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Telangana to hold public hearing on new power distribution licence on May 28

Hyderabad: A public hearing on the Telangana Rythu Power Distribution Company Limited (TGRPDCL) licence application will be held on May 28 at the Telangana Electricity Regulatory Commission (TGERC) from 11 am onwards. Geographic Reference

TGRPDCL has applied for a power distribution licence under the Electricity Act, 2003. The TGERC has invited the public to send their comments, suggestions, or objections on this proposal. They must be submitted in writing by 5 pm on May 18 either by post or email (secy-tgerc@telangana.gov.in).

Kaushik Reddy warns of mass protests over Sirasapalli dumping yard

Hyderabad: Huzurabad MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy warned of intensified protests if the proposed dumping yard at Sirasapalli is not cancelled. He opposed the plan to shift waste from the erstwhile Karimnagar and Warangal districts to his constituency. City & Local Guides Speaking to mediapersons at Telangana Bhavan on Friday, the Huzurabad MLA said protests have been continuing for 25 days at Ambedkar Chowrasta, with participation from all political parties. He announced that a Joint Action Committee of political parties and civil organisations will launch a Padayatra from April 22, if the government fails to withdraw the proposed plan.

Constitution Amendment Bill on women's quota fails in Lok Sabha

A Constitution Amendment Bill to implement women's reservation from 2029 and expand Lok Sabha seats was defeated in the Lower House, falling short of the required two-thirds majority. While 298 MPs supported it, 230 voted against the proposal

New Delhi, April 17

A Constitution Amendment Bill to implement reservation for women in legislatures in 2029 and increase the number of seats of the Lok Sabha was defeated on Friday in the Lower House.

While 298 members voted in support of the Bill, 230 MPs voted against it. Out of 528 members who voted, the Bill required 352 votes for a two-thirds majority.

According to the Constitution Amendment Bill, Lok Sabha seats were to be increased to a maximum of 850 from the current 543 to "operationalise" the women's reservation law before the 2029 parliamen-



tary polls, following a delimitation exercise based on the 2011 Census.

Seats were also to be increased in states and Union Territory assemblies

to accommodate 33 per cent reservation for women.

Telangana CM Revanth Reddy praises Opposition for rejecting Women's Reservation Bill

HYDERABAD, APRIL 17

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy declared today a day when a national calamity was averted. He praised democratic forces and opposition parties for uniting to prevent what he called a disaster.

Reddy's comments followed the rejection of the 131st Constitutional Amendment Bill—aimed at implementing 33 per cent reservation for women—in the Lok Sabha.

He stated, "Under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, a



national calamity was thwarted. Today will be re-

membered as a golden day in the history of the nation."

He thanked allied leaders for their support.

Allahabad HC orders inquiry into Rahul Gandhi's alleged dual citizenship

Lucknow: The Allahabad High Court has directed Uttar Pradesh Police to conduct an inquiry and consider filing an FIR into a matter related to the alleged dual citizenship of Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul

Rae Bareilly.

Shishir has sought registration of an FIR and a detailed probe, levelling allegations under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Official Secrets Act, the Foreigners Act and the Passport Act.

The petitioner claimed that he has documents and some emails from the British government that prove that Rahul Gandhi is a British citizen, and that, as a result, he is ineligible to contest elections in India and cannot hold the post of a Lok Sabha member.

He had filed a complaint against the Congress leader before a special MP/MLA court in Rae Bareilly, and the matter was transferred to the Lucknow Bench of the High Court on December 17, 2025.

Recently, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma launched a scathing attack on Rahul Gandhi, questioning the transparency of his foreign travels.

"Before making allegations against others, Rahul Gandhi should be transparent about his own passport and his foreign visits. I am ready to put my passport and my entire family's passports before the press. Let Rahul Gandhi do the same — then we will know where he has been going," CM Sarma said.

He also challenged Gandhi to address the public openly on the allegations levelled against him over the past 10 years, adding, "A person who makes allegations must also be prepared to answer questions."



Gandhi, a lawyer said on Friday.

Justice Subhash Vidyarthi gