme.

Zaheerabad Student Anam Hurein Scores 935 Marks in Intermediate Second Year

"Zaheerabad April 15 (Indian Chronicle): "Anam Hurein, a meritorious student from Zaheerabad, has achieved outstanding success in the Intermediate Second Year examinations by securing 935 marks out of 1000. Her remarkable performance has brought pride to her family and her educational institution. "Daughter of Mohammad Afser, Anam Hurein is a student of Shaheen Junior College, Zaheerabad. Known for her intelligence, dedication, and consistent hard work, she has once again proved her academic excellence with this impressive result. "Family members, teachers, and friends expressed their ??? and congratulated her on this achievement. According to the college faculty, Anam has always been a sincere and hardworking student with a clear focus on her goals. "On this occasion, her father Mohammad Afser expressed his happiness and pride, stating that his daughter has brought honor to the entire family. He credited her success to her hard work and the valuable guidance of her teachers. "The management of Shaheen Junior College also congratulated Anam Hurein and wished her a bright and successful future.

TELANGANA BOARD OF INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION, HYDERABAD											
Memorandum of Marks											
ROLL NUMBER	REGISTRATION NO.	NAME	MARKS	PERCENTAGE	GRADE	STATUS	MARKS	PERCENTAGE	GRADE	STATUS	MARKS
12345678	98765432	ANAM HUREIN	935	93.5	A	Pass	935	93.5	A	Pass	935



‘PMC action an injustice’: RMC plants to stop ops until concrete rules formed



GNS News Agency, April 15

Pune Municipal Corporation has come down hard against ready mix concrete (RMC) plants — considered to be a major contributor to air pollution in city — as it demolished seven illegal RMC plants in Lohegaon as opposition against polluting and unsafe RMC operations. The Pune RMC Association has termed the action as injustice to them. On Wednesday morning, PMC demolished the plants, which allegedly belong to the family of a corporator.

Terming the growing opposition and Pune civic body action against RMC plants in the city as illegal, the Pune RMC Association has decided to temporarily stop operations from Wednesday midnight to highlight the injustice being done to their business along with conducting self-assessment to bring in changes for sustainable operations in the sector. Rajya Sabha MP Medha Kulkarni had recently flagged RMC plants causing pollution and road safety issues. The demand to ban RMC operations in the city limits have gained momentum, with elected representatives in the Pune civic body urging the civic administration to take action against plants. The administration has admitted that concrete dust is a major contributor to the deteriorating air quality, which is why it banned construction work from 10 pm to 7 am and made it mandatory for all construction sites to install air quality sensors for round the clock monitoring and initiate measures to mitigate air pollution.

“Air pollution due to RMCs has become a serious issue in the city. These should be shifted out of the city limits,” said BJP corporator Haridas Charvad, who submitted a proposal in the civic standing committee on the

issue. There are around 125 authorised RMC plants operating in the city, with some illegal ones as well. RMC plants are launched and operated once they receive an approval from the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) based on its guidelines. No other agency has anything to do with their permission or operations. The RMC sector has grown in Pune as per market demand. Sixty to 70 per cent of its products are supplied to real estate projects and government infrastructure projects like roads, bridges, flyovers, Metro development, riverfront development, sewage treatment plants, water treatment plants and government buildings.

“There are no specific rules and regulations of the civic body for RMC but even then it is taking action against them. We comply by all MPCB laid rules, but there should be comprehensive MPCB, civic body and state government rules for RMCs that are in the interest of the public as well as the industry,” said Sachin Kate, spokesperson of the RMC Association. He added that the association had been following up on framing rules for RMCs for the last nine months with the state government and district administration, but unfortunately there had been no response to it so far. Kate said the move to temporarily halt work was to streamline RMC operations, given its importance in the city’s development and until rules are framed by the government and the Association. He said traffic police have put restrictions on timings for RMC vehicles to ply on city roads following accidents in parts of city. He added that PMC has restricted construction work from 10 pm to 7 am and that RMC vehicles can only run for five hours in a day in the given restrictions which is not beneficial for the project developer as well as RMC operators. “It is not scientifically and practically possible to complete a slab construction within five hours,” said Kate. The temporary halt in RMC operations in the city is not to protest but to bring in proper rules for its operations, he said adding that it was high time a policy decision had to be taken on the demand for proper rules and regulations for RMC. During the halt, all RMC owners will conduct internal audits of plants regarding MPCB rule compliance, safety checks of transit mixers, implementation of air pollution control systems, among others Kate said.

Awareness Programme on Soil Health Management Conducted in Jharasangam Mandal

“Experts highlight importance of soil testing and balanced fertilizer usage to farmers...” Zaheerabad April 15 (Indian Chronicle): “An awareness programme on soil health, conservation, and balanced fertilizer management was conducted in Bopanpally, Kakkerawada, and Jharasangam villages of Jharasangam Mandal under the aegis of DDS-KVK. The programme aimed to educate farmers on scientific soil management practices and sustainable agriculture. “Speaking on the occasion, DDS-KVK soil testing expert E. Swamy explained the importance of soil testing. He guided farmers on how and when to collect soil samples from their fields. He stated that soil testing helps in understanding the nutrient status of the soil, including parameters such as pH levels, soluble salts, and organic carbon content. Based on these results, appropriate soil management practices can be adopted to achieve better crop yields. He also demonstrated the method of collecting

soil samples directly from the fields along with farmers. “Later, V. Ramesh, Scientist (Crop Management), advised farmers to ?????????? conduct soil testing and use fertilizers based on the test results. He noted that this practice would help reduce the cost of chemical fertilizers. He also suggested that instead of cultivating the same crop every year, farmers should adopt crop rotation at least once every two years. “He further emphasized the importance of intercropping (growing two or more crops in the same field) to ensure balanced nutrient utilization and improved yields. Highlighting organic farming practices, he encouraged farmers to prepare and use organic fertilizers such as vermicompost and Ghanajeevamrutham to improve soil health and productivity. “During the programme, the results of previously collected soil samples were distributed to farmers and explained in detail. “Village Sarpanches, DDS Supervisor Sampath, Narsimulu, women farmers, and several other farmers participated in the programme.”

KTR Leads BRS Induction Drive in Peerzadiguda, Targets Centre and State

--Several Congress and other party leaders join BRS; KTR warns of agitation over delimitation, slams unfulfilled promises and development delays



“Medchal- Malkajigiri, Staff Reporter, April 14 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Peerzadiguda: A party induction program was organized in Peerzadiguda under the leadership of former Mayor Jakka Venkat Reddy. BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) attended as the chief guest. Former minister Chamakura Malla Reddy, MLC Shambhipur Raju, and senior leaders Ragidi Laxma Reddy and Kyama Mallesh were also present. Several leaders from the Congress party and other political parties joined the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) during the event. Those who joined include former corporator Kaude Pochayya, educationist Akula Madhukar, Vellanki Shashidhar Reddy, Donthiri Madhusudan Reddy, Kasireddy Narayana Reddy, Onteru Madhava Reddy, Somireddy, and others. They were welcomed into the party by draping BRS scarves. Addressing the gathering, KTR alleged that the central government is attempting to do injustice to southern states in the name of delimitation. He said BRS would strongly oppose such moves and warned that the party would launch an agitation under the leadership of K. Chandrashekar Rao if necessary. KTR stated that BRS had provided 50 percent reservation for women in local bodies and criticized the Congress party for failing to implement its election promises. He said the assurances given before elections are yet to be fulfilled. He also alleged that land encroachments have increased in Hyderabad and that public safety has declined. He criticized the state government for not focusing on public issues. Referring to infrastructure, KTR said the Uppal flyover works have been delayed for years due to a lack of coordination between the central and state governments. Expressing confidence, KTR said BRS would secure victory again in Medchal-Malkajigiri district in the upcoming municipal elections and appealed to people to support the party for continued development. The program was attended by BRS General Secretary Yadavalli Raghuvardhan Reddy, former corporators Kolturi Mahesh, Donthiri Harishankar

Reddy, Madhusudan Reddy, Letakula Madhavi, Raghupathi Reddy, women’s president Nirmala, youth president Prabhhu, working president Enugu Manoranjan Reddy, minority leaders Jilani Pasha and Javeed Khan, former mayors Samala Buchchi Reddy and Mekala Kavya, former Pocharam chairman Kondal Reddy, former vice chairman Reddy Nayak, Boduppall president Manda Sanjeeva Reddy, and several party leaders and workers from Peerzadiguda, Boduppall, Pocharam, and Ghatkesar.

Villagers stage protest at Dammamet police station, alleging assault by SI

Kothagudem: Tension prevailed at the Dammamet police station in the district on Wednesday as a group of villagers staged a protest, alleging that SI Sai Kishore Reddy had indiscriminately assaulted two farmers who were on their way to work in the fields. They further claimed that the SI was attempting to falsely implicate the farmers in a gambling case with which they had no connection. The protesters entered into heated arguments with the police during the protest. The farmers, Lanka Hanumantha Rao and Chinna Malliah, residents of Duradapadu village, stated that they were returning home after finishing their farm work when they were intercepted by the SI. The SI, who was reportedly on his way to conduct raids on gambling dens, accused them of engaging in gambling and beat them severely with sticks. The villagers alleged that the SI showed a discriminatory attitude towards the Dalit farmers Hanumantha Rao and Malliah.

MLA Manik Rao Meets District Collector Over Key Issues in Zaheerabad Constituency



“Seeks urgent action on drinking water shortage, road repairs, farmers’ concerns, and welfare schemes...” Zaheerabad April 15 (Indian Chronicle): “Raising several pressing public issues faced by the people of Zaheerabad constituency in Sangareddy district, MLA Kaninti Manik Rao met District Collector Praveenya on Wednesday and submitted a representation seeking immediate intervention. “During the meeting, the MLA highlighted that the drinking water situation has worsened in many parts of the constituency due to the irregular supply under Mission Bhagiratha. He urged the authorities to sanction borewells on a priority basis to ensure adequate drinking

water for the people. “He also brought to the Collector’s notice the poor condition of roads in several villages and requested that pending development works be expedited. Stressing the plight of farmers, Manik Rao appealed for timely resolution of agricultural issues and called for immediate procurement of the leftover Bengal gram (chana) stocks to support farmers. “The MLA further requested allocation of funds for the shifting of electric poles to facilitate the ongoing road widening works in Jharasangam mandal headquarters. He emphasized that Indramma housing should be sanctioned to all eligible poor beneficiaries in a transparent manner. “Additionally, he urged the administration to distribute sewing machines without delay to eligible minority beneficiaries under welfare schemes. He also pressed for the clearance of pending bills of former sarpanches, which have been awaiting payment for a long time. “Responding positively, District Collector Praveenya assured that the issues raised would be reviewed with the concerned departments and necessary steps would be taken to resolve them at the earliest. She reiterated the administration’s commitment to addressing public grievances effectively. “Zaheerabad Mandal Party President Tattu Narayana, Jharasangam Mandal Party President Venkatesham, Mogudampally Mandal Party President Sanjeev Reddy, and other party leaders were present during the meeting.”

‘Nari Shakti Bandhan’ Bill in Parliament: 33% Reservation for Women

PM Narendra Modi to introduce the Bill on April 16, says BJP leader Naubad Jagannath...” Zaheerabad April 15 (Indian Chronicle): “BJP District General Secretary Naubad Jagannath stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will introduce the ‘Nari Shakti Bandhan’ Bill in Parliament on April 16, aiming to provide 33% reservation for women in legislative bodies. He said women across the country have been waiting for this landmark legislation for several years. “Speaking at the Zaheerabad Assembly party office on Tuesday, Jagannath said that once implemented, the Bill would ensure 33% reservation for women in Parliament and State Assemblies. He informed that special sessions of Parliament will be held on April 16, 17, and 18 to discuss the Bill. “He alleged that several political parties, including the Congress, had opposed the Women’s Reservation Bill in the past. Despite multiple attempts by previous leaders, the Bill could not be passed earlier, he said, expressing confidence that under Prime Minister Modi’s leadership, it will now become a reality. “Jagannath emphasized that the Centre is not only focused on passing the legislation but is also working on its effective implementation. He appealed for support to the Bill beyond party lines and hoped that the 33% reservation would be implemented by the 2029 elections. “He described the Bill as not just a law, but a reflection of the aspirations of millions of women in the country. Its passage would mark the beginning of a new era of women’s empowerment, he added. “Currently, only two women represent Telangana in Parliament, he noted, adding that the number is expected to increase significantly after the Bill’s implementation. He further stated that if delimitation is completed, up to nine women from Telangana could enter Parliament. “He also mentioned that the total number of Assembly constituencies in Telangana could in-



crease to around 180, out of which nearly 60 seats may be represented by women. He said the Bill would also create better opportunities for SC and ST communities. “Clarifying further, Jagannath said the reservation would not be temporary and is expected to continue for three consecutive terms.

Road Safety Must Be Recognized as a Social Responsibility: Additional DGP Sanjay Kumar Jain

“Khammam April 15 (Indian Chronical): “Additional DGP Sanjay Kumar Jain emphasized that road safety should be recognized as a social responsibility. As part of the Prajapalana-Pragati 99-day action plan, an ‘Arrive Alive’ awareness program on road safety was organized for students at SR Junior College in the city. “Speaking on the occasion, the Additional DGP stated that road safety is everyone’s responsibility and helps prevent accidents and save lives. He highlighted that safe travel can be ensured by following rules such as wearing helmets on two-wheelers, using seat belts in cars, obeying traffic signals, avoiding drunk driving, not using mobile phones while driving, and controlling over-speeding. “He pointed out that more people die in road accidents than in wars or crimes. Every year, around 1.8 lakh people lose their lives in road accidents. On average, one accident occurs every minute, and one person dies every three minutes. Most victims fall in the age group of 18-45 years. He said that speeding, negligence, and failure to follow traffic rules are the main causes of these deaths. “He further noted that in foreign countries, strict laws and heavy fines ensure adherence to traffic rules. However, many people neglect these rules in India, leading to a high number of accidents every year. “He advised that teachers and parents should act as role models by following road safety rules and instilling good habits in children. By practicing safety measures like wearing helmets and seat belts regularly, they can create awareness among children. Teachers in schools and parents at home should promote these habits to prevent accidents. Students were encouraged to share the knowledge gained in the program with their families and relatives. “Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt also spoke at the event, stating that even small acts of negligence can lead to accidents, pushing families into distress. Losing a family member in a road accident creates an irreplaceable void, causing emotional trauma, mental stress, and financial difficulties. He urged family members to remind their loved ones to wear helmets and seat belts and avoid using mobile phones while



driving. “Students pledged to strictly follow road safety rules, wear helmets and seat belts, and never drive under the influence of alcohol. “Additional DCP (Law & Order) Prasad Rao, RTO Rajasekhar, ACPs Ramanamurthy, Mahesh, Srinivasulu, Server, and several CI officers including Bhanu Prakash, Karunakar, Balakrishna, Mohan Babu, Rajireddy, Satyanarayana, and Appalanaidu participated in the program.

Puligundala Ecotourism Project in Khammam is open for nature lovers

Khammam: Puligundala Ecotourism Project in the Kanakagiri reserve forest area in Sathupalli constituency of Khammam district is now open for nature lovers. Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, along with Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy and Sathupalli MLA Matta Ragamayee Dayanand, inaugurated the project on Wednesday. Cottages, boating facilities and a jungle safari developed as part of the project were also launched. Puligundala Ecotourism Project in the Kanakagiri reserve forest of Tallada Range is spread over Khammam and Kothagudem districts, encompassing Kalloor and Penuballi mandals. It has been developed with the objective of promoting responsible tourism and fostering environmental awareness, as

well as generating employment opportunities for the local population. Speaking on the occasion, Vikramarka said the State government was giving top priority to the tourism sector to showcase Telangana’s natural beauty to the world. Funds were allocated in the budget to develop the Kanakagiri area in Khammam district as a tourist destination. A double road from Kanakagiri to improve tourist connectivity is being planned and the district Collector has been instructed to prepare proposals immediately. The Puligundala project, Kanakagiri hills and Kalloor hills would be integrated and developed into a major tourist hub, he said. MLA Ragamayee Dayanand informed that Rs 4 crore was required for tourism development at Puligundala tank.

Why Dr Reddy's generic weight-loss drug under Olymviq brand won't hit markets till Friday



GNS News Agency, April 15

Several cheaper generics of semaglutide, the blockbuster weight-loss drug, launched in India this week, though Dr Reddy's Laboratories' (DRL) generic version, under the Olymviq brand, will not hit the market until Friday. The oral assurance given by the Indian generic drugmaker came in a suit by Danish pharma giant Novo Nordisk filed before the HC. Alleging trademark infringement of its blockbuster semaglutide drug 'Ozempic', Novo Nordisk flagged that DRL has released its generic version of the injectable semaglutide under the branding of 'Olymviq'. By maintaining a status quo, DRL will effectively not be able to manufacture and release in the market, either directly or indirectly, until Friday, under the brand name of 'Olymviq'. However, DRL can sell the drug under the other two brand names — Obeda and Mashlo. A question of phonetics

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Novo Nordisk before Justice Jyoti Singh on Wednesday, sought an immediate interim injunction, objecting to the phonetically similar sounding brand name DRL has chosen for the product. According to DRL, it has launched the drug under three brand names though it had only mentioned the brand name 'Obeda' in its public announcement of the launch of the drug on March 21. Arguing that "there can't be a more blatant, over-clever way of doing it", the Danish firm accused DRL that there "cannot be a more dishonest" way

of branding the product. Citing that Novo Nordisk has enjoyed the trademark from 2014, including in India where it launched in December last year, Singhvi further argued, "Clearly, you're following my invention (of the word)... it is an invented word, not a common parlance... [The syllables of] 'O-im-ic'... I ask the question, why would anyone have this after my transborder reputation, after my launch in India? Common sense must prevail." Senior advocate Sandeep Sethi, appearing for DRL, however, contended that it is not an ordinary drug that is purchased over the counter that it will cause confusion. Further, he said, there cannot be any confusion as "even if the trademark is identical, which is not the case here, the house mark, particularly well-known housemark [of DRL] will make the distinction". This [Olymviq] might give an idea of the Olympics, not really Ozempic," Sethi added.

Justice Singh, however, orally indicated that in the court's opinion, there is a phonetic similarity. Addressing Sethi, Justice Singh orally opined, "Why have you chosen to come so close [to the Ozempic mark]? I'll be this with you. According to me, there's a phonetic similarity [with the Ozempic mark] and in pharma, it's a threshold I would not like to cross." Orally inquiring about DRL's stance, on whether it is amenable to changing its name or to maintain status quo, the court indicated that if not, it will pass an order staying the use of DRL's mark of Olymviq for the drug. With the court urging the two companies to "co-exist peacefully" in the market, DRL gave the court an oral assurance that it will maintain status quo until the next hearing on Friday and will not release more of the injectables under the branding of 'Olymviq' in the market or among distributors. The patent held over the GLP-1 class of drugs' semaglutide by Novo Nordisk in India expired on March 20. The very next day, DRL announced the launch of its generic version of the blockbuster drug for Diabetes Type-2 and obesity, branded as 'Obeda', in the Indian market. Not only DRL, a slew of Indian generic drugmakers are in the race to launch their versions of the semaglutide. Prior to that, since last year, the two pharma companies have been locked in litigation over patent infringement of the drug.

APERC keeps electricity tariffs unchanged for FY27



GNS News Agency, April 15

Amaravati: In a major relief to consumers across Andhra Pradesh, the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (APERC) has approved no increase in electricity tariffs for FY2026-27, reaffirming the state government's commitment to protecting households, farmers, and small businesses from rising power costs. The commission's order also includes the true-up/down and performance review of Discoms for FY2024-25, following an extensive public consultation process. Government Steps In to Shield Consumers While Discoms projected a revenue gap of Rs 17,508 crore, APERC approved a lower gap of Rs 15,790 crore, which will be fully supported by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. This intervention ensures no tariff hike across all consumer categories, no additional burden through true-up charges, and continued affordability and financial stability for consumers.

The order delivers wide-ranging benefits across sec-

tors: 1.13 crore domestic consumers protected from tariff increases, 22 lakh farmers to continue receiving free power supply, 22 lakh SC/ST and economically weaker households to receive free or subsidised electricity through DBT, commercial tariffs reduced from Rs 12.25/unit to Rs 9.95/unit, benefiting 2 lakh consumers, and cottage industry load limit doubled from 10 HP to 20 HP, aiding 18,000 small enterprises. Reforms to Support Industry & Growth To boost industrial activity and align with emerging sectors, APERC has introduced key structural changes, such as a new tariff subcategory for solar module manufacturing, promoting clean energy investments; reclassification of water purification plants and printing presses as industrial units; rationalisation of tariffs for utilities such as national highway street lighting; and special provisions for poultry and seasonal processing industries. The commission rejected several proposals that would have increased consumer burden, including changes in the Time-of-Day tariff structure, a shift to non-telescopic billing for certain consumers, and the removal of the green power category. Strengthening Power Sector Efficiency APERC has issued critical directions to DISCOMs to improve operational efficiency. These directions include accelerated clearance of subsidy dues and government department arrears, implementing strategies to minimise private arrears, enhancing electrical safety measures, including public reporting systems via websites and WhatsApp, and ensuring compliance with national standards and RDSS targets. This tariff order reflects Andhra Pradesh's approach of balancing fiscal responsibility with social protection, ensuring affordable electricity for households, continued support to agriculture, incentives for industry, promotion of clean energy, and strengthened financial health of DISCOMs.

KSCA not respecting legislators, giving general tickets for IPL matches at Chinnaswamy stadium,' say Karnataka MLAs



GNS News Agency, April 15

Ahead of the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) season, the Karnataka Assembly Thursday witnessed a brief debate on match tickets for MLAs at M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. Legislators, cutting across party lines, alleged that the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) was not giving them respect, as they were given general tickets. The issue was raised by Congress MLA Vijayanand Kashappanavar, as Karnataka Deputy CM and Bengaluru Development Minister D K Shivakumar was responding to discussions on issues affecting the city. The MLA said that five general seat tickets were given to legislators. "When we go to watch the match, we don't get respect. A separate lounge should be made for ministers and MLAs," he demanded. Leader of Opposition R Ashok joined the discussion, saying that the government had given land to KSCA at a monthly charge of Rs 1,600. "Yet, legislators are not respected," he said. Noting that KSCA had an excise license to sell liquor, he asked the government to review it so that KSCA would agree to the government's demands. "They should be taught a lesson," he added. Meanwhile, Speaker U T Khader advised Shivakumar to hold a meeting with KSCA. "Their reason for not giving VIP tickets to MLAs is that other people occupy the seats on MLAs' behalf. You should ask them to give a minimum of four tickets to members of MLAs' families at the VIP gallery," he said. A few legislators suggested that tickets were

sold in black with the knowledge of the government and stadium authorities. BJP MLA Abhay Patil demanded a probe into the matter. Responding to this, Shivakumar agreed to convene a meeting with KSCA to address the issue. "There is nothing wrong with what the MLAs are asking. They have every right as they should get benefits as legislators," he said. In his response about Bengaluru development, Shivakumar said that alternate arrangements are in the works to ease the flow of traffic at key entry points to the city. While an alternate road connecting Nelamangala to Bidadi via Tavarekere will be developed, the government was looking to extend the Bala Gangadhara Swamy flyover, which connects Town Hall with Sirsi Circle, till Kengeri in the southwestern part of the city. The reply was interrupted by a heated exchange between Shivakumar and BJP MLA Munirathna. The saffron MLA asked Shivakumar to respond even as his fellow BJP legislators asked him to sit down, prompting protests from Congress MLAs who entered the well of the Assembly and demanded action against the BJP legislator. Due to the poor choice of words used in the exchange, the Speaker expunged the remarks from the official proceedings of the House.

Protests intensify in Hyderabad over job vacancies

Hyderabad: From students, unemployed, activists, to teachers, hundreds of protesters continued to hit the city roads even as the Assembly session was underway on Thursday. After SFI and AIFS Telangana student activists protested and rocked the Assembly over various issues in the education sector on Wednesday, the Democratic Youth Federation of India Telangana called for 'Chalo Assembly'. Despite police carrying out preventive illegal arrests across all districts on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday, DYFI activists managed to reach the Assembly and tried to lay siege to it.

India book semifinal berth in SAFF U-20 championship



GNS News Agency, April 15

Hyderabad: Roundglass Punjab FC Academy athletes delivered a masterclass performance to power the India Under-20 men's national team to a commanding 3-0 victory over Pakistan in their SAFF Under-20 Championship in Maldives.

The high-octane clash at the National Football Stadium in Malé saw the Blue Colts secure their spot in the semifinals while simultaneously eliminating Pakistan from the tournament. The Indian squad got off to a fiery start, with academy talent heavily involved in the opening breakthrough and ultimately accounting for every goal scored in the match. In just the third minute, Gurnaj Singh displayed exceptional vision, floating a perfectly weighted through ball into the box. Vishal Yadav, the third youngest player to make his Indian Super League (ISL) debut for Punjab FC, controlled the aerial pass brilliantly under immense pressure and slotted it past

the Pakistan goalkeeper at the near post to give India an early 1-0 advantage.

While Pakistan created several equalising opportunities in the first half, the Indian defence and goalkeeper Suraj Ahebam stood tall, making crucial saves to maintain the clean sheet. The second half, however, belonged entirely to Omang Dodum, who stepped up to seal the victory with a spectacular brace and was deservedly named the Player of the Match, ensuring that all three of India's goals came from Punjab FC academy players. Dodum, notably the only returning member from India's previous SAFF title-winning squad, continued his strong attacking form from last year.

In the 64th minute, Dodum doubled India's lead after timing his run to perfection, heading home a brilliant first-time effort off a crossfield diagonal from substitute Rishi. Dodum then capped off a stellar individual and team performance in the dying minutes of the game. After teammate Prashan Jajo was brought down inside the box in the 84th minute, Dodum confidently converted the resulting penalty into the top corner in the 88th minute to make it 3-0. Apart from the two goalscorers, the Indian U-20 squad features four more players from the Punjab FC academy, underlining the club as having one of the best youth systems in the country. This six-member contingent, Vishal, Dodum, Karish Soram, Usham Singh Thougamba, Rishikanta Meitei Laishram and Aniket Yadav, formed the core of the Punjab FC squad that recently won the AIFF U-17 Youth League. With this commanding victory, the Indian side comfortably advanced to the knockout stages. The Blue Colts will next face Bangladesh on March 28 to conclude their group-stage campaign.

Flaws, lapses cost key revenue-generating departments crores in tax revenue in Karnataka: CAG

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has flagged several shortcomings in tax administration across key revenue-generating departments in Karnataka. The CAG report on State Revenues for the period ending March 2024 has noted the poor enforcement of compliance under Goods and Services Tax (GST), misclassification and undervaluation in the Stamps and Registration Department, and delays in implementing revised prices, causing a loss of duty to the state exchequer. In the Transport Department, inefficiencies "affected both revenue and public safety," it said.

As per CAG, a total of 1,451 Inspection Reports, containing 4,966 observations, involving a monetary value of Rs 3,464.94 crore, were pending for settlement with the Departments of Commercial Taxes, Stamps and Registration and State Excise at the end of June 2024. "Test-check of 34 cases under Detailed Audit, cases audited by the Department under Section 65, and five Local GST Offices audited under Commercial Taxes Department, 44 unit offices under Department of Stamps and Registration, and eight unit offices under State Excise Department conducted during the year 2023-24, showed under-assessment/short levy/loss of revenue aggregating to Rs 253.73 crore. Under the Transport Department, an audit of 30 offices found under-assessment of tax and other irregularities amounting to Rs 16.49 crore," it said. In the GST audit, CAG identified an additional revenue of Rs 112.16 crore in the 90 cases audited for the 2020-21 tax period. "...but recoveries amounted only to Rs 9.18 crore, reflecting a recovery rate less than 10 per cent," the report said. The non-adoption of Open Market Value for construction service in the Joint Development Agreement (JDA) led to undervaluation of Rs 118.06 crore and short levy of tax amounting to Rs 21.26 crore, the report further said.

Another flaw highlighted was the non-compliance of the government notification rates after the revision of tax rates for government authorities. "Nine contractors of Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society continued to pay tax at older rates, resulting in short payment of tax of Rs 6.38 crore," the report said. In the Stamps and Registration Department, CAG observed cases of misclassification, undervaluation, and suppression of facts across multiple instruments, leading to significant short collection of tax. "Misclassification of the Power of Attorney



and Agreements of Sale led to short levy of Stamp Duty and Registration Fee amounting to Rs 15.06 crore and Rs 18.84 crore, respectively," it said. Apart from this, improper execution or classification of release deeds resulted in a short levy of Rs 14.20 crore, while Mortgage Deeds were incorrectly classified, causing a short levy of Rs 6.69 crore. Undervaluation of the undivided share resulted in short collection of Rs 9 crore. Adoption of incorrect rates and non-consideration of enhanced value for properties in 99 Joint Development Agreements resulted in a short levy of Rs 32.82 crore. "Suppression of facts regarding land status, Power of Attorney, and Market Value led to a short levy of Rs 14.10 crore. Further, undervaluation of the properties due to non-adherence to special instructions and guidance value rates resulted in a short levy of Rs 4.05 crore," the report noted. Audit of the transport department showed that though fitness certificates of 3.87 lakh vehicles had expired between April 2019 and March 2024, they continued to ply on the road. This signified that "RTOS failed to ensure that only roadworthy vehicles remain in usage. Similarly, it was observed that about one third (4.7 lakh out of 14.01 lakh) vehicles requiring transport permits did not have valid permits," the report said. It also noted that enforcement activities between 2019 and 2024 covered about 22.2 lakh vehicles annually and collected Rs 363.46 crore in fines. But, the enforcement "was not data-driven or strategically targeted and lacked systematic follow-up, due to which vehicles with expired fitness certificates, unpaid taxes, or missing permits continued to operate with minimal checks," the CAG report added.

Bengaluru firm loses Rs 26 lakh in cyber fraud to conmen posing as BSF officials



GNS News Agency, April 15

The firm, UNICASE, which imports and supplies hard plastic cases across India — including for defence organisations — was targeted earlier this month, according to a complaint filed with the East Division cybercrime police. The company's owners, Mahesh Patil and Ravindra S Patil, said conmen lured them with a fake purchase order, creating the impression of an authentic defence procurement. According to the complaint, the firm received an enquiry on March 9 from a person identifying himself as Akshay Kumar of the BSF Yelahanka purchase department. On March 11, the accused allegedly issued a purchase order. Following this, UNICASE sent a proforma invoice seeking a 50 per cent advance payment. Soon after, another individual claiming to be Kuldeep Singh from the 'BSF accounts department' contacted the firm, assuring that the payment would be processed as per "Indian Army procedure". "Under this pretext, he instructed the complainant to carry out multiple bank transactions. They asked us to carry out small test transactions first, including one that was refunded at a higher amount to gain our confidence. Thereafter, they instructed us to transfer larger sums to multiple accounts", the FIR stated, and by the time the victims realised it was a scam, Rs 26 lakh had already been

siphoned off.

The firm reported the matter to the Cyber Crime Helpline (1930) and submitted all transaction details. The payments had been made from the firm's ICICI Bank current account. The East Division cybercrime police are tracing the accused, freezing the beneficiary accounts, and attempting to recover the defrauded sum. Further investigations are underway.

UK Court rejects Nirav Modi's plea to reopen extradition case

New Delhi: The London High Court relied on the "quality of assurances" given by the Government of India in its note verbale while rejecting fugitive diamondaire Nirav Modi's petition to reopen his case against extradition, officials said.

Modi, who is wanted in India in connection with a Rs 13,000-crore Punjab National Bank fraud, had approached the London court to reopen his case on the basis of the judgment in fugitive economic offender Sanjay Bhandari's case, where extradition was dropped on the possibility of torture by Indian agencies.

The London High Court had discharged Bhandari from the extradition order on human rights grounds. "Refusing" the permission to reopen Modi's case, the Bench Lord Justice Stuart Smith and Justice Jay in the High Court of Justice, King's Bench Division, said they relied on "the quality of assurances" given by the Indian government in its note verbale. "When Mr Modi's case came before us in the autumn of 2022, the material underpinning the decision in Bhandari was either not available or was not drawn to our attention.

Delhi woman arrested for extorting Rs 17 lakh from UP cop, forcing him to convert under guise of marriage



GNS News Agency, April 15

The Baghpat police in Uttar Pradesh Saturday arrested a 30-year-old Delhi-based woman for allegedly pressuring a police constable to convert to Islam and extorting money from him in exchange for giving a statement in his favour in a rape case she filed against him in 2021. The 35-year-old constable, whose wife died some time ago, is currently posted in Baghpat. The police said the constable alleged that the woman had asked him to convert to Islam, assuring him that she would testify in his favour in the rape case she had filed against him, marry him, and leave her husband.

However, despite his conversion, the woman neither married him nor withdrew from her existing marriage. Instead, she and her associates allegedly continued to extort money from him on the pretext of helping him in the case, with the total amount reaching Rs 17 lakh, the police said. Acting on the constable's complaint, the police registered a case against the woman and five others, including her husband and a cleric. "We have arrested the woman accused of harassing the police constable, and efforts are underway to trace the remaining accused in the case," said investigating officer of the case and circle officer, Baghpat,

Rohan Chaurasia. According to police, the complainant approached the station and lodged an FIR against the Delhi-based woman who allegedly forced him into marriage.

During questioning, the constable stated that he first came into contact with the woman through her husband while being posted in Ghaziabad. Over time, they began speaking regularly over the phone, following which he began visiting their residence regularly. The police said that in 2021, following a dispute, the woman lodged an FIR in Delhi accusing the constable of rape, after which he was arrested and sent to jail. After securing his release, the constable allegedly re-established contact with the woman, who assured him that she would give a statement in his favour and marry him after leaving her husband, provided he converted to Islam. The Delhi Police filed a chargesheet against the constable in the case. Attended religious gatherings, says constable

The constable further claimed that during this period, the woman, through her associates, extorted around Rs 17 lakh from him on the pretext of helping him in the case. He alleged that he converted to Islam and, under pressure from the woman, attended religious gatherings on multiple occasions, said the police. "Despite complying with her demands, the woman neither gave a statement in his favour nor married him, and also failed to return the money," a police officer said. "Aggrieved by this, the constable approached the police and lodged an FIR against the woman and others." The case has been filed on charges of criminal intimidation, Deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs and extortion. The police also invoked the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act against the accused. The officer added that the role of the woman's husband in the alleged offences is also being examined as part of the ongoing investigation.

Temperature to cross 40°C this week; Prayagraj, Jhansi at 37.6 already



GNS News Agency, April 15

In Lucknow, the maximum temperature was recorded at 35.3°C (1.9°C below normal) on Saturday, while the minimum stood at 18.4°C. (Representational image) In Lucknow, the maximum temperature was recorded at 35.3°C (1.9°C below normal) on Saturday, while the minimum stood at 18.4°C. (Representational image) A sustained dry spell across Uttar Pradesh in the coming week is set to drive a sharp rise in temperature, with the mercury likely to cross the 40°C mark in several parts of the state, including the capital Lucknow. Experts at the Meteorological Centre, Lucknow, warned of a 6-8 degree rise in maximum temperature, and a 4-6 degree Celsius rise in minimum temperature in the coming week.

The warming trend has already become evident. Over the past three days, maximum temperatures have risen by 6-8°C on average across the state. Despite this increase,

while readings in many places remain below normal, meteorologists say that the state is set to witness a temperature rise. In Lucknow, the maximum temperature was recorded at 35.3°C (1.9°C below normal) on Saturday, while the minimum stood at 18.4°C.

However, across districts, higher readings are already being reported, with Prayagraj and Jhansi being the hottest on Saturday at 37.6 degrees Celsius. While both Prayagraj and Jhansi reported 37.6°C each, followed by Varanasi (BHU) and Orai at 37.4°C. Other districts included Sultanpur, which recorded 37.2°C, while Ghazipur and Azamgarh touched 37.0°C. Banda (36.8°C), Ballia (36.5°C), and Barabanki (36.0°C) also reported elevated temperatures. However, parts of central and western UP recorded temperatures in the mid-30s, including Kanpur (35.6°C), Hardoi (35.6°C), Gorakhpur (35.5°C), and Basti (35.0°C). Relatively lower readings were seen in Bareilly (33.5°C), Moradabad (33.2°C), and Muzaffarnagar (32.0°C), though these too are on an upward trend, warned experts.

Officials maintained that as of now, strong westerly winds blowing at 30-40 kmph, gusting up to 50 kmph, have been providing some relief during the day. However, these winds are expected to weaken after April 12. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), no weather system is likely to affect the state over the next week. With clear skies and dry conditions persisting, maximum temperatures are expected to rise further by 4-6°C from Monday. The combined effect of weakening winds and sustained dry weather is likely to push temperatures beyond 40°C in many parts of the state in the coming days, marking the onset of more intense summer conditions.

Khalsa, a radical idea that redefined faith and power

GNS News Agency, April 15

Baisakhi, a harvest festival, is also a historical event in which Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, created the Khalsa, a psychological construct that galvanised the common people to rise against oppression. To test their courage, the Guru, with an unsheathed sword, called for volunteers to sacrifice themselves for the faith. The five brave hearts who stepped forward, offering themselves for obliteration, were initiated into the 'Khalsa', a name derived from the Arabic word 'Khalis', meaning pure.

These 'Panj Pyare' (five beloved ones) were not from Punjab alone. While Himmat Rai, a water-carrier, came from Jagannath Puri (Orissa), Mokham Chand, a tailor, belonged to Dwarka (Gujarat). Sahib Chand, a barber, hailed from Karnataka, and Dharam Das, a farmer, was a native of Hastinapur (Delhi). Only Daya Ram, a shopkeeper from Lahore, represented Punjab. They were given a common surname of 'Singh', meaning lion, and became the first members of this new order with a distinct identity, recognisable in a multitude. While Khalsa is synonymous with a warrior ever ready for a righteous war, he also represents a tradition that unites humanity by breaking down discrimination of any sort. If this regional representation with different dialects signified the spirit of the oneness of "Akhand Bharat", the common surname further shed caste distinctions. "Manas ki jaat sabhe eke pehchanbo", asserted the Guru, meaning that the entire human race is one. This resonated with the concept of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", a Sanskrit term referring to the world as one family.

In the context of the Mughal Empire, 'Khalsa' (pronounced Khalisah) also referred to 'crown land'. This land was directly owned by the emperor, without intermediaries such as jagirdars or mansabdars, with revenue going straight to the imperial treasury. Giving the title of Khalsa to commoners was a direct challenge to the ruling authority;



his followers were no longer answerable to any emperor, but directly to God. In medieval times, the common man could connect with God only through intermediaries such as a pandit, bhikkhu (monk) or qazi. The languages used by these clerics in religious practices were often beyond the comprehension of the masses. Consequently, these 'messengers of God' could exploit an innocent and confused populace, entangling them in incomprehensible rituals.

The creation of the Khalsa also sought to render such power-wielding clergy across faiths redundant. Sikhs were expected not to bow before any mortal; they would offer absolute obeisance only to their eternal Guru, the Guru Granth Sahib. Having completed his life's most defining work, Guru Gobind Singh proclaimed: "Khalsa mero roop hai khaas, Khalsey meh hau karau niwas", meaning the Khalsa is my true form, and within it I reside. It thus became his most powerful instrument in the fight for righteousness, equality and justice, eventually leading to the emancipation of the oppressed, who later rose to become rulers of their homeland. The Sikh invocation 'Raj Karega Khalsa' does not imply rule by a community, but alludes to the rule of the 'pure ones'—those guided by divine principles, free from ritualism, superstition and inequality.

Chester Hills row deepens as chief secy seeks answers, RERA defends approvals

GNS News Agency, April 15

The controversy surrounding the Chester Hills housing project in Himachal Pradesh Solan further intensified Saturday, with the state's Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) defending its role in granting approvals soon after Chief Secretary Sanjay Gupta sought a detailed explanation over alleged inaction in addressing violations. Gupta wrote to RERA chairperson RD Dhiman on April 9, seeking a factual report within 15 days asking of there was "wilful inaction" by officials despite receiving complaints about violation of Section 118 of the Himachal Pradesh Tenancy and Land Reforms Act, which regulates the transfer of land to non-agriculturists.

Gupta also raised concerns about the initial scrutiny process during project registration, asking whether due diligence was conducted regarding the promoter's land ownership status and financial capacity. He further questioned whether past officials, including then RERA chairperson Shrikant Baldi, may have "helped in violation of provisions" through inaction. Dhiman said he would present his position before the competent authority. "RERA is answerable to the courts," he said. Later, in a statement, the RERA said that all three projects — Chester Hills, Chester Hills-2, and Chester Hills-4 — were registered in accordance with Sections 4 and 5 of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) [RED] Act, 2016, only after due verification of statutory documents. "The registration... has been done strictly on submission of all the requisite statutory documents online," the authority's Administrative Officer-cum-Spokesperson, said and added that RERA examines key aspects such as clear land title, approvals from Town and Country Planning departments and municipal bodies, environmental clearances, and compliance with Section 118 wherever required before granting registration. The RERA emphasized that project registration is subject to approvals from relevant state government departments and does not override their jurisdiction. However, it acknowledged that complaints began emerging around five to six months ago from allottees and other stakeholders. These complaints alleged violations of Section 118 of the tenancy Act, deviations in construction, and lack of basic services.

Following this, the authority initiated quasi-judicial proceedings against the project promoters. "Many show cause notices were issued regarding imposition of penalty under various provisions of the Act," the spokesperson said, adding that notices were also sent to Solan's Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Municipal Corporation, and the Deputy Commissioner (DC). Penalty proceedings, the authority confirmed, are still pending. At the heart of the controversy lies a report by the SDM Solan, which found violations of Section 118. The responsibility to ensure compliance lies with the project proponents, while enforcement action falls within the domain of the district administration, the RERA said. "The DC should take appropriate action against the project promoters for the contravention of Section 118," the statement noted, adding that the state government has already directed the DC to act on the SDM's findings. A parallel issue involves allegations of unauthorized construction within the project. The Municipal Commissioner of Solan had initially ordered demolition of the deviations but later regularized them under directions from the state government. RERA has, however, directed the promoters to secure the consent of two-thirds of the allottees, failing which penalty proceedings under Section 14(2)(ii) read with Section 61 of the Act may be initiated.

The authority also clarified that proceedings under Section 7, related to revocation of project registration, have not yet been initiated, as the case has not reached that stage. Highlighting its enforcement actions, RERA said that it has already imposed a penalty of Rs 10 lakh on the project promoters and ordered refunds in certain cases. "In no case has RERA passed an order in favour of the promoters," the statement read. RERA further addressed allegations stemming from a site visit by its former chairperson, stating that such inspections are routine regulatory exercises. "Such inspections do not confer or recognize any legal status of promoter or ownership, nor do they amount to endorsement of the project," it said, dismissing claims based on video clips as "devoid of merit." The authority also rejected allegations of inaction against its leadership, noting that quasi-judicial decisions are taken collectively by the full bench and not by individual members or the chairperson. "Accordingly such allegations of inaction against the former or present chairperson are baseless and against the factual position in the case," it added.

Earlier, in the two page letter, Chief Secretary Gupta



wrote, asked if the previous RERA chairperson Shrikant Baldi "in conspiracy with non-agriculturists by his acts of wilful inaction" helped in violation of provisions of Section 118, RERA & Benami Act "as ... he is seen praising the project in presence of non-agriculturists". "Whether present RERA chairperson... by inaction on the complaint... further perpetuated illegalities? Why proper scrutiny under Section 5 of RERA Act was not made... and whether the promoter had required financial/economic capacity to execute this project." "In the interest of allottees/consumers of the said project, you are requested to examine the matter and furnish a comprehensive factual report... since hundreds of consumers have invested their life savings in the project and violation of any law found at his belated stage would put their life savings in jeopardy".

Baldi, who was Chief Secretary from 2019 to 2023, was the RERA chairman when clearance was accorded to Chester Hills-2 and Chester Hills-4 project. The incumbent RERA chief Dhiman was Chief Secretary from July 2022 to December, 2022. Dhiman was appointed the Chairman of RERA in July 2025. The Chief Secretary had earlier termed a probe report by SDM Solan as "violative of law," though subsequent developments saw the state government directing the Deputy Commissioner to continue the investigation. Section 118 of the Himachal Pradesh Tenancy and Land Reforms Act, 1972, remains central to the dispute. The provision restricts the transfer of agricultural land to non-agriculturists without government approval, aiming to protect local agrarian interests from speculative acquisition. With multiple agencies—including RERA, the district administration, and the state government—now involved, the Chester Hills case underscores the complex regulatory challenges in balancing real estate development with land protection laws, even as the fate of hundreds of homebuyers hangs in the balance.

Delhi Metro to upgrade 70 trains on Red & Blue Lines by November 2027

Delhi Metro Refurbishment Plan: The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has set a target to upgrade 70 trains operating on the Red and Blue Lines in a phased manner by November 2027. According to DMRC, these trains, inducted between 2002 and 2007, have completed around 19 to 24 years of service and are being refurbished with modern systems and features to meet the latest rolling stock standards.

DMRC launches mid-life refurbishment of trains The DMRC will refurbish the metro trains in three phases. In the first phase, 12 trains have already been upgraded. In the second phase, 18 trains have been refurbished, and work on another 9 trains will begin soon, followed by work on the remaining 9 trains. In the third phase, 22 Blue Line trains will be refurbished by November 2027.

In a statement, Anuj Dayal, Principal Executive Director, Corporate Communications at Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, said that DMRC has undertaken a comprehensive mid-life refurbishment (retrofit) initiative for its Blue Line trains to enhance passenger safety, comfort and overall travel experience.

"Under this initiative, the oldest Rolling Stock (RS-1) trains are being upgraded with modern technology and improved facilities to ensure they remain reliable and meet current standards," he said. Delhi Metro to modernise oldest Rolling Stock

11 Bangladeshi 'victims' of flesh trade escape high-security Pune shelter home after attacking staffer



GNS News Agency, April 15

The police immediately apprehended two shelter home inmates, while a search continues in Mumbai and Pune to nab the remaining 11 inmates. The police immediately apprehended two shelter home inmates, while a search continues in Mumbai and Pune to nab the remaining 11 inmates. Thirteen Bangladeshi women residing at a shelter home in Pune's Mohammadwadi escaped after attacking a woman staffer, gagging and tying her hands and legs.

The police immediately apprehended two of them, while a search continues at various locations in Mumbai and Pune

to nab the remaining 11 inmates, said Mansingh Patil, senior police inspector. The incident took place at the Shelter Home of Rescue Foundation around 7 pm on March 23; however, a case was registered on Friday at the Kalepatal police station. "Initially, our focus was to search for the women and get them back to the Shelter Home, as they are victims of the flesh trade. Finally, the FIR was lodged against the women who are seen attacking the Shelter Home staffer in the CCTV footage," Patil said.

The shelter home has 42 inmates, all of whom were rescued in flesh trade cases registered under the Prevention of Immoral Trafficking Act (PITA) at different police stations in Pune city and Pune rural, over the last two years, the police said. The police said that, as per the CCTV footage, four women are seen attacking the staffer. "After receiving information, our team rushed to the spot and launched a search. We nabbed two women within some time," said Patil. There is a three-tier security arrangement and a big compound wall at the Shelter Home; still, the women managed to escape," said Patil. Deputy Commissioner of Police Rajkumar Shinde said the women have been booked under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections 127 (1) (wrongful confinement), 115 (1) (Voluntarily causing hurt), 351 (1), and 3 (5).

Women's participation in IT flexi roles rises to 40 per cent in FY26

New Delhi: Women's participation in contractual and flexible roles in India's IT and ITeS sector has seen a steady rise, reaching 40 per cent in FY26, a new report said on Sunday. The report, titled "Women in IT/ITeS: Trends in Contractual/Flexi Roles" by Careerist, showed that women's placements have grown by 10 percentage points, from around 30 per cent in FY22 to 40 per cent in FY26. The study is based on an annual sample of around 3,000 contractual placements and indicated that flexible work arrangements are becoming more popular among women. Currently, women make up about 30 per cent of the total contractual talent pool in the IT/ITeS sector, which translates to nearly 96,000 professionals out of an estimated 3.2 lakh workforce. In terms of job roles, women are increasingly choosing core business functions. Finance and Accounting remains the top choice, with 43 per cent participation, followed by Data Science and Analytics at 34 per cent.

Roles in UX, design and architecture have also gained traction, accounting for 31 per cent of participation. Other areas like IT and information security and software engineering continue to see steady involvement, while consulting roles still have relatively lower representation, the report said. Geographically, the participation of women in flexi roles is largely concentrated in major tech hubs. Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Pune together account for over half of the total talent pool, as per the report. Other cities such as Delhi NCR and Chennai also contribute significantly, while Mumbai and Kolkata have smaller shares. Tier-2 cities make up around 11 per cent — indicating that the trend is still more prominent in metro regions. The report also highlighted that most women in these roles are in the early to mid stages of their careers. Professionals with 5 to 8 years of experience form the largest group, followed closely by those with less than two years of experience, as per the report.

How a Pune school is honouring football prodigy killed in 'tanker menace'



GNS News Agency, April 15

Aariz Shaikh always had a smile on his face, but on April 5, that smile was extinguished in a tragedy that ignited a firestorm of outrage across Pune. The Class 12 student and football sensation was killed after being struck by a water tanker in Kondhwa, the first of two fatal tanker-related accidents to strike the city in a single week. Thousands have since gathered at condolence meetings, not just to mourn a boy who was the "heart of the team," but to ensure his name does not become just another entry in Pune's rising traffic fatality statistics. A star in the making, Aariz was not just a student-athlete; he was a prodigy. The only player from Maharashtra selected for the School Games Federation of India (SGFI) team to play for the ICSE Council, he had recently returned from representing his state in the U-19 School National Games in Kashmir. "I was sure in the next one to two years he would be playing for the ISL (Indian Super League). He was that good," said Shayne McPherson, principal of The Bishop's School, Camp. In a twist of fate, the school had already finalised its annual prize list a month before the accident. Aariz had been named the

'Best Footballer of the Year.' The school now plans to present the award posthumously to his parents.

Those who knew Aariz remember his character above his goals. His coach, Stephen Zuzart, described him as "always smiling, joking, and lively." Manoj Phulphagar, a parent of Aariz's teammate, recalled his composure during a high-stakes match at Bavdhan. After a controversial red card, while others were furious on his behalf, Aariz simply nodded and walked off. "He was a stickler for rules. He never uttered an angry word; he just kept his head down," Phulphagar said. "He was a stickler for rules. He would never go against the rules." The tragedy has shifted the spotlight onto the unregulated "tanker mafia" in areas like Kondhwa and Wanowrie. Residents argue that rapid urban expansion has outpaced municipal infrastructure, leaving citizens dependent on a constant stream of heavy tankers.

"Residential complexes were sold without reliable municipal water, leaving the area infested with tankers," said Pooja Ajwani, a local resident. She criticised the Pune Municipal Corporation's (PMC) proposed solution, breathalysers tests at refilling stations, as a "plan with major loopholes" that lacks structural accountability. "Walk the talk. Where are the corporators now?" she asked, describing the area as a "concrete jungle" of multi-crore apartments with zero safety regulations. In a tribute, The Bishop's School has announced that it will permanently retire the No. 7 jersey of the senior football team. The jersey will be framed and displayed in the physical education department. Next week, the school will host 'The Aariz Shaikh Memorial Football Tournament' to honour his legacy. "It will never be used again," the principal confirmed. "We are retiring No. 7 for life." As the city prepares for the tournament, the words of Aariz's father at a candlelight vigil on April 10 continue to echo through the community: "We just want justice. Justice for Aariz."

Out for morning walk, village pradhan's husband shot dead in Mirzapur over 'panchayat poll feud'



GNS News Agency, April 15

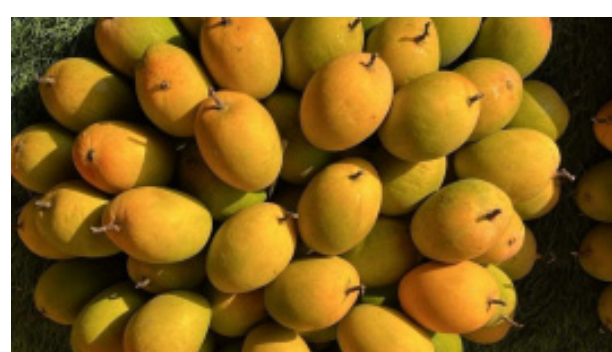
A videograb of the incident in which an assailant is seen firing at the victim in the Katra area of Mirzapur district on Saturday. A videograb of the incident in which an assailant is seen firing at the victim in the Katra area of Mirzapur district. The husband of a village pradhan was shot dead allegedly over a rivalry over panchayat elections in the Katra area of Mirzapur district on Saturday, police said. One of the two assailants has been identified with the help of CCTV footage and a manhunt has been launched to nab them, they claimed. According to police, the victim, identified as Rajeev Kumar Singh, alias Rinku Singh (40), the husband

of Devari village pradhan Pratima Singh, was fired upon by the assailants when he was out for a morning walk. CCTV footage collected from the area shows the assailants waiting by the roadside on a motorcycle and one of them approached Singh, who was alone, and fired at him from a close range before trying to flee, police said. The clip, which has since been widely circulated on social media, shows the assailant trying to kick-start the two-wheeler, while the pillion rider brandished his gun to threaten bystanders, police said. Aparna Rajat Kaushik, Superintendent of Police, Mirzapur, said, "Police have collected credible leads in the case and are examining it from all possible angles." Information was received on Saturday morning that a man had been shot at in the Katra area. Our team rushed to the spot and took the victim, who suffered a gunshot wound in his chest, to the hospital, where he was declared dead, police said, adding one of the assailants has been identified as Hari Rajan Sonkar, a resident of Devari village, while efforts are underway to identify the other suspect. Police said that Sonkar and Singh reportedly had a longstanding dispute linked to panchayat pradhan elections, which is suspected to have led to the killing. A preliminary probe suggests that the accused had allegedly been planning the attack for some time and were aware of the victim's regular morning walking route, police added.

Konkan's Alphonso in short supply: Erratic weather leaves mango growers counting heavy losses

GNS News Agency, April 15

The fragrance of Hapus or Alphonso mangoes that usually hangs thick over Pune's Gultekdi market around Akshaya Tritiya feels faint this year. Boxes are fewer, prices are steep, and the farmers who grow Maharashtra's most prized fruit are left counting losses they say are unlike anything in recent memory. Anand Marathe, a mango farmer from Rajapur taluka in Ratnagiri district, has been in this business for 25 years. This season has tested him like no other.



The fragrance of Hapus or Alphonso mangoes that usually hangs thick over Pune's Gultekdi market around Akshaya Tritiya feels faint this year. Boxes are fewer, prices are steep, and the farmers who grow Maharashtra's most prized fruit are left counting losses they say are unlike anything in recent memory.

December, but the sudden cold spell in January and February undid all of it," he said. The Alphonso's first flowering, locally called mohar, requires temperatures between 19 and 24 degrees Celsius for the fruit to set. This year, temperatures fell below 10 degrees Celsius in parts of the Konkan, causing flowers to drop before the fruit could form. Early morning dew compounded the problem by triggering fungal attacks on the blossoms. Similar conditions, he noted, have played out across Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Palghar, and Thane, effectively every district that grows Alphonso in Maharashtra. "When the erratic rains were followed by sharp temperature swings, the trees' ability to complete their reproductive cycle was badly disrupted," he said, pointing to climate change as the deeper, longer-term driver of what is fast becoming an annual pattern of distress. The impact has rippled all the way to Pune's Gultekdi market, where traders have been watching arrivals closely. Aniruddha Mansukh, a fruit trader at Gultekdi, said the contrast with a normal Akshaya Tritiya season is stark. "This time of year, we usually see 13,000 to 14,000 boxes arriving daily. Right now, we are getting 5,000 to 7,000 at best," he said. Prices reflect the scarcity. A dozen Alphonso mangoes are selling between Rs 800 and Rs 1,500, while a box of five to six dozen ranges from Rs 3,000 to Rs 6,000. Premium Alphonso is commanding as much as Rs 8,000 per box. Mansukh expects some easing after Akshaya Tritiya, when supply could gradually pick up. Fellow trader Mauli Ambekar added about the effects on the food processing industry. "Last year was a record season. This year, we are at barely 20 per cent of that supply. It has hit not just the fresh fruit market but the entire processing chain — mango pulp manufacturers and others are all struggling to source enough fruit," he said.

"Only about 20 per cent of last year's produce is available this year. I used to send 100 boxes a day to Mumbai and Pune combined, but now I can barely put together 20," he said. The damage, he explains, was inflicted by a string of unfavourable conditions: unseasonal rain and sharp diurnal temperature swings that disrupted flowering at the most critical stage. The January flowering was severely affected, and the February flowering, which typically yields fruit after mid-May, is expected to be equally disappointing. "Between February and mid-April, I would normally send around 4,000 boxes to the Pune and Mumbai markets. This year, I managed only 500," Marathe said. The losses have forced farmers to rethink even basic logistics. "The produce is so little that individual transportation doesn't make financial sense anymore. Now, four or five of us pool our harvest together and share the transport costs," he said. Even the investment made in preparing the fields has not been recovered.

For Marathe, who employs 30 migrant labourers from Nepal each season for his 1,000-tree plantation, the reduced harvest has had a human cost too. "I had to send 20 of them back. There simply wasn't enough work," he said. He urges the government to act quickly on crop insurance claims. "The relief usually comes around Diwali, but by then it is too late for us to prepare for the next cycle. If claims are settled by June, we can at least begin getting the farm ready for the Kharif season," he said. The season that wasn't. The story is similar across the Konkan belt. Narendra Desai, who manages a 5,000-tree plantation with his family in Pavas village in Ratnagiri, said the season had raised hopes before dashing them. "Rainfall last year was satisfactory, and we expected a bumper harvest. But what followed was deeply unfavourable. Nights turned cold while afternoons touched 35 degrees Celsius — those extreme swings created severe stress on the trees exactly when they needed stable conditions to flower," he said. The Desai family has seen a roughly 50 per cent drop in overall harvest this year. "We are cautiously hopeful that April supply may hold steady, but May remains uncertain given the weather pattern," Desai added.

Dr Vivek Bhide, chairman of Hapus Amba Utpadak Vikrete Sahakari Sangh, has watched over the Alphonso trade for over 40 years, and what he sees today worries him deeply. "The only thing predictable about the weather now is its unpredictability. This year has been one of the worst we have seen. Everything seemed on track until

A 'Vedic forest' taking shape in UP's temple town of Naimisharanya

GNS News Agency, April 15

In an attempt to turn an ancient pilgrimage site into a place offering a slow-paced and more immersive spiritual experience rooted in natural environment to attract not just religious tourists but also nature lovers, the Uttar Pradesh government is coming up with a first-of-its-kind "Vedic forest" in the temple town of Naimisharanya. The project, named Vedaranyam, located in Sitapur district and nearly 85 km from the state capital, has been approved at an estimated cost of Rs 14.09 crore and is being carried out by the Uttar Pradesh Rajkiya Nirman Nigam as part of the state's tourism infrastructure push, officials said. The Vedic forest is being planned over nearly 20 acres, structured around the theme of the four Vedas — Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda — considered among the oldest Hindu scriptures — with each zone interpreted through distinct landscape and design elements, they said.

The first installment of Rs 7.04 crore for the project has already been released, the officials added. It aims at encouraging longer tourist stays by offering an experience that goes beyond the traditional parikrama routes of the spiritual site, it is learnt. Located within the Naimisharanya Dham area, the site is being designed as a zoned forest campus, where trees, pathways and open spaces, and not buildings, shape the experience. "Planned as a structured spiritual landscape, the Vedaranyam project is designed to translate traditional knowledge systems into a physical and experiential space. The layout aligns movement, plantation and activity zones in a manner that gradually draws visitors towards Chakra Teerth, which remains the spiritual core of the region and is believed to anchor its cosmic energy," said Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism, Culture and Religious Affairs, Amrit Abhijit.

"The zoning of the Vedic forest, along with elements such as meditation areas, Ayurveda based plantation, interpretation spaces and interconnected trails, is intended to create a continuous journey that combines reflection, wellness and learning. This approach is aimed at moving beyond a single point pilgrimage and developing Naimisharanya as a holistic spiritual and wellness destination," he further informed. Officials said at the centre of the layout will be the "Brahmasthan", conceived as the spiritual core of the project.

From there, the movement across the site is aligned towards Chakratirth — the focal point of Naimisharanya's religious geography. Officials said the planning follows traditional vastu principles, with directional elements guiding both design and visitor flow. According to the proposed project plan, the Rigveda zone, associated with natural elements such as sun, wind and water, is being envisioned as a largely open and organic space, with minimal structural

intervention and relatively simple plantation to retain a nature-first character. The zone is proposed to have an open platform for yoga.

In contrast, the Yajurveda zone, linked to rituals and discipline, is planned with a more structured layout. Pathways there will be linear and clearly defined, with designated spaces for gathering and activity, and plantation patterns reflecting order. The Samaveda zone draws from the themes of music and harmony, with curved pathways and balanced landscaping aimed at creating a sense of flow. The area is proposed to include spaces for quiet reflection like meditation and sound experience. The Atharvaveda zone, associated with healing and daily life, will emphasise wellness, with medicinal and therapeutic plants forming a key component. The design is expected to support slow movement and engagement with Ayurveda-based knowledge. Officials said the zones are not being developed as isolated sections but as part of a continuous experience, connected through a network of walking trails and loops. "The idea is to allow visitors to transition gradually — from a more natural landscape to structured spaces, then to calming environments, and finally into wellness-focused areas," said an official. The forest area is proposed to have additional thematic areas such as Panchvriksha (five sacred trees) — Mandara, Parijata, Samtanaka, Hari Chandana and Kalpa Vriksha; Ayurveda zone, which would have plants with Ayurvedic properties; and Nakshatra zone (astrological plantation) linking ecological knowledge with spiritual traditions. A network of interconnected walking trails will allow the visitors to navigate the site in a parikrama-like manner. An audio-guided tree trail is also being planned to explain the significance of different plant species and zones. Built structures will be minimal and context-specific — limited to cottages, gazebos, yoga areas and a themed entrance. Supporting infrastructure will include natural-finish pathways, toilets, a cafeteria, ticketing facilities and seating areas.

Landscape elements include lotus ponds, tulsi courtyards, stone features and sculptures along with solar lighting, water ATMs and waste management systems. Officials said the project is part of a broader effort to position Naimisharanya as a major spiritual tourism hub while encouraging longer stays and more experiential visits. "Chakrateerth remains central, but the idea is to build an ecosystem around it — linking parikrama routes, wellness spaces and nature-based experiences," another official said. If executed as planned, the Vedic forest could mark a shift in pilgrimage sites being developed away from structure-heavy models towards quieter, landscape-driven spaces, where visitors engage with both faith and environment, a tourism expert said.

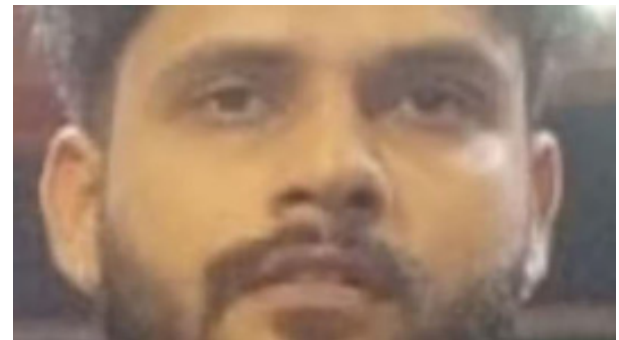
Gangster wanted in 16 cases deported from Thailand, arrested by Haryana STF

GNS News Agency, April 15

Haryana STF arrested gangster Sahil Chauhan at Delhi airport after his deportation from Thailand, where he had been tracked through a Red Corner Notice and international coordination. (File Photo) Haryana STF arrested gangster Sahil Chauhan at Delhi airport after his deportation from Thailand, where he had been tracked through a Red Corner Notice and international coordination. The Special Task Force (STF) of Haryana Police Saturday arrested gangster Sahil Chauhan, alias Sahil Rana, as he landed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport after being deported from Thailand, a senior officer said. Chauhan, a resident of Ambala's Shahzadpur, was wanted in 16 criminal cases involving murder, attempt to murder, dacoity and the use of illegal firearms and had been on the run since 2024 after jumping bail in a case of firing at a rival gangster, he added.

A look out circular (LOC) and a Red Corner Notice issued against him in 2025 and the Central Bureau of Investigation located him in Bangkok where he was detained before being deported. "The CBI, in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs coordinated the return of the wanted fugitive from Thailand," a statement from the CBI said. A key member of Bhuppi Rana and Bambiha gangs, Chauhan committed his first crime in 2016 and operated in Haryana, Punjab and Chandigarh areas. He was also associated with Gurgaon's Kausal Chaudhary gang. STF IG B Sathesh Balan said that Sahil joined Bhuppi Rana gang at the age of 18. "His criminal dossier includes severe charges such as murder, attempt to murder, robbery, extortion, criminal intimidation, and violations of the Arms Act. His primary areas of influence span the districts of Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Ambala, and Panchkula," he said.

He was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for firing



upon rival gangster Monu Rana in Jagadhari court on January 4, 2017. However, after being released on bail in 2024, he first fled to Bengaluru and from there, using a fake passport, he fled abroad. "He kept moving to Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand and Angola. He had reached Thailand a few days ago. He was trying to renew his father's passport, as his father was due for dialysis. He wanted to take his father to Thailand. Meanwhile, the STF learned about his presence there," Balan said. "He tried to travel to Portugal, and when he could not, he returned to Thailand where he was captured at the Bangkok airport based on the Red Corner Notice," Balan said, adding his fraudulently acquired passport was impounded on March 17 this year. This is the fifth deportation secured by Haryana Police in 2026. Earlier, Ankit Shokeen, Aman Bhainswal, Sombir Motta and Shilu Dahar have been deported this year, Balan said. Several other gangsters, including Rao Indrajit Yadav, have been detained in Dubai and other countries. Their paperwork is being processed, and extradition is underway, Balan added.

Delhi's draft EV policy out, big tax breaks proposed for strong hybrid vehicles

A 50% exemption on road tax and registration fees for strong hybrid cars priced up to Rs 30 lakh, a proposed ban on registration of new internal combustion engine (ICE) petrol two-wheelers from April 2028 and CNG autorickshaws from 2027, as well as incentives on purchase of electric two- and three-wheelers — these are among the key proposals in the draft Electric Vehicle Policy 2026, released by the Delhi government on Saturday, inviting suggestions and comments from the public by May 10. The current policy, launched in 2020 and extended multiple times, had expired on March 31. Thereafter, it was extended again for three months.

As per the draft, all kinds of electric vehicles (EV) registered in Delhi since the notification of the policy, including cars priced up to Rs 30 lakh (ex-showroom), will get 100% exemption from road tax and registration fees until March 31, 2030. However, the draft draws a clear line for higher-end vehicles, stating that electric cars priced above Rs 30 lakh will not be eligible for any exemption. Until now, Delhi has not provided a road tax exemption on strong hybrid cars. As per the draft, people who are looking to buy such cars — which allows the driver to switch from electric to fuel — will get a 50% discount on road tax and registration fees applicable for new cars. On March 12, besides road tax and registration fee exemptions for electric cars, The Indian Express had also reported that year-wise incentives for electric two-wheelers and e-autorickshaws, along with incentives for scrapping old vehicles, expansion of charging infrastructure, as well as setting up systems for battery recycling are likely to be among the key features of the government's upcoming EV Policy. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said that the policy, proposed until March 31, 2030, is a significant initiative towards establishing a clean, ac-

cessible, and sustainable transport system in the Capital. "All purchase incentives will be provided directly to eligible beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer. This will include individuals, proprietorship firms, agencies, and companies that are from Delhi and whose vehicles are registered here." In the draft policy, to accelerate the adoption of EVs, the Transport department proposed major incentives only for the first three years. For instance, buyers purchasing an electric two-wheeler priced up to Rs 2.25 lakh (ex-showroom) will receive an incentive of Rs 10,000 per kWh, up to a maximum of Rs 30,000 in the first year after the date of notification. The incentive will be reduced yearly. In the second year, buyers will receive Rs 6,600 per kWh, capped at Rs 20,000, while in the third year, the incentive will drop to Rs 3,300 per kWh, up to a maximum of Rs 10,000. "Two-wheelers constitute approximately 67% of the total vehicle stock in Delhi, making their rapid electrification critical for achieving meaningful reductions in vehicular emissions. Further, three-wheelers, commercial cars, and N1 category goods vehicles exhibit high daily utilisation and mileage, resulting in a disproportionate contribution to urban air pollution..." reads the draft. A similar incentive structure has been proposed for e-autorickshaws, with an incentive of Rs 50,000 offered in the first year, Rs 40,000 in the second, and Rs 30,000 in the third year. Further, the draft proposes a range of scrapping-linked incentives to accelerate the transition to cleaner vehicles. Buyers of electric two-wheelers will be eligible for a Rs 10,000 incentive on scrapping BS IV and older vehicles, while those purchasing electric three-wheelers (L5M) will get a Rs 25,000 incentive. For electric cars priced up to Rs 30 lakh, the incentive has been pegged at Rs 1 lakh, limited to the first 1 lakh eligible applicants, while buyers of electric four-wheeler goods carriers (N1 category) will receive Rs 50,000.

How nonagenarian Pune resident travelled alone to Pakistan to visit childhood home



Her hair is neatly brushed back, her cheeks glow with a hint of a tint, and her face crinkles into a smile that makes her eyes sparkle. That's Reena Verma for you, 94, who lives on her own in her second-floor apartment in a building without a lift in Salunke Vihar, cooks her own food, goes for dance and yoga class every week, and stays up late scrolling through Facebook. But her biggest feat, she says, is none of these. "What I am really proud of is that I took to technology and made friends with it — that's what keeps me going," she smiles. "I love going on YouTube, Facebook, and am on so many WhatsApp groups." It was one of those WhatsApp groups that also gave her the biggest adventure of her life at 91.

Verma was born in 1932 in undivided Punjab's Rawalpindi. The family that included six children — four boys and two girls, with Verma being the youngest — had an upper-middle-class lifestyle with summers spent in Murree and winters in Lahore. She completed her matriculation at 14, just a year before Partition tore the subcontinent apart. When indications of violence crept up in 1947, her elder sister's husband in Amritsar urged the family not to go to Murree that year but to move towards the other side. Shimla was already full of people who had clearly thought similarly, so her father decided on Solan. They missed the worst of the bloodshed but not the ache it gave every heart. They lived for around six months. Her brother, serving in the Army, was transferred to Pune, and the family followed in 1948. Verma's education was disrupted for years — she didn't complete her graduation until 1956, a full decade after her matriculation. She married at 30, unusually late for the time. Her father, she recalls fondly, was progressive: "He said he would only arrange my marriage when I said yes happily." When she met her husband, an HAL employee who had had a brief stint in the Indian Air Force earlier, she felt she had known him forever. They spent 33 years in Bengaluru, raised two children, and eventually retired to Pune.

Her husband, Inder, passed away 20 years ago. Her son died a decade ago. Her daughter lives in Gurgaon and urges her to move closer, but Verma refuses. "I like my independence," she says simply. "My daughter looks after me well, but she also knows I can handle most things on my own." For decades, though, Verma had nurtured a dream of once returning to her childhood home in Rawalpindi. In 2022, a WhatsApp group called Punjab Heritage made it possible. Her daughter had spotted the group — a cross-border community connecting people from both Punjab — and urged Verma to join it. Verma, then 91, posted a short note, expressing her wish to visit.

A journalist from Karachi reached out, followed by another from Rawalpindi. They asked if she'd like to record a message for Pakistan's Independence Day. With a friend's help, Verma recorded her memories about her life in Pindi,

her memories of the Partition, how she wished it had never happened, and her desire to see her childhood home. The video travelled. A Pakistani documentary maker in the US saw it and shared it widely. Suddenly, Verma was in the news on both sides of the border. The journalists in Rawalpindi located her childhood house and offered to facilitate the trip. Verma applied for a visa, but her application was put on hold. Before she could reapply, Imran Khan's government fell, and the embassy temporarily closed. She returned to Pune, disappointed. But someone forwarded her video to the new foreign minister, who called the embassy in Delhi and asked why a 91-year-old should be refused a visa. A three-month visa was granted. But on the other side, there was a crowd waiting for her. She spent two days in Lahore before travelling to Rawalpindi, where the hotel owner refused payment. The media descended on her — stories and photographs of the 91-year-old visitor from India were splashed across the country. Home Reena Verma's childhood home in Rawalpindi's Prem Galli. (Photo Credit: Special Arrangement) The homecoming exceeded her expectations. The current residents of her childhood house arranged a dholak to welcome her, and flower petals were showered on her as she walked through the lane of Prem Galli. "I said, what have I done to deserve this?" she recalls. "When I entered the house, though, it was with mixed feelings. I was overjoyed, but the tears wouldn't stop. All I could see was my family. I felt they were right there with me — sitting with me, walking with me." Even though 75 years is a long time, the house had changed little. "But I sensed a strange uneasiness in the family — perhaps they feared I had come to reclaim property. I immediately said that I only wanted to see my home. Nothing more." Relief bloomed into unbridled generosity.

The family's younger son, who was away in another city, heard the news and rushed home. His room had been hers. He arrived with a wooden nameplate he had made: Reena's House. He offered to hang it below his father's. They asked her if she would like to spend a night in the house — in her own room. Verma agreed instantly. She sat in her favourite balcony and sang the song she used to sing during the monsoons as a girl. Back in Pune, Verma's days continue to follow a gentle routine. She wakes up late, tunes into Vividh Bharati, and cooks her own meals with help from a part-time maid. She attends dance and yoga classes, participates in society events, and spends — by her own admission — too much time on Facebook! An avid music lover, the walls of her charming home are adorned with photographs of her all-time favourite Talat Mehmoed, as well as K L Saigal and her own picture with Sonu Nigam. She listens to old classics but keeps up with contemporary music too. "People say current music is not like the old," she shrugs. "That's okay, you have to accept and appreciate change. Twenty-five per cent of the music I listen to is new."

She has fond memories of being present at the iconic 1963 Lata Mangeshkar concert in Delhi, where she sang, "Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon," moving Pandit Nehru to tears. History and her own life have often overlapped. Her son's death 10 years ago left a quiet ache, yet she does not dwell. Two things, she says, have kept her going: embracing technology and having the courage to live — and travel — alone. Her message to the world, born of the wisdom of the years gone by? "Be independent, solve your problems by yourself as far as possible, trust your intuition — your heart is always right, and never forsake your family. For the seniors, an extra word — be social, keep your hobbies alive, make sure you have done something good for someone before you leave this world."

Kargil hero Colonel Sonam Wangchuk and indomitable spirit of Ladakhi soldiers



The death of Colonel Sonam Wangchuk (Retd), the holder of the nation's second-highest gallantry award, the Maha Vir Chakra, last week brings into focus once again the high, windswept, desolate lands of Ladakh, whose hardy people have defended India's borders again and again in each conflict. The names of Ladakhi warriors and also civilians who have helped the defence forces selflessly have been etched into history. Names such as Sonam Norbu, who oversaw the construction of the emergency airfield in Leh in 1947, Colonel Chewang Rinchen, Maha Vir Chakra, Colonel Sonam Wangchuk, and Naib Subedar Chering Mutup, who received the Ashok Chakra, the nation's highest peacetime gallantry award, are a few names representative of the entire Ladakhi people.

While Colonel Sonam Wangchuk became famous throughout India for his part in the Battle of Chhorbatla during the Kargil conflict, fighting with the Ladakh Scouts, not many are aware that he was originally from the Assam Regiment and returned to his parent regiment after completing his secondment to the Ladakh Scouts. In an interview with the website 'Reach Ladakh' in 2014, Colonel Wangchuk revealed that although he was born in Sankar, a suburb of Leh, he never studied in Leh. "We were here for just two years before my dad was transferred to Nubra and Changthang. In 1969, when I was around seven years old, I went to a boarding school in St. Louis, Solan, Himachal Pradesh," he told the website.

After four years in Solan, his father moved to Dharamsala as a security officer to the Dalai Lama and he thereafter studied at Sacred Heart High School, Yol Cantonment. He eventually completed his schooling at Modern School, Delhi, where he passed Class 12, and thereafter graduated from Shri Venkateshwara College, Dhaura Kuan. Colonel Wangchuk joined the Officers Training Academy (OTA), Chennai, in 1986 and was commissioned in 4 Assam. He remained deployed in the Northeast and then in Sri Lanka as part of the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF). His stint with the Ladakh Scouts, which was then not a full-fledged regiment but attached to the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, made him a household name in the country. The hardy Ladakhislt was the result of the stellar performance of the Nunnus of Ladakh Scouts (Nunnu means younger brother in Ladakhi, and young Ladakhi soldiers are affectionately called Nunnus in the Army) in the Kargil conflict in 1999 that a decision was made to separate it from the ambit of the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles and accord it the status of a full-fledged regiment. Today, with barely five battalions, it is the smallest and youngest infantry regiment in the Indian Army.

The patriotism of the Ladakhi people has been on full display ever since independence in 1947. When Pakistan tried to take advantage of the tribal invasion aided and abetted by the Pakistan Army in the Kashmir Valley and in the Poonch region, it also undertook an offensive operation in Kargil and Ladakh to seize as much territory as it could. Again, not many people in India are today aware that Pakistani regular and irregular troops were virtually knocking on the doors of Leh and were just a few km away in the 1947-48 war. In the Nubra Valley, too, the situation was dire with Pakistanis advancing at a fast pace. It was at this critical moment that the common Ladakhi rose to the occasion and volunteered to fight the Pakistanis, aware that the Indian Army was severely understaffed due to a lack of air connectivity with Leh and the lengthy route over the Zojila Pass. It was also in the 1947-48 war with Pakistan that 17-year-old Chewang Rinchen led his Ladakhi volunteers against Pakistanis in the Nubra Valley and routed them. He was awarded a well-deserved Maha Vir Chakra, a feat he repeated in the 1971 war, capturing vital territory in Baltistan's Turtuk sector and earning the medal a second time, becoming a Ladakhi and Indian Army war hero. The 1947-48 war was also the genesis of the Ladakh Scouts, as it evolved from a militia into a full-fledged regiment. During the 1962 war against China, the Ladakhi troops and civilians rose to the occasion once again and defended India with resolve. Chewang Rinchen yet again took an active part and was awarded a Sena Medal for gallantry. More than 600 honours and awards

In all the conflicts in which the Ladakh Scouts regiment has participated, it has earned more than 600 honours and awards for conspicuous gallantry and distinguished service. While presenting Colours to the regiment in August 2017, President Ram Nath Kovind said that the track record of the Ladakh Scouts speaks to the exceptional valour and spirit of the regiment's personnel and serves as a model for all soldiers and officers of the armed forces. He said, "Your courage and steadfastness have won you the Battle Honour 'Turtuk' for liberating approximately 804 square km of Indian territory in 1971, and Battle Honour 'Batalik' and Theatre Honour 'Kargil' in Operation Vijay in 1999. The regiment was a pioneer on the Siachen Glacier, as part of Operation Meghdoot, and Eastern Ladakh, which in a true sense is your home." "Your invaluable contribution during Operation Vijay in 1999 earned you the award of the Chief of Army Staff Banner and Unit Citation. I am also pleased to note that one of your battalions participated with great distinction in the United Nations Peace-keeping Mission in Lebanon," the President said at the time. Ever since it was formed into a full-fledged regiment in 2000, all five battalions of the Ladakh Scouts, along with the regimental centre, have been awarded General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, Unit Appreciations, for their exceptional service during operations and natural calamities.

During the Kargil conflict, the Ladakh Scouts were awarded 55 gallantry awards, including one Mahavir Chakra to Major (later Colonel) Sonam Wangchuk. Apart from the Mahavir Chakra, the regiment also won six Vir Chakras and two Yudh Seva Medals during the Kargil conflict. The courage of the Ladakhi soldiers can be best summed up during the 1971 war by Lieutenant General KP Candeth, then Western Army Commander, "I doubt any other troops had ever battled in such appalling conditions and it speaks much for the determination, motivation and physical fitness of the troops and their commanders, that they were able to carry out this task so well."

When Karnataka police had suspects in custody before they knew there was a murder

Twelve years ago, on the night of the Banashankari festival in Karnataka's Badami, two men sitting inside a parked autorickshaw at 4 am gave mismatched answers to a patrolling team's routine questions. That was enough to bring them to the police station. Hours later, news came in of a gruesome murder nearby, and the police realised with shock — the suspects were already in their custody.

Badami, once the capital of the erstwhile Chalukya dynasty, houses rock-cut cave temples carved into red sandstone cliffs and is considered to be one of the wonders of India. The town is known for the Banashankari Amma festival — one of the biggest fairs in the state with nearly 30-40 lakh devotees attending it. During that time, the police force from at least 3-4 districts is deployed, as it is the season when pickpockets and thieves from Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and other parts of Karnataka come to make quick bucks. During the festival season in 2013, the night patrolling police team spotted two men — identified as Gangadhara and Shafi Abdul Munaf Takalli — sitting inside an autorickshaw around 4 am on November 19.

Nagaraj K, Badami Station House Officer (SHO), recalled that the men had parked the autorickshaw a little outside the town, and they were questioned normally. "Police constables Yamanappa Itagi and Somayya Mannur were on duty. Usually, during the Banashankari Badami fair. Whenever we find any suspicious movement, we often question the suspects and let them off once we get clarity. But in this specific incident, Gangadhara and Shafi gave different answers to the same question. It made us bring them to the Kulageri police station to inquire about a background check," he said. One of them said that they were visiting the temple and were waiting for it to open, but the other one said that they were waiting for friends. It was enough for the police to suspect something was fishy. One of the police constables sat in the autorickshaw and asked him to take him to the police station. Upon reaching, they took the men inside the station and checked their contact numbers and addresses on their mobile phones.

Shivaputrappa AB, who had completed one year as a police inspector and in his first stint as head of a circle, was about to sleep after finishing his night shift duty when he got a call from T L Veerappa, then police sub-inspector at Badami police station. Veerappa passed him a message that there was a murder of an elderly woman in his limits. Sumithra alias Sumithramma, a woman in her 50s, had lost her husband and did not have any children. She was living alone for many years at Kulageri Cross. Shivaputrappa told The Indian Express, "It was a gruesome murder. When I visited the spot, it looked like someone out of revenge had killed her. There were stab wounds on the chest, stomach, wrist, neck, and many other parts of the body." But the crime scene told a different tale. The house was ransacked, and the valuables were taken away from the almirah. Two gold necklaces, one gold ring, and other things were missing. With no CCTV cameras, the police then started to inquire with the neighbours, who said that she had some visitors to the house, a day before the incident, and there was nothing suspicious at that point.

The police approached the district unit to check for the



active mobile numbers in the location between 6 pm on November 18 and 6 am on November 19. They started to filter the numbers and found out that some phones were active for a few hours before leaving the location. Shivaputrappa said, "A couple of active numbers were found to be of the people who were detained at Kulageri police station. It was a great breakthrough. What was surprising is that even before we came to know about the crime, the suspects were already detained." Then, the Badami police took Gangadhara and Takalli into custody. When interrogated, they confessed to murdering Sumithramma and said that the mastermind was her relative. The accused spilled some names — Kiran Kumar, 20, a driver, Mahammad Yakub, 20, a driver, and Mujafar, 21, a labourer. As investigations progressed, the police found out that Kiran was Sumithra's nephew. Shivaputrappa says, "Kiran is the son of Sumithra's younger sister, and she treated him like a son. He visited her house whenever he travelled to Badami." Upon learning about the involvement of Kiran and two others, a police officer made Gangadhara call Kiran in order to share the stolen ornaments. Unaware that Gangadhara was caught, Kiran came to meet him, and the police caught him red-handed. During questioning, Kiran confessed to the crime but also told how he had executed it. Shivaputrappa said, "On November 12, 2013, Kiran and his friends arrived at Sumithramma's residence in an autorickshaw. Kiran, who was aware that Sumithramma was getting a pension and had some gold ornaments, masterminded the murder and robbery." Sumithramma, meanwhile, was highly hospitable towards her nephew and his friends who had come for the Banashankari fair, prepared special food for them, and allowed them to sleep at her house. "Around 12.30 am, Kiran, Yakub, and Mujafar sneaked into Sumithramma's room and smothered her to death while she was asleep and stabbed her multiple times before fleeing from the spot. It was such a gruesome murder as the knife was still stuck to Sumithramma's stomach in the morning," Shivaputrappa said. In 2014, the police filed the chargesheet against five accused in the murder case, making Kiran Kumar the prime accused. While there were no eyewitnesses to the case, the police filed a chargesheet naming 23 witnesses. The court document reveals that the phone call records became a critical corroboration of the evidence, as the mobile tower location of Kiran matched Sumithramma's residence. However, Kiran claimed that he was at the Badami temple at the time of the murder. Also, Sumithramma's clothes,

Arrested after 500-km chase: How a Delhi Police team caught a digital fraud accused near China border

At nearly 10,000 feet in Arunachal Pradesh, the road to Tawang winds through thin air. On January 31, as temperatures dipped below freezing, a Delhi Police team drove deeper into the mountains, closing in on a man they had been tracking across several states. Tawang sits close to India's edge — its police station is among the last in the country, just 16 km from the Line of Actual Control with China. It was here, police said, that they hoped to find a 24-year-old accused in an investment fraud that stretched across borders and digital platforms.

The 24-year-old man, Babidul Khan alias Bobby, was accused of duping at least 15 people and operating multiple mule accounts where he allegedly moved the defrauded amount worth Rs 5 crore. The racket was operating from China, said police, and Khan's arrest — after a 500-km hunt from Guwahati — eventually happened in Tawang. The racket had come on the police radar just weeks before when Diwakar Jha (45), a retired Air Force personnel and a resident of South West Delhi's Sagarpur area, claimed that he was duped. "Diwakar retired about two years ago, and was living with his wife and their two children," a police officer said. His wife is suffering from paralysis, and most of his time went into caring for her and the children, police said, adding that he often felt lonely. "Last November, he made his profile on a matrimony website. He was not looking to remarry, but he saw no harm in talking to a woman for some time and seeing how it goes," a police officer said.

At the start of December, Jha matched with a woman named Prachi. "They got along well. Prachi even discussed possible future prospects, and said they would need money to settle together as he was retired. The conversation then moved on to an investment scheme from where she claimed to have earned good returns," the officer said. Marriage was not on Jha's mind, but money was. Intrigued, he agreed to join a WhatsApp group that Prachi was part of. Initially, he was asked to deposit Rs 80,000 in an account whose details were sent to him. Jha made a decent profit in two days. "He then made another deposit of Rs 30,000 into another bank account. In the days that followed, he made his final deposit of Rs 6 lakh 50 thousand in a third account in the first week of January," the officer added.

With no profits, he was now worried about the money and reached out to Prachi. By January 12, Prachi stopped replying to Jha's anxious messages and she was eventually unreachable, officers said. He realised he was conned.

"Jha filed a complaint with the Delhi Police. Prachi's number was traced, and it was found that it was being operated from Cambodia. One of the accounts in which he transferred money was found linked to a phone number registered in Assam's Dispur," said one of the investigators. The number was that of Mantu Sutradhar (23), who worked at a restaurant in Guwahati. Soon, another account was tracked to Pranav Talukdar (31), who ran a water supply business in the same city. Police joined the dots. "A team, led by Sub-Inspector Amit, and supervised by Inspector SHO Parvesh (Cyber) and DCP (Southwest) Amit Goel, reached Dispur on January 26. The two were



"Jha filed a complaint with the Delhi Police. Prachi's number was traced, and it was found that it was being operated from Cambodia. One of the accounts in which he transferred money was found linked to a phone number registered in Assam's Dispur," said one of the investigators.

chased down before being arrested in Guwahati," another investigator said.

As the duo were questioned separately, they said that they had just sold their bank accounts to the common man — Khan. Officers found Khan was unemployed. Over the past year, he had joined Telegram groups where mule accounts were bought and sold by cyber fraudsters from across South East Asia. "The bank accounts were 'tested' through APK files for their authenticity. After testing, the access of the accounts was transferred to the administrators of the Telegram groups. For each account, and the money came to it, the seller on January 27, a three-member team — led by a sub-inspector with the Cyber police station of the Capital's South West district — started chasing Khan, who was moving towards Bomdila Pass in Arunachal Pradesh. By January 28, as the police team camped in Bomdila, Khan got to know he was being chased. "Someone sent him the pictures of Pranav and Minto, standing with police officers in court, and he had seen all our faces," another officer said. He went higher up the mountains towards Tawang. The Scorpio of the police team entered the freezing Tawang on the night of January 31 after a 500-km hunt. "We got a tip about a car in which he was travelling. We traced the car to a shabby hotel, and nabbed him there," one of the team members said. The whole night, the police officers questioned Khan at the Tawang police station. He was produced in a court the next day.

Western Command and NDMA's disaster mgmt conclave: Speakers stress 'first 24 hours most critical', suggest regular mock drills to enhance disaster preparedness



GNS News Agency, April 15

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) member Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd) on Wednesday stressed conducting frequent mock exercises to enhance disaster preparedness across the country and shifting from reactive response to proactive resilience. Lt Gen Hasnain was speaking at the Western Command Disaster Management Conclave on 'Disaster Risk Resilience' organised by the Western Command Headquarters, in collaboration with the NDMA, at Chandimandir, Panchkula.

The conclave opened with a series of key addresses, outlining the vision for a more robust national safety framework. "Such exercises focus on strengthening response coordination, testing emergency plans, and better preparedness for various disasters among agencies that are involved to tackle them," Lt Gen Hasnain said, delivering the opening address. The conclave identified concrete action points for 2026, including the development of joint training calendars and a unified command structure to enhance inter-agency coordination. In the coming weeks, a mega mock drill has been planned for Punjab. The event brought together senior military officials, NDMA policymakers, state disaster management representatives, and academic and technical experts to foster greater civil-military synergy and integrate advanced technologies into national disaster governance, according to a Western Command statement. Stressing resource mapping, Lt Gen Hasnain said, "When disasters strike, civil and other agencies involved should know what equipment and resources are available so that these can be immediately put to action."

Delivering a keynote address, NDMA member and Head of Department Rajendra Singh lauded the exemplary role played by the Army's Western Command during the devastating flood in Punjab last year that claimed about 60 lives and caused extensive damage to infrastructure and crops. "When lives, livelihood and critical infrastructure were under serious stress, the Indian Army sprang into action with remarkable speed, professionalism and compassion. Army columns were among the first responders on the ground, rescuing citizens and providing essential relief

material, restoring connectivity and instilling confidence in disaster-affected people," he said. Delivering a plenary address, Lt Gen Manoj Kumar Katiyar, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Command, reiterated the Indian Army's role as the "preferred responder" in extreme crisis situations. Lt Gen K S Brar (ret), who has been part of several Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations, including the Wayanad landslide in 2024, stressed that the first 24 hours are most critical.

"...If you have to save lives, do any kind of mitigation, you have to react very fast," he said, underlining that synergy and preparedness are key in responding to various kinds of disasters. "Now, there are AI models, how much water can be released from upstream, how far it will flow, you can do a digital simulation. So, all models can be made, and one can have a digital model of what has to be done," he said. Exploring ways to harmonise protocols and maximise the critical "Golden Hour" in relief operations, Lt Gen Ajay Chandpuria, General Officer Commanding 11 Corps, said a large part of the northern region is exposed to a wide range of hazards, including seismic, floods, landslides, avalanches, cloudburst, extreme weather and man-made disasters. The landscape is not only diverse, but it is operationally demanding. The nature of the terrain, population density, and other aspects involved pose a clear operational imperative on how we plan, deploy and respond to various challenges. "Disasters also have a national security implication, and hence, the armed forces have a mandated role to respond to it as a whole of nation or whole of society approach," Lt Gen Chandpuria said.

The technical sessions highlighted innovation and lessons from recent disasters. Dr Kala Venkat Udhay from IIT Mandi presented advancements in remote sensing and landslide early warning systems. Mohammad Afzal, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Power, spoke about reducing vulnerabilities in hydroelectric river basins. Commandant Santosh Kumar of the 7th Battalion NDRF shared operational insights and challenges from the 2025 floods and proposed solutions to improve resource mobilisation for future urban and rural flooding scenarios. A dedicated panel discussion featuring KK Pant, Additional Chief Secretary, Himachal Pradesh, Snober Jamil from the State Disaster Management Authority, Jammu & Kashmir, and Mohsen Shahidi, DIG Operations, HQ NDRF, examined gaps in state-level frameworks and the game-changing potential of artificial intelligence in disaster management. Meanwhile, an interactive exhibition showcased the country's growing indigenous disaster response capabilities, such as AI-integrated next-generation early warning systems, satellite-linked communication modules resilient to network failures, high-altitude rescue equipment, CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear) protection suits, advanced medical trauma kits, and community outreach programs aimed at turning local populations into the first line of defence.

'Direct link to passenger safety': Delhi High Court asks for DGCA's response on revised norms for pilot rest

GNS News Agency, April 15

Highlighting that the relaxation has "increased accident risk, pilot fatigue exposure", the petitioners have also objected to Indigo and other airlines marketing themselves as "low cost airline". Highlighting that the relaxation has "increased accident risk, pilot fatigue exposure", the petitioners have also objected to Indigo and other airlines marketing themselves as "low cost airline". The Delhi High Court Wednesday, while hearing a Public Interest Litigation raising concerns on the "illegal dilution of fatigue norms" for airlines' pilots, told the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to take instructions on the issue and report back to the court Thursday, even as IndiGo questioned the maintainability of the PIL. In their PIL, Sabari Roy Lenka, a former aircraft engineer, Aman Monga, a crew resource management trainer, and Kiran Singh, a social worker, have objected to the relaxation of the weekly rest clause as stipulated under the revised Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) norms, by way of a DGCA order on December 5, 2025. The relaxation came following en masse IndiGo flight cancellations and delays, leading to a collapse and chaos in the aviation sector.

Highlighting that the relaxation has "increased accident risk, pilot fatigue exposure", the petitioners have also objected to Indigo and other airlines marketing themselves as "low cost airline". The petitioners seek that DGCA's December order be quashed and set aside, and that all scheduled airlines operating in India be immediately restrained from describing, projecting, or advertising themselves as "low cost airlines" on their websites, booking portals, etc., as there is no such statutory recognition under the laws and rules. IndiGo, which is the only airline made a party to the litigation, represented by Senior Advocate Sandeep Sethi, raised an objection to the maintainability of the petition, questioning the petitioners' locus. "How are they concerned? They are not a pilot."

While the bench of Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia orally observed that the DGCA order only allowed for deferment of implementing the FDTL norms in toto in the back of the IndiGo crisis, CJ Upadhyaya, addressing IndiGo's counsel, orally remarked, "We cannot straightaway rule out his standing. Petitioner 1 has been an aircraft engineer". "The regulator has prescribed a certain period of rest for the pilots. This has a direct link to passenger safety. So, the concern cannot be ruled out altogether. If the regulator has provided some regulations, unless they are challenged or there is an inherent flaw, it needs to enforce them. The new regulations are not being practically followed... So concerns expressed in the petition cannot be brushed aside." "The petition points out public safety in general, so we can't say that the petition can't be maintained. It is only that at the moment, there must be some rationale available with DGCA (for putting the norms in abeyance)," CJ Upadhyaya added orally. The new FDTL rules were implemented in two phases to better manage pilot fatigue, a key risk to aviation safety. Under the new rules, the weekly rest period for pilots was increased to 48 hours from 36, and night landings were limited to two from six earlier. The night-duty-related changes took effect on November 1, 2025, and began affecting IndiGo's flight operations, as the airline operates a significant number of night-time flights and relies on high utilisation rates for aircraft and crew. The ex-



emptions granted to IndiGo include that the airline's definition of "night" will be midnight to 5 am, instead of midnight to 6 am, as prescribed in the new FDTL rules. The exemptions also allow IndiGo pilots flying during these hours to perform up to six landings, whereas the new norms capped night landings at just two.

25 cases of hate speech still pending: Akal Takht on police action against Delhi youth

GNS News Agency, April 15

The Punjab Police's swift action in Amritsar against a youth, who rinsed his mouth in Darbar Sahib's sacred sarovar, for hurting Sikh sentiments has raised questions on the law enforcement agency's functioning in other such cases.

The accused, Subhan Rangrez, has been sent to police remand for three days by the court on Wednesday, after which police brought him to Amritsar. The youth from Delhi had come to Darbar Sahib on January 13, where he allegedly rinsed his mouth in the sarovar. He roamed around the Darbar Sahib complex and had a video shot by another companion.

Following a complaint by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), police arrested him within three days and registered a case of sacrilege against him. The SGPC lawyer, Amanbir Sial, highlighted the glaring inconsistencies in handling of cases involving hurt religious sentiments by police. While this incident led to a swift arrest, some older complaints against social media offenders have been stalled for years. One such offender includes a Gujarat woman named Archana Makwana. Makwana was also booked for hurting Sikh sentiments after she performed Yoga in Darbar Sahib premises on June 21, 2024 — World Yoga Day. "We have filed an application in court for directions regarding her arrest," Sial said. No chargesheet has been filed in the Makwana case and the accused has neither obtained anticipatory bail nor joined the investigation, he said. "Police is actually defending Makwana in court as in response to our demand of her arrest, police informed court that Makwana has apologised to SGPC via email."

Politically attractive Mukh Mantri Sehat Bima Yojana is economically hollow: Tarun Chugh



GNS News Agency, April 15

Terming the AAP government's Mukh Mantri Sehat Bima Yojana (MMSBY) "misleading, impractical and entirely publicity-driven", BNP national general secretary Tarun Chugh on Wednesday said the rigid package capping was the biggest and most fundamental failure of the scheme, exposing the Rs 10-lakh health coverage claim as "hollow" from the very beginning. "The central government's scheme Ayushman Bharat provides genuine, pre-insured protection, but AAP's MMSBY rests on hollow claims and weak foundations," he said, addressing a press conference in Chandigarh.

Chugh said, "The biggest lie of this Kejriwal-Mann scheme is the promise of Rs 10 lakh health security. The reality is that the scheme provides actual insurance of only Rs 1 lakh per family, while the remaining Rs 9 lakh is left to the mercy of the debt-ridden Punjab government. Where will this Rs 9 lakh come from when the state is already struggling financially?" Chugh said, "Kejriwal and his party are loudly advertising the false Rs 10-lakh claim, but they

have imposed such harsh capping on even the most serious medical procedures that proper treatment becomes impossible. When treatment caps are fixed so low that complete care for critical illnesses cannot be provided, the Rs 10 lakh promise remains nothing more than a paper claim." He alleged that the scheme had been deliberately designed to either offer incomplete treatment or force patients to pay heavily from their own pockets.

Referring to Ayushman Bharat, Chugh said the central government's scheme sets a national benchmark by fixing package rates based on the actual cost of treatment. "In contrast, the MMSBY has imposed extremely low caps on complex procedures like heart surgery, brain surgery and knee replacement, pushing major and credible hospitals away from the scheme and leaving the poor and middle class to suffer." Chugh said it took the Mann government 48 months just to announce this scheme, and even now, the government itself admitted that it would take several more months to implement. "The truth is that patients will not get treatment under this scheme, but in an election year, AAP will use public money only for self-promotion and propaganda." Raising serious concerns over Punjab's deteriorating financial condition, Chugh said, "The state is already burdened with debt exceeding Rs 4 lakh crore. Over the past four years, the Mann government has added more than Rs 1 lakh crore of fresh debt, and in the current financial year alone, Punjab must repay Rs 90,000 crore. While the government claims it has no money to pay DA to its employees, it has ample funds for Kejriwal's helicopter rides." Chugh further said, "If even one per cent of families avail benefits under the scheme, the annual expenditure would reach Rs 6,500 crore, while the budget allocation remains negligible. The real debate is not Rs 5 lakh versus Rs 10 lakh, but real insurance versus paper promises."

Chandigarh man booked for illegal possession of two Indian parakeets



GNS News Agency, April 15

Police in Chandigarh have registered a case against a man for allegedly illegally keeping two Indian rose-ringed parakeets at his residence, violating the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, following a UT Forest and Wildlife Department official's complaint. Police said the case was registered against Sandeep Kumar, a resident of Chandigarh's Sector 24, at Police Station Sector 11 under Sections 9, 39(3)(A) and 51 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The complaint

was filed by Jatinder Singh, Range Forest Officer, posted at Paryavaran Bhawan, Sector 19-B, Chandigarh.

As per the wildlife department officials, they received information from former Union Minister Maneka Gandhi. Gandhi alerted the department about the alleged illegal captivity of two Indian parakeets by the accused. Following this, a team of the wildlife department conducted an inspection of the area on January 24. During the inspection, the team found and rescued the two parakeets confined inside the accused's house.

Both parakeets were placed under the supervision of the department's veterinary doctor. Officials said the birds are in a safe environment and their health condition is being closely monitored. Further action regarding their rehabilitation and release will be taken as per established wildlife conservation protocols. Police said further investigation is underway to determine how the birds were procured and whether any other individuals were involved in the offence. According to the wildlife department, the Indian rose-ringed parakeet is a protected species listed under Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and keeping, capturing or confining the bird without official permission is a punishable offence under the law.

New Chandigarh Golf Club president lays out 100-day reform agenda

GNS News Agency, April 15

Three days after being elected president of the Chandigarh Golf Club with the highest winning margin in recent years, Major Rajinder Singh Lally Virk (ret) has outlined an ambitious first-100-day agenda focused on professional management, governance reforms and member welfare. Virk, 57, defeated Capt Mohanbir Singh (ret) by 304 votes in the recently concluded elections. Speaking to The Indian Express, he said the mandate reflected members' desire for a more transparent, accountable and progressive club administration. The main focus will be professional course management. We plan to appoint a professional consultant to improve course maintenance and playing conditions," Virk said, adding that improving the overall golfing experience would be a priority in the initial months.

Another key area identified by the new president is a comprehensive review of the Chandigarh Golf League. He said the league format would be refined in consultation with stakeholders and team owners, with attention to handicapping, scheduling and transparency. "The aim is to ensure satisfaction for all members, both league participants and regular players," he said. Virk said governance reforms would form a major plank of his agenda to enhance accountability and transparency. These include proposed amendments to the club bylaws to extend the managing committee's tenure to two years, hold separate elections for the club captain, introduce seamless digital voting, and regularise and digitise Annual General Meetings. He also proposed a model code of conduct to keep election months free from official party activities.

Digital transformation will accompany these reforms, with greater use of online platforms for AGMs and member-related processes to improve accessibility and transparency. The new president also flagged long-pending civic issues within the club premises. A dedicated team will be set up to propose and implement a sustainable parking solution. Caddy welfare will be another focus area, with plans to improve caddy hut facilities and review working conditions to ensure their well-being. "We will keep the club community informed at every step, and I remain fully accessible to members for ideas, suggestions and feedback," Virk



said. Twelve members were elected to the managing committee: Jasprat Singh Sekhon (765 votes), Amarbir Singh Lehal (755), Brigadier TS Mundi (720), Dr Angad Singh Sangha (666), Raman Singh Gill (642), Dr Atul Sachdev (597), Amarinder Singh Aulakh (590), Alamgir Grewal (573), APA Kahai (570), Shona Singh (559), JS Toor (557) and Brigadier Balvinder Singh (547). Dr Atul Sachdev has been appointed senior vice president, and JS Toor the vice-president while Alamgir Grewal has been named the club captain. Amarbir Singh Lehal will serve as secretary and Brigadier TS Mundi as treasurer. Sachdev will also chair the medical camps subcommittee and coordinate the Chandigarh Golf League, while Toor will head the entertainment and legal affairs subcommittees. Shona Manco will chair tournament and handicapping, while Grewal will chair the greens subcommittee, Lehal the HRD and new construction subcommittees, and Mundi the finance, food and bar, discipline, and IT and digitalisation subcommittees. Other members will oversee additional areas of club functioning.

2022, 2023 and 2024 respectively. His latest Laadli Award, in November 2025, came for an article on Deepthi Jeevanji, who won India's first gold medal at the World Athletics Para Championship and was touted for her unusual features as a child. Nitin mainly covers Olympics sports disciplines with his main interests in shooting, boxing, wrestling, athletics and much more. The last 17 years with The Indian

Former Congress MP flags IPS officers' role in land settlements

Hyderabad: Expressing concern over deteriorating policing in the State, former Congress MP Madhu Yashki Goud alleged that a few IPS officers were setting aside their responsibility of monitoring law and order and were involving themselves in land settlements. Speaking during an informal interaction with media persons at Gandhi Bhavan on Wednesday, he said a senior IPS officer was more focused on hitting headlines in the media and interfering in land disputes. The officer was misusing power and subjecting the poor and innocent to harassment, he alleged.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had clearly instructed

police officials to handle and investigate cases strictly as per rules and procedure. However, instead of following established norms, a few officers, under the guise of investigation, were taking people into custody late at night, he said. "I strongly condemn the conduct of a few IPS officers. Due to their conduct, the Congress government's image is taking a hit," Goud charged. He said the officials should bear in mind that the Congress government had come to power in Telangana and should work accordingly. They could not continue to function as they did during the previous government's tenure, he stressed.

Govt announces major hikes in export duties on diesel, jet fuel to ensure domestic fuel availability



Rs 1,500 crore in a fortnight, as per back-of-the-envelope calculations by the government. The hike in export duties could lead to higher revenue gains. Along with the export duties on diesel and jet fuel, the government on March 27 had also slashed excise duty on domestic sales of petrol and diesel to provide some relief to the OMCs that have been incurring heavy losses on fuel sales. The gains from export duties on diesel and ATF would only be a fraction of the estimated Rs 7,000 crore per fortnight of revenue loss the government will bear due to the excise duty cut. India's total refining capacity stands at around 260 million tonnes per annum (mtpa), which is more than the domestic consumption, making India a net exporter of refined fuels. Diesel and ATF are the major petroleum fuels that India exports. The export levies on diesel and ATF are not applicable to fuel exports from Reliance Industries (RIL) special economic zone (SEZ) refinery. RIL's Jamnagar mega refining complex—the largest single-location refining complex in world—has a 35.2-million-tonnes-per-annum (mtpa) SEZ refinery and a 33-mtpa domestic tariff area (DTA) refinery. According to the CBIC, export duties are not applicable to SEZ refineries as per judicial pronouncements. Even when similar duties were imposed in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the government had explicitly exempted SEZ refineries from the levies.

With the West Asia war effectively closing off the critical maritime chokepoint of the Strait of Hormuz, crude oil and fuel prices have surged globally. India depends heavily on oil and gas imports to meet its energy needs, and fuel prices in the country are linked to global oil and fuel price benchmarks. With the effective halt in vessel movements through the Strait of Hormuz—from where one-fifth of global oil and natural gas flows usually transited—global energy supplies have been hit and prices have skyrocketed. While India has been in a comfortable position with regard to crude oil, petrol, and diesel availability, it still has to bear the brunt of high prices.

"With global petroleum prices up by upto 100% in the last 1 month, PSU OMCs are incurring under-recoveries of Rs 24.40/litre on petrol and Rs 104.99/litre on diesel at RSP (retail selling price) level as on 01.04.2026," the MoPNG had said in an April 1 post on X. Since the beginning of the West Asia war on February 28, global ATF prices have almost doubled to \$195.19 per barrel for the week ended March 27 from \$99.40 for the week ended February 28, as per the data compiled by IATA, the global industry body of airlines. The crack spread—difference between the price of crude oil and products like ATF derived from it—trebled to \$81.44 per barrel for the week ended March 27 from \$27.83 for the week ended February 27.

Amid the surge in global oil and fuel prices due to the West Asia war, the government on Saturday significantly hiked the export duties on diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF), or jet fuel, to dissuade refiners from exporting the fuels and ensure adequate availability in the domestic market. The duty on export of diesel was more than doubled to Rs 55.5 per litre from Rs 21.5 per litre, while on jet fuel exports, the levy was hiked to Rs 42 per litre from Rs 29.5 per litre with immediate effect, according to notifications issued by the Finance Ministry. The export duty on petrol continues to be nil.

The export levies, or windfall gains taxes—in the form of excise duties—were imposed from March 27 with the objective of ensuring adequate availability of these fuels in the domestic market by disincentivising exports amid a major price difference between domestic and international markets. Public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) have not hiked diesel and petrol prices in the domestic market, even as prices have surged in the international market. As for ATF, only a fraction of the international price pressure was passed on for domestic flights. According to the government, these duties are not for boosting government revenue, but to not allow fuel exporters to take undue advantage of the price differences. "At a time when international diesel prices have surged sharply, the levy is designed to disincentivise exports and ensure that refinery output is directed first towards meeting domestic demand. Keeping Indian pumps fully supplied takes precedence over export opportunities, however commercially attractive those may be at current global prices," the Petroleum Ministry had said in a release on March 27. Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Chairman Vivek Chaturvedi had said that these duty rates will be reviewed on a fortnightly basis to align the duties with prevailing fuel prices in the international market.

At the rates announced that took effect on March 27, the revenue gain from export duties was estimated at around

LPG tanker Jag Vikram crosses Strait of Hormuz; first Indian vessel to transit since US-Iran ceasefire announcement

Jag Vikram Strait of Hormuz transit marks the first Indian vessel crossing after the US-Iran ceasefire, indicating a gradual resumption of shipping through the critical chokepoint. (Representative image) Jag Vikram Strait of Hormuz transit marks the first Indian vessel crossing after the US-Iran ceasefire, indicating a gradual resumption of shipping through the critical chokepoint. Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tanker Jag Vikram crossed the Strait of Hormuz between Friday night and Saturday morning, becoming the first India-flagged vessel to cross the maritime chokepoint since the announcement of the temporary two-week ceasefire between the US and Iran, according to ship tracking data. Jag Vikram is the ninth Indian ship to exit the Persian Gulf since early March; another 15 India-flagged vessels are in the Persian Gulf with its exit. As of 8 pm (India time) on Saturday, the tanker was in the Gulf of Oman, well beyond the Strait, and was sailing eastwards towards India's west coast.

According to the government, Jag Vikram is carrying around 20,400 tonnes of LPG with 24 seafarers on board. It is expected to arrive at Mumbai on April 15. The tanker is a mid-sized gas carrier (MGC) owned by Mumbai-based Great Eastern Shipping Company, as per shipping databases. The tanker has a deadweight capacity of over 26,000 tonnes. Deadweight tonnage is the total weight a vessel can carry, including cargo, fuel, fresh water, ballast water, provisions, and crew. According to trade sources, Jag Vikram had been waiting to cross the Strait of Hormuz for over a week now. On April 3, The Indian Express had reported that LPG tankers Green Asha and Jag Vikram were expected to cross the crucial waterway in a few days' time. Green Asha transited the Strait on April 5. Scores of vessels have been stranded in the Persian Gulf since the war began, with only a few being able to safely transit the Strait, and that, too, in coordination with Iran.

Seven of the eight other Indian LPG tankers that crossed the Strait of Hormuz over the past few weeks were very large gas carriers (VLGCs), with more than double the LPG carrying capacity than an MGC. One was an MGC. The remaining 15 Indian vessels in the Persian Gulf include at least one more LPG tanker, four crude oil tankers, one liquefied natural gas (LNG) tanker, one chemical products tanker, three container ships, two bulk carriers, and a few vessels undergoing routine maintenance. While transiting the Strait of Hormuz, Jag Vikram was signalling that it was an Indian ship with Indian crew on board. Such identity broadcasts have become a standard of sorts among vessels crossing the Strait in coordination with Iranian authorities, which are regulating vessel movements. The Strait of Hormuz is a narrow waterway between Iran and Oman that connects the Persian Gulf with the Arabian Sea; it is a critical maritime chokepoint for global energy flows. Around one-fifth of global oil and gas flows transited the Strait before the war began. India is among the countries that have been engaged with Iran at the diplomatic level for safe passage of their ships through the Strait of Hormuz, where Tehran brought vessel movements to an effective halt amid the ongoing West Asia war. With the ceasefire announcement on Wednesday, there were hopes that vessel movements through the Strait would progressively increase. While some movement in traffic has reportedly picked up a bit, flows remain highly constricted.

Amid reports that Iran wants to impose a toll or a transit fee on merchant vessels crossing the Strait of Hormuz, India continues to press for free and safe navigation through the waterway. In response to reports regarding the potential formalisation of a toll by Iran for passage through the Strait, a senior Foreign Ministry official recently said that there has been "absolutely no discussion" on the issue between India and Iran, adding that India maintains its long-



Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tanker Jag Vikram crossed the Strait of Hormuz between Friday night and Saturday morning, becoming the first India-flagged vessel to cross the maritime chokepoint since the announcement of the temporary two-week ceasefire between the US and Iran, according to ship tracking data. Jag Vikram is the ninth Indian ship to exit the Persian Gulf since early March; another 15 India-flagged vessels are in the Persian Gulf with its exit. As of 8 pm (India time) on Saturday, the tanker was in the Gulf of Oman, well beyond the Strait, and was sailing eastwards towards India's west coast.

held stance on the matter and will evaluate future scenarios if and when they arise.

There had been reports that Iran was already charging a "toll" from some vessels before allowing them to cross the Strait of Hormuz. The Indian government has been categorically denying the payment of any toll or charge to the Iranians for the passage of India-flagged ships through the waterway. Since the war began, eight India-flagged vessels—all LPG tankers—have returned from the Persian Gulf. India has high dependence on West Asia for its oil and gas supplies, most of which come to the country via the Strait of Hormuz. The Strait is also important for India's supplies of other commodities, including fertilisers and petrochemicals. "On the question of toll... there has been no discussion on this point between us and Iran. So that is where we are. As to what will be the scenario if a certain situation arises or happens in future, we'll see when the time comes. But our point of view at this point in time is that we continue to call for free and safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz," Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on Thursday. Like most other natural waterways that are shipping chokepoints, the Strait of Hormuz is an international strait, and no tolls are charged just for crossing them, as per the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Although neither Iran nor the US have ratified the convention, it is widely accepted as international law, and Washington and Tehran have mostly abided by it. Sources indicated that changing the status of the Strait of Hormuz is a question of international law and would be required to be done through the UN. Prior to the ceasefire, Iran had said that non-hostile vessels linked to countries other than the US, Israel, and their allies can cross the strait in coordination with Iranian authorities. With the ceasefire announcement on Wednesday, Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said that safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz will be possible for two weeks but "via coordination with Iran's Armed Forces and with due consideration of technical limitations".

Can you actually eat honey on a strict sugar-free diet?



As more people try to reduce their sugar intake, questions about natural sweeteners are becoming common. One ingredient that often sparks confusion is honey. Because it's natural, many assume it may be allowed even on a no-sugar diet. A user recently asked a similar question on Quora: Can I eat honey on a no-sugar diet? To understand whether honey fits into such diets, we spoke with Veena V, the chief clinical dietitian and head of the Department of Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics at Aster Whitefield.

Does honey count as sugar?

According to the expert, honey is technically a form of sugar because of its composition. "It's a combination of glucose and fructose—simple sugars or carbohydrates." This means people following a strict no-sugar diet are usually advised to avoid it altogether. However, the situation may be slightly different for people who are simply trying to reduce refined sugar intake rather than eliminate sugar completely. According to Veena, for them, small amounts of natural, organic honey can be consumed in moderation. Honey also contains small amounts of antioxidants, enzymes and trace minerals, which gives it a slight nutritional edge over refined sugar. Still, experts emphasise that it should not be treated as a free substitute. "If you have

genuine organic honey, 1-2 tablespoons occasionally can fit into a balanced diet, but count it as added sugar."

Is honey healthier than refined sugar?

Honey is often promoted as a healthier sweetener, and there are a few reasons behind that perception. It is less processed than refined sugar and contains small amounts of nutrients such as potassium, calcium and iron. "Honey is a slightly healthier option than refined sugar, with minor nutritional benefits," the dietitian notes. It also has a somewhat lower glycaemic index than table sugar, which means blood sugar levels may rise more slowly. But that doesn't mean it is completely harmless. "However, honey is still a simple carbohydrate and raises blood glucose levels." Because of this, eating too much honey can still contribute to weight gain or metabolic issues. Instead of switching to another sweetener, try gradually reducing your overall preference for sweetness. (Image: Freepik)

How does honey affect blood sugar?

Like other sweeteners, honey contains sugars that the body quickly converts into energy. "Honey contains glucose and fructose, which increase blood glucose levels, albeit at a slower rate than refined sugar or jaggery."

For people trying to cut down on sugar or manage their blood glucose levels, this means portion control is important. "From a metabolic standpoint, the body processes honey like other sugars, so portion control is crucial."

What can you use instead?

The best long-term strategy is not necessarily replacing sugar with another sweetener, but gradually reducing the desire for sweetness. "Try gradually reducing your overall preference for sweetness." Natural low-calorie sweeteners like Stevia or Monk fruit can be alternatives for some people. You can also use naturally sweet ingredients like dates, mashed banana or apple sauce in recipes. Spices such as cinnamon, cardamom or vanilla can also add flavour and sweetness without increasing sugar intake—helping people cut back on sugar more sustainably.

'Be honest with kids': Mona Singh on Gen Z parenting; but expert warns about the risks of oversharing

Unlike millennials' parenting styles that sometimes prioritise authority and discipline, many Gen Z parents focus on building trust and validating their children's feelings. As social media remains dominated by videos sharing parenting tips for the new generation, actor Mona Singh also recently opened up about the importance of being honest with one's children, highlighting the very core of what the Internet calls "Gen Z parenting style." In a recent interview while promoting her project Maa Ka Sum, the Laal Singh Chadha actor stressed that "Gen Z" parenting in this time and age is all about being honest. "I see my sister with her kids, and she is so open and honest with them. And I love that," she said.

Experts explained the importance of honesty between parents and Gen Z children in building long-term trust. Dr Murali Krishna, Visiting Consultant – Psychiatry & Counselling Services, Aster RV Hospital, Bangalore, highlighted that the relationship between parents and their Gen Z children depends on honest communication, as it fosters trust that endures over time, in an age when young people seek truthful relationships. "Children establish safe spaces for disclosing their problems and errors and their emotions through open and honest dialogue with their parents. The process creates greater emotional stability while decreasing hidden behaviour and defiance," Dr Krishna said.

The psychiatrist warned that a lack of honesty can trigger mistrust between children and parents. "The practice of maintaining complete honesty throughout life establishes a powerful bond between parents and their children, which enables them to build better relationships while achieving emotional health throughout their adult years," he added. Dr Krishna further highlighted how Gen Z parenting differs from that of previous generations. Modern parenting focuses on transparent communication, the development of emotional intelligence, and a flexible response to changing situations, he explained.

"Gen Z parents show a preference for communication and mental health practices, mutual respect between parents and children, instead of using traditional methods which



focus on discipline through authoritative control," he stressed. Dr Krishna also noted that Gen Z parents demonstrate better digital expertise through their active social media profiles. "The current culture emphasises personal expression and societal acceptance, while people work to eliminate racial and gender stereotypes which were common in previous eras. The Gen Z parenting approach supports gentle or conscious parenting methods, which help parents understand their children's actions instead of using disciplinary measures that create better emotional bonds and permanent trust between parents and children," he explained.

However, Dr Krishna warned that sometimes, oversharing or being too honest with children can affect them negatively in an age-appropriate way. "Children lack the emotional maturity required to understand complicated matters which involve financial difficulties, marital disputes, and personal challenges. Children who receive information about these matters at an early stage will experience overwhelming feelings because they cannot handle their situations," he said. He further advised that parents should balance between presenting the truth and showing sensitivity to others. "Parents should filter information based on the child's age and emotional readiness, offering reassurance and stability," Dr Krishna stated.

'What exactly is the connection between gut health and brain function?'

Questions about the link between gut health and brain function are becoming increasingly common online. Recently, a user on Quora asked: What exactly is the connection between gut health and brain function? The topic has been gaining traction as more research highlights the role the digestive system may play in mood, memory and overall mental wellbeing. To better understand this growing area of discussion, we reached out to medical experts. According to Dr Atampreet Singh, Senior Director and Head – Neurosciences at ShardaCare-Healthcity, the gut and brain are closely linked through what doctors call the gut-brain axis. "The digestive system and brain constantly communicate through nerves, hormones, and immune signals." This communication system allows the brain and gut to influence each other in several ways. "A healthy gut helps regulate brain chemicals that influence mood, focus, and overall mental health," Dr Singh told indianexpress.com. How the gut communicates with the brain One of the most important connections between the two organs is the vagus nerve, which carries signals between the digestive system and the brain. "When the gut is balanced, it supports better brain performance and emotional stability," Dr Singh explains. The gut also plays a role in producing neurotransmitters—chemical messengers that influence brain function. Many of these chemicals are involved in mood regulation and cognitive processes.

Can gut imbalance affect mood and memory?

The gut helps produce chemicals like serotonin that affect mood. Experts say the gut contains trillions of microorganisms that together form the gut microbiome. When this delicate balance is disturbed, it may influence mental well-being. According to Dr Saksham Seth, Associate Consultant – Gastroenterology at ISIC Multiphasy Hospital, disturbances in the microbiome can affect emotional health and cognitive functions. "When this microbial balance is disrupted, it may affect emotional health and

cognitive functions such as memory and focus." Research has also suggested possible links between gut imbalance and mental health conditions. "Research suggests a possible link between gut imbalance and conditions like anxiety and depression, although many other factors are also involved," Dr Seth says.

Why the gut is called the "second brain"

The digestive system is sometimes referred to as the body's "second brain," and there is a scientific reason behind the phrase. "The gut is often called the 'second brain' because it contains a vast network of nerve cells known as the enteric nervous system," Dr Seth explains. This network of nerves controls many digestive processes and constantly communicates with the brain. "The digestive tract contains millions of nerve cells that help regulate digestion, hormone release, and certain brain signals."

Can improving gut health help the brain?

While gut health alone cannot cure mental health conditions, experts say it can play a supportive role in overall well-being. Dr Singh notes that improving diet and lifestyle habits can positively influence both gut and brain health. "A balanced gut microbiome supports better digestion, reduces inflammation, and helps regulate brain chemicals related to mood and cognition." Simple lifestyle steps may help support this connection. Experts recommend eating fibre-rich foods, fruits, vegetables and probiotic-rich items, along with regular exercise, good sleep and stress management. Dr Seth adds that maintaining gut health helps the body function better overall. "Maintaining a healthy gut microbiome supports better nutrient absorption and helps regulate chemicals that influence mood and brain function." As research into the gut-brain connection continues to grow, doctors say paying attention to digestive health may be an important step toward supporting both physical and mental wellbeing.

Priyansh-Prabhsimran powerplay flex, Iyer's finishing touch extend Punjab Kings' winning run



Shreyas IyerSkipper Shreyas Iyer's unbeaten 69 and half-centuries from openers Arya and Prabhsimran powered Punjab Kings to a record chase of 220 against SRH, keeping their 2026 season unbeaten. (Following openers' demolishing assault, skipper Shreyas Iyer took the baton with his 33-ball knock of 69 runs that took Punjab Kings to a five-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL encounter at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh PCA New International Stadium. With the latest win, hosts registered their third win of the season to remain undefeated in the tournament.

Chasing a target of 220 runs, Punjab Kings reached the target for the loss of four wickets in 18.5 overs with Iyer remaining unbeaten on 69. Openers Priyanshu Arya and Prabhsimran Singh hit half-centuries each with Arya playing a knock of 57 runs and Prabhsimran scoring 51

runs. "When you are going for a very big chase, you have to cash in on the powerplay. At one point, it felt like they could score 250 or even more, but our bowlers made a very good comeback. We have chased successfully in all three matches now, and the quicker we adapt to the conditions, the better cricket we will play," Prabhsimran said while addressing the media post the team's win. The opener smashed his first half-century of this year's IPL and his first-wicket partnership for 99 runs with Arya shifted momentum towards Punjab Kings. His innings included four boundaries and as many sixes. Prabhsimran, who was picked up by Punjab Kings in 2019, has played for the franchise since then and was one of the two players retained by the Punjab franchise in 2024 ahead of the mega auction, with the other player being Shashank Singh. The opener had a stellar last season too, in which he amassed 549 runs in 17 matches and was one of the major pillars in Kings reaching the final before the team lost by six runs against Royal Challengers Bengaluru. He also spoke about his camaraderie with fellow opener Priyanshu Arya. "Priyanshu is batting very well and we enjoy playing together. Having clarity from the captain and coach is very important; we motivate each other a lot, and that shows on the field during these big chases." Meanwhile, Iyer spoke about the start given by the blistering start by the openers and about his knock. "Firstly, we've got a phenomenal start. When you're chasing 220, you need that start. Pleasing to the eye, proper cricketing shots... (It) steadied the rhythm at the start. (It was) not easy, but maintaining that momentum - I needed to give myself time. Once I gauged the pace of the pitch, it was good," Iyer said in the post-match presentation.

When Asha Bhosle collaborated with Australian speedster Brett Lee for a duet



GNS News Agency, April 15

Legendary Indian singer Asha Bhosle passed away at Breach Candy Hospital on Sunday, where she had been admitted on Saturday evening due to extreme exhaustion and a chest infection. Asha Bhosle's passing marks the end of an extraordinary musical journey that spanned over eight decades. Interestingly, she also sang a duet with Australian cricketer Brett Lee back in 2007. The song titled 'You're the One for Me' was released in 2007 for the album Asha and Friends, also had Brett crooning Hindi lines like "Haan, main tumhara hu, tumhara hi rahunga," with the iconic singer. It became a raging hit with young and old alike when it came out.

"I had great time working with her (Asha Bhosle) on the song," Lee had said back in 2016. He also talked about how the collaboration came together in his autobiography "My Life". The music video was shot in 2006 when Lee was in India to participate in the Champions Trophy. "She was a lovely gentle woman with a wonderful sense of humour. Although I didn't have much of an idea about what I was doing, I had real fun. I didn't tell any of my teammates what I was up to; when I went for the shoot I told them I was going for a look through the streets," he wrote.

"You're the One for Me" went on to become a number-one hit in India after making its chart debut at six. It also did well in South Africa. Four months after that whirlwind recording experience, I caught up with Asha when she visited Sydney to perform at the Opera House. She gave me her compilation album with a personal signed message. It will always be one of my treasures," he had added. Beyond films, Bhosle explored independent music and collaborations. Her notable works included Dil Padosi Hai with Gulzar and RD Burman, Jaanam Samjha Karo with Leslie Lewis, and albums with Adnan Sami. Her collaboration Legacy with Ustad Ali Akbar Khan earned her a Grammy Award, while You've Stolen My Heart: Songs from RD Burman's Bollywood brought her another nomination. She also composed music for Aap Ki Asha (2002) and collaborated with artists including Sanjay Dutt, Urmila Matondkar, and the aforementioned Lee.

History in Berlin: Marie-Louise Eta takes charge of Union Berlin as Bundesliga's first female head coach



GNS News Agency, April 15

Union Berlin have appointed Marie-Louise Eta as the interim coach for the rest of the Bundesliga season. (Photo: dpa via AP) Union Berlin have appointed Marie-Louise Eta as the interim coach for the rest of the Bundesliga season. Marie-Louise Eta has made history as the first female coach in charge of a men's team in the Bundesliga when Union Berlin, fighting to stay afloat in the German top flight, named the 34-year-old Eta as a replacement for Steffen Baumgart.

Baumgart, along with his assistants Danilo de Souza and Kevin McKenna, were relieved from their positions in the team after the team lost 3-1 to last-place Heidenheim on Saturday. Eta had already made history three years ago

by becoming the first female assistant coach in the Bundesliga and the top divisions of Europe's 'big five' football leagues, including the English Premier League and the Spanish La Liga.

Eta, named as an interim coach of the men's team, essentially has five games to secure Union Berlin's stay in the top flight in Germany's Bundesliga. Union Berlin are in 11th place in the 18-team division, just seven points clear of St. Pauli in the relegation zone with five rounds remaining. Eta was coaching the Under-19 men's team previously and was also handed the reins of the Union Berlin women's team next season.

"I'm delighted that Marie Louise Eta has agreed to take on this role on an interim basis before she becomes head coach of the women's first team as planned in the summer," Union sporting director Horst Heldt said in a statement. Explaining why the club decided to part with the coach despite the club being in 11th place in the Bundesliga, Heldt said: "We've had a completely disappointing second half of the season so far and we're not letting the table fool us - our situation remains precarious and we desperately need points to secure our place in the league. Two wins out of 14 games since the winter break and the performances shown in recent weeks do not give us the confidence that we can turn things around with the current setup. We have therefore decided to make a fresh start," Heldt said.

Kris Srikkanth slams SRH: 'Can win only if they score 500 with this bowling attack'

GNS News Agency, April 15

Coming into the tournament, Sunrisers Hyderabad's bowling was under scrutiny, but as the tournament started and is in progress, the attack has shown more and more flaws. In the game against the Punjab Kings on Saturday, defending 220 runs, the side looked clueless. Although spinners Shivang Kumar and Harsh Dubey did a decent job, the rest of the bowling looked toothless. Speaking about SRH's vulnerable bowling attack, former Indian selector Kris Srikkanth said SRH need to score 500 runs to win.

"They have no scope with their bowling. The opposition will chase down even 300 against their bowling. Their two young spinners, Harsh Dubey and Shivang Kumar, are good. But their bowling starts and ends there. Eshan Malinga will get smashed straight to Colombo with his bowling, yet, SRH is playing him," Srikkanth said on his YouTube channel. "It's time over for Jaydev Unadkat and Harshal Patel. SRH can win only if they score 500 with this bowling attack. You can't do anything with this bowling. It's not even up to the level of the first division," he added. Shreyas Iyer was awarded Player Of the Match for his 33-ball 69. Srikkanth lauded Iyer and said: "PBKS have a fantastic captain, and one that shows a lot of responsibility. He just



came in and easily won the game for them with his batting. Everyone is playing at a 200+ strike rate. It is impossible to beat them if they all play at this strike rate," said Srikkanth.

"I think in the middle, we could have ended up with a total of 250 at least the way we got started. But, the things happen. We did not end up getting those runs. But at the same time, they did actually bat well in the beginning and they also had the powerplay on their side. But at the same time, I feel we were not so good with the execution.

Why is Aakash Chopra 'heartbroken' with Gujarat Titans team selections



GNS News Agency, April 15

Lucknow Super Giants will take on Gujarat Titans on Sunday. Former Indian cricketer Aakash Chopra predicted his playing combinations for the game. Kumar Kushagra came into the side in the Titans' game against the Rajasthan Royals when Gill was injured. Chopra urged Titans to play Kushagra more despite Gill being back in the side and said he will be "heartbroken" if Kushagra does not play.

"You won a good match. Jos Buttler, Shubman Gill

and Rashid Khan are in form, and Sai Sudharsan was already in form. So play Kumar Kushagra. You are not playing him. I am heartbroken when you don't play him, and you don't play Anuj Rawat as well. You play Shahruxh Khan and Rahul Tewatia. I know you trust in people, Ashish Nehra and company, but I feel they should be played," he said on his YouTube channel. So far in the ongoing season, Sharukh Khan has scored 15 runs at an average of 15.50, and Tewatia has scored 24 runs from three innings.

"In bowling, I won't talk about Sai Kishore here. You will find left-handers in between here. You will find Rishabh Pant first and Nicholas Pooran after that. So use off-break if you can, or else Washington Sundar's role is not yet defined," he observed. Speaking of the Lucknow Super Giants combinations, Chopra said, "I have only one suggestion for Lucknow. We will be extremely eager to watch Mukul Choudhary once again. Make M Siddharth sit out and play George Linde because you are playing with only three overseas players," he said. "So you can play Linde, who will give you a little bowling, and you will get a batter at No. 8. You might have to make Ayush Badoni bowl a little as well. If Mohsin is fit, think about him because Mohsin is brilliant. He had a slightly tight hamstring, so you didn't play him, but if he is fit, play him," Chopra observed.

R Ashwin on Sanju Samson after 56-ball 115: 'I just want to give Sanju one message. This is not enough...don't want 80,90 or 100 from Sanju, I don't want that'



GNS News Agency, April 15

Sanju samsonSanju Samson of Chennai Super Kings reaches his century during Match 18 of the TATA Indian Premier League 2026 between Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals at MA Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai, India.

Chennai Super Kings on Saturday registered their first win of the ongoing Indian Premier League season. Sanju Samson scored a sublime 56-ball 115 to help the hosts win against the Delhi Capitals. However, former Indian cricketer R Ashwin opined that this was not enough from Samson.

His job is to keep piling on points. "I just want to give Sanju one message. This is not enough. This is now two points, I don't want 80,90 or 100 from Sanju, I don't want that. CSK got 2 points, need two more on the 14th, and then two more points after that, that is it. His job is that. He looks switched on now. When he wins six points in three games with his bat, then I will love him, that is my wish for him," Ashwin said on his YouTube channel.

Chennai managed to get 212 runs, which Ashwin thought were not enough, and Delhi should have gotten those runs. "Delhi should have chased this score down, I think even 230 would have been less, the wicket was that good. Delhi could not adapt. CSK had the chance to score 230-240, and they lost the opportunity. They did not do two things. Sure, Ayush Mhatre scored a fifty, but they have so many spin hitters like Brevis and Dube. So, they should have taken that risk," R Ashwin said. "Ayush Mhatre played really well, scored 50 off 30 balls, but Brevis or Dube can hit 3-4 sixes in an over. They have that ability. If there were two 20-run overs, then the score would have been 240. CSK were at 160 after the 15th over mark, and DC did a solid comeback from there, why? Because they had two tired batters in Ayush and Sanju. I was not surprised. According to me, it was a bit late and should have been done sooner," he added.

Mumbai is getting its fifth cricket stadium. Chirag Shetty, World No. 1, has no arena to call home



GNS News Agency, April 15

Chirag Shetty, perhaps Mumbai's greatest international athlete currently, a certified No. 1, has no home stadium that can even dream of a Super 500 event while he's at the peak of his career. (Reuters Photo/File) Chirag Shetty, perhaps Mumbai's greatest international athlete currently, a certified No. 1, has no home stadium that can even dream of a Super 500 event while he's at the peak of his career. (Reuters Photo/File)

Chirag Shetty will be the last person to carp about cricket - he loves the sport, and doesn't just watch it but plays it too. He's a proper Mumbaier that way. Most Indian top athletes adore cricket, feel elated as fans when the Indian Cricket Team wins, and know their IPL jargon. But does Mumbai, a global metropolis, respect Chirag Shetty - a former World No. 1, twice World Championship medalist, Asiad and Asian Championships title holder, and Thomas Cup champion in badminton? News of Mumbai getting probably the biggest, largest, swankiest, cleverest cricket stadium to host over a lakh trickled out this week. That will be the city's fifth cricket venue after Wankhede, Brabourne, DY Patil and BKC - only because all ICC finals keep getting allotted to Ahmedabad, and somebody let it slip that Wankhede was too small a capacity, despite it doing fairly alright all these years across all formats. So Mumbai gets dragged into the laughable competition of who has the biggest stadium.

Juxtapose that with the fact that India's financial and glamour capital, with some of the richest citizens, the second-most important city in the country, has no world-class stadia for any of these sports - hockey, badminton, tennis, track and field, swimming, or a generic top-grade venue for gymnastics, TT, boxing, wrestling or any of the multi-purpose arena sports. Thane's Dadoji Konddev Stadium, which continues to have a massive crop of enthusiasts for athletics, has been encroached upon for IPL second-team training, with four lanes of the track being literally eaten up by cricket grass. The Andheri Sports Complex lies in disuse and is of no utility for international-level events. And Chirag Shetty, perhaps the city's greatest international athlete currently, a certified No. 1, has no home stadium that can even dream of a Super 500 event while he's at the peak of his career.

The city's Anglo-Indian community base that nourished past Indian hockey teams has been allowed to erode. Cooperage is an apology of a football venue, though the sport deserves its space in South Mumbai, just as cricket and hockey do. The track and field talent from the Thane-Mumbra and Govandi belts has no stadium left to train at, and pushing sport further into Navi Mumbai is a sign of a deteriorating sports culture, as cricket saturates and then

irritates the sportscape. It was bad enough that private clubs and gymkhanas made sport inaccessible to many who actually played. The uber-rich had access to facilities in South Bombay but no intention to take up sport as a career. NSCI, CCI, Bombay Gymkhana can host state championships at best, or a Tata Open. But there's nothing in Mumbai to host the world's greatest shuttlers.

Mumbai was never a single-sport city. It won't forcibly morph into one either, just because a spectacular stadium rises somewhere on the horizon. Even a North Stand regular at Wankhede - amongst the most fanatic of cricket supporters - would blanch at the prospect of the state capital turning into a cricket monochrome. True cricket fans always have a second love amongst Olympic sports, and are not insecure about crowding the whole city with cricket stadia and killing all other sports. Ask Sunil Gavaskar what badminton means to this city. Or Sachin Tendulkar.

Nobody hates cricket. But the resentment towards the mammoth sport builds when others are blatantly ignored, when their home city erases them from the sporting history of the land they call their own. Chirag Shetty won India the Thomas Cup in 2022, the team World Cup of badminton. It was as big as the 2011 50-over Cricket World Cup, in his sport. India doesn't win World Cups that often - except in kabaddi - for everyone to simply forget about this one. He will perhaps be the city's only Asian Games-bound athlete, or one of a handful. But he doesn't have a badminton arena, or a world-class multipurpose stadium that he could share with 20 other indoor sports, to call his home court while cricket stadia proliferate. Mumbai, the megapolis, looks incredibly small and limited and minimum when that gets spelled out.

Payal wins two gold at Asian Oceania Open Championship

Hyderabad: Payal of Haryana, who has trained at the Aditya Mehta Foundation (Hyderabad), delivered an exceptional performance at the Bangkok Asian Oceania Open Championship, bringing pride to the nation with an impressive medal haul. Having been identified and nurtured by the Foundation from the grassroots level, Payal's journey is a testament to structured training, resilience and consistent support. Competing in the highly competitive 67 kg junior category, which featured participants from five countries with six competitors, Payal won two gold medals in the individual category and two silver medals in total lift. "This achievement marks yet another proud moment for the Aditya Mehta Foundation, reinforcing its commitment to developing athletes from the grassroots to elite levels," the AMF media release stated. The Foundation extended its sincere gratitude to its valued supporters - Gmmco, Invesco, NTT Data Business Solutions and Alcon - whose continued support plays a crucial role in enabling such success stories. "Payal's victory stands as an inspiration to young athletes across India and highlights the growing strength of Indian representation in global sporting arenas." For the record, the AMF is dedicated to empowering para-athletes through world-class training, infrastructure and holistic support, with a vision to build champions who represent India with pride on the global stage.

'If a bank lost Rs 500 Crore, the country would erupt': FEFSSI chief on Vijay film Jana Nayagan Leak



RK Selvamani, President of the Film Employees Federation of South India, has come out strongly against the pre-release leak of Vijay-starrer Jana Nayagan, calling it the single largest robbery in the country and expressing deep frustration that the incident has not triggered the kind of national outrage he believes it deserves. In a media interaction, Selvamani did not hold back. "This is the biggest robbery in India, but everyone is staying quiet," he said, adding, "If a bank lost Rs 500 crore, the whole country would be in an uproar. Why is it different for a movie? Rs 500 crore worth of property has been stolen here and sent to lakhs of people." Theater owners left stranded.

For Selvamani, the leak has a direct and painful human cost for everyone in the exhibition chain who had been counting on Jana Nayagan. "Theater owners have been waiting for four months, hoping this movie would save them. At a time when the cinema industry is struggling, we expected this film to bring in great revenue, but then this happens," he said. Jana Nayagan was originally slated for a Pongal release in January 2026 and was widely seen as one of the films most capable of pulling audiences back to cinemas in large numbers. With exhibition businesses across Tamil Nadu having endured a prolonged lean period, this release carried real economic hope for hundreds of theater owners and their staff. That hope has now been seriously damaged.

Selvamani said, "This release should have been a festival for theaters. The money would have flowed from the theaters to distributors, then to producers, and finally to the workers. That chain is now broken. This was the most

awaited film of the year. Seeing it leak like this is a shock and a massive loss." He also pointed out the absence of any effective enforcement mechanism in India to deal with film piracy at scale, drawing a direct contrast with how similar situations are handled in Hollywood. "Our industry has zero protection. If a Hollywood movie leaks like this, people get arrested immediately. But when it happens to an Indian film, no one even asks a question." Selvamani also revealed that FEFSSI had done its own preliminary inquiry into the origins of the so-called "edit print" that circulated online. "We checked with the editor about the edit print leak. They said copies were sent to Karnataka for dubbing and Hyderabad for audio mixing. We don't know if it leaked from there. It is terrifying that stolen property is being delivered straight to people's homes without any fear or reaction," he said. The digital shift and its vulnerabilities.

Selvamani drew a clear line between the old era of physical film distribution and the current digital landscape, explaining why leaks are now structurally easier to execute. "Back when we used physical film rolls, the copy was under one person's control. It was impossible to leak it before the release," he said, adding, "But now everything is digital. Especially for a Pan-India film, work happens in many places at once, and everything is sent over the internet. For digital thieves, grabbing these files is easy."

Also Read: Love Insurance Kompany Box Office Collection Day 2: Pradeep Ranganathan-starrer earns over Rs 22.38 crore globally He directly linked his concern to what Kamal Haasan had said publicly following the leak. Haasan had written on social media that the leak was not an accident but the result of systemic failure, arguing that inordinate delays in certification had created fertile ground for piracy. Selvamani endorsed that reading. "This is exactly what Kamal Haasan sir meant in his tweet. This system is flawed," he said. Selvamani closed with a formal appeal to those in power, making clear that he expects both the Central and State governments to act, and not merely react. "I request the Central and State governments: at least give us the confidence that these thieves will be punished," he said, adding, "This is spreading through the internet, which is under the Central Government's control. They must find a way to stop this." As of now, Jana Nayagan remains without a theatrical release date. KVN Productions has confirmed that investigations are underway and that civil and criminal proceedings will be initiated against every individual found to be part of the distribution chain of the leaked content.

The secret life of 'Lion': When actor Ajit hid a second family in Hyderabad for years



Ajit, best known for playing memorable antagonist roles like Lion in Subhash Ghai's 1976 action thriller Kalicharan, had quite an eventful personal life. The actor, who breathed his last at the age of 76 in 1988, got married thrice. In fact, he remained committed to his second wife, who was also his cousin, and their children, even after marrying his third wife, Sarah, with whom he had two children. Shehzad Khan, Ajit's elder son from his third marriage, has now opened up on his estranged yet extended family. He revealed that while Ajit had a love marriage with his first wife, Gwen, an Anglo-Indian, it fell apart because they couldn't conceive kids. "How could the Pathan legacy move forward then? It was a huge deal back then. So, my grandfather got him married to his cousin, Shahida aunty," said Shehzad.

Shahida and Ajit went on to have three sons — Shahid Ali Khan, Zahid Ali Khan, and Abid Ali Khan — but that was

a mystery to Sarah, who went on to be Ajit's third wife, also a love marriage. "My dad's second marriage remained intact. He never told my mom he's married. He hid his second wife and their kids away in Hyderabad. My mother was 25 years younger than my father. Had my mom known about his second marriage, she'd have never married him. She found out only after I was born," revealed Shehzad.

While Ajit's second marriage remained a mystery till he got married to Sarah, he did make his third wife meet Gwen, with whom he remained amicable long after their divorce and despite her relocating to London. But even after Sarah got to know of Ajit's second wife and their kids, she remained in the marriage. "My mom compromised, like every woman did back then. Of course, I was pained by that. It came as a shock to me too," said Shehzad. He recalled how his father was quite impartial towards his second wife and their kids, as he continued to shuttle between both his families in Hyderabad and Mumbai. "God bless him, but he was so unfair that he bought a lot of property in Hyderabad, but close to nothing here. My stepbrothers seized all the property. It doesn't matter who the property was bought for, but he was as much our dad as theirs. The property has to be divided," said Shehzad, adding, "But God has its own way of getting back. One of them has a kidney issue, the other has some other. How long would you sustain yourself with rental income?" Shehzad Khan confirmed he's not in touch with any of his stepbrothers. "I don't have any connection with them. They're all in Hyderabad. The second wife is still around if I'm not mistaken," he said, adding, "My dad may have made mistakes — once, twice, or I'd say even thrice — but he remained our father."

Actor-filmmaker Ameer draws fire for viewing and commenting on leaked Jana Nayagan footage

When Jana Nayagan surfaced on piracy platforms ahead of its theatrical release, most of Tamil cinema rallied around the film's producers with messages of solidarity and calls to boycott pirated content. However, Tamil filmmaker and actor Ameer took a different path. He watched the leaked footage and then used his WhatsApp status to raise an objection about what he saw, triggering a controversy that quickly shifted focus from the leak itself to the director's conduct.

On his WhatsApp status, Ameer criticised the film's portrayal of Muslims, writing: "Even in the leaked footage of Jana Nayagan, Muslims are portrayed as terrorists. Is this your politics? When will this mindset change?" The reaction that followed was swift. Social media users slammed the director for viewing and discussing content from a major film leak. The criticism was two-pronged: many took issue with the substance of his remark, while others argued that by watching and publicly commenting on pirated footage, Ameer had legitimised the very act that the rest of the industry was condemning.

Prominent names from across film industries had voiced their outrage. Rajinikanth said he was pained and shocked, and urged the government to treat the incident as a crime requiring strict punishment. Kamal Haasan wrote that the leak was not an accident but the result of systemic failure, adding that inordinate delays in certification had created fertile ground for piracy and that when legal access is stalled, illegitimate channels take over. Director A.R. Murugadoss wrote that a film, when leaked, is not just a movie but the dreams and livelihoods of many. Telugu star Vijay Deverakonda said the incident made him angry and recalled experiencing a similar loss early in his own career.

Not his first comment on the film This was not the first time Ameer had weighed in on the Jana Nayagan contro-

versy. Earlier, reacting to the delay in CBFC certification for the film, Ameer had said: "I don't remember any instance where the CBFC said that a film must be reviewed and decided upon by the Election Commission for certification. If that is the case, we cannot deny, and must accept, that there is a significant political angle hidden in it." That earlier remark had pointed to what he saw as institutional interference driven by political considerations, given the timing of the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections and Vijay's own political entry with Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam. The latest comment, however, was of a different nature. It shifted the conversation from the certification process to the content of the film itself. Ameer did not stop at his WhatsApp status. In a subsequent media interaction, he went further, directing his challenge specifically at Jana Nayagan director H Vinoth and making clear he expected a public response. He said: "Shouldn't the filmmaker, who is now appealing to the public not to boycott the movie, also provide a response to this specific issue? He certainly has a duty to answer it. He ought to say something to the effect of: 'Look, my friend and brother, Ameer, has raised this pertinent question; I want to ensure that no one else misunderstands our intentions in this regard.'" Separate from Ameer's comments, KVN Productions recently issued a statement confirming that it will initiate civil and criminal proceedings against individuals who downloaded, stored, or circulated the leaked content on platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, and YouTube. Jana Nayagan, directed by H. Vinoth, remains without a theatrical release date. The film is still awaiting CBFC certification and is not expected to reach cinemas before the end of April 2026. It features Vijay alongside Pooja Hegde, Bobby Deol, Mamitha Baiju, Prakash Raj, and Priyamani, and carries the weight of being Vijay's final screen appearance before he devotes himself entirely to politics.

Ajith Kumar-starrer 'Amakkalam' to re-release on April 24



The film was directed by Saran and originally released on August 13, 1999. It featured Kumar in the role of Vasu, an unruly man, who fights with Mohana (played by Shalini), the daughter of a police officer, over a

movie reel. Later, the two fall in love but end up in unforeseen problems while they try to unite. Production banner Sparrow Cinemas shared the news with a post on its official X handle on Saturday. It featured the film's poster. "AK & Shalini A love that still feels fresh, pure, and timeless! April 24 - Feel the love again in theatres," read the caption. "Entire Tamil Nadu theatrical release by Sparrow Cinemas - Karthik V. Some stories don't age! they become emotions. #AK25 #AjithKumar #Shalini #ReRelease," it added. The film turned out to be a blockbuster at the box office, and it also marked the project which transformed Kumar from a romantic hero into a bankable action hero. It was also remade in Telugu and was titled "Leela Mahal Centre". It featured Aryan Rajesh and released in 2004. The Kannada version was titled "Asura" and released in 2001. It featured Shiva Rajkumar and Raghuvaran.

Adivi Sesh and Mrunal Thakur film crosses Rs 24 crore mark worldwide

Dacoit box office collection Day 2: Adivi Sesh's Dacoit: A Love Story has maintained its momentum on its second day in cinemas, recording a jump over its opening Friday numbers and pushing its worldwide gross past the Rs 24 crore mark. The film, which stars Adivi Sesh and Mrunal Thakur in the lead role and marks the directorial debut of cinematographer Shaneli Deo, released across India and overseas on April 10. According to box office tracker Sacnilk, Dacoit collected a net of Rs 7.00 crore on Day 2 across 3,734 shows. This represents an improvement over its Day 1 India net of Rs 6.55 crore across 3,800 shows. A Saturday uptick of this kind is generally considered a healthy sign for a mid-budget film, suggesting that positive word of mouth is drawing in audiences beyond the initial opening day crowd.

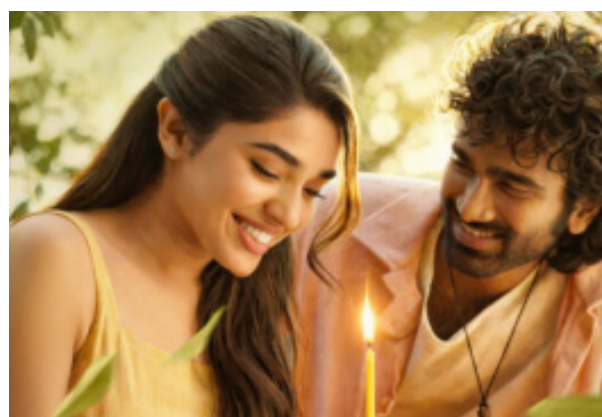
The cumulative India net collection after two days stands at Rs 13.55 crore, while the total India gross has reached Rs 15.81 crore. State-wise data from Sacnilk shows that the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana belt has been the film's strongest performing region, which is consistent with Adivi Sesh's established fanbase in the Telugu-speaking market. Karnataka and the rest of India have contributed meaningfully as well, though on a smaller scale. The film was shot simultaneously in Telugu and Hindi, giving it a genuine bilingual presence rather than a dubbed one.

On the overseas front, the film added Rs 2.50 crore on Day 2, taking its total overseas gross to Rs 9.00 crore across the two-day period. The production house confirmed that overseas collections have crossed the \$1 million mark, a milestone that points to a solid showing in markets such as North America, where the film had crossed \$100,000 in



premiere sales alone before its release. The worldwide gross now stands at Rs 24.81 crore after just two days of theatrical run. With worldwide earnings of Rs 14.13 crore, Dacoit delivered a career-best opening day for Adivi Sesh, surpassing his previous record set by Major, which had collected Rs 13.15 crore on its first day. The opening also extended his record of back-to-back double-digit worldwide openings to three consecutive films, a consistency that very few actors in the mid-budget Telugu space have managed to sustain. Sesh's last theatrical releases before this were Major and HIT: The Second Case, both in 2022, meaning he is returning to cinemas after nearly four years. That gap, and the expectations it built around his return, appear to have translated into genuine audience interest through the opening weekend.

Pradeep Ranganathan-starrer earns over Rs 22.38 crore globally



Love Insurance Kompany Box Office Collection Day 2: After a decent opening at the box office, collecting Rs 7.05 crore on Day 1 (Friday) across 3,202 shows with an occupancy of 32.9%, Pradeep Ranganathan's Love Insurance Kompany (LIK) witnessed a noticeable jump on Day 2 (Saturday).

According to trade tracker Sacnilk, on April 11, LIK earned Rs 7.70 crore from 3,316 shows, with occupancy improving to 35.4%, indicating growing audience traction

over the weekend. With Saturday's earnings, the film's total India gross stands at Rs 17.08 crore, while its India net collections have reached Rs 14.75 crore. Overseas, the film added Rs 3 crore on its second day, taking the total to Rs 5.30 crore. Its worldwide gross now stands at Rs 22.38 crore.

The overall occupancy of Love Insurance Kompany on Saturday stood at 36.05%, with a slow start in the morning at 21.23%. The film picked up significantly in the afternoon with 40.23%, followed by a slight dip in the evening at 31.69%, before witnessing a strong surge in night shows, which recorded the highest occupancy of the day at 48.46%. On Day 2, Love Insurance Kompany saw its strongest performance in Tamil, which contributed Rs 6.20 crore with a solid 40.0% occupancy across 2,226 shows. Meanwhile, the Telugu version added Rs 1.50 crore with a comparatively lower occupancy of 26.0% from 1,090 shows, indicating that the film's primary traction remains in the Tamil market. Love Insurance Kompany is written and directed by Vignesh Shivan and produced under the banners of Rowdy Pictures and Seven Screen Studio. The film features Pradeep Ranganathan, S. J. Suryah, and Krithi Shetty in lead roles, with Yogi Babu, Seeman, Gouri G. Kishan, Shah Ra, Malavika, and Sunil Reddy in supporting roles.

Meryl Streep approves Karan Johar's Rs 1.25 lakh Prada shoes as Anne Hathaway quizzes him.



The Devil Wears Prada 2 is easily one of the most anticipated films of the year, and the buzz around it continues to grow. Ahead of its release, filmmaker-producer Karan Johar had a memorable interaction with Hollywood stars Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway during their international promotional tour in Tokyo. Giving fans a peek into this meeting, the official Instagram handle of 20th Century Studios shared a video capturing a light-hearted exchange between the trio.

In the clip, Anne playfully asked Karan, "But do you judge their shoes?" After a brief pause, Karan responded with a grin, "All the time," sending Anne into fits of laughter.

Adding to the fun moment, Meryl chimed in with a compliment, saying, "But you have the perfect shoe on today," approving of his fashion choice. For the occasion, Karan Johar was seen sporting a striking black-and-white pair of downtown leather Prada sneakers, reportedly worth over Rs 1.25 lakh.

Sharing his excitement earlier, Karan had posted pictures with the two stars on Instagram, expressing his admiration for Meryl Streep. "This is not a caption. This is a confession. I am singularly obsessed and inspired by the unmatched brilliance of Meryl Streep," he wrote, calling her his "guru" in the art of acting. Revealing his deep connection with the original The Devil Wears Prada, Karan admitted to watching it as many as 47 times. "I have quoted it at dinner tables, in edit suites and in board meetings (no kidding!). So when I tell you that standing next to HER & them today, I felt the ground shift, please believe me," he shared, adding that despite trying to stay composed, his "knees were rattling." He also praised both actors for their warmth, writing, "They were both so warm and welcoming. This image is going in my will." The Devil Wears Prada 2 fans are eagerly awaiting the sequel, which brings back the iconic characters of Miranda Priestly and Andy Sachs, nearly two decades after the original became a cult classic. The film will also see the return of Emily Blunt as Emily Charlton and Stanley Tucci reprising his beloved role. The Devil Wears Prada 2 is slated for a worldwide release on May 1, promising a fresh dose of high-fashion drama and nostalgia.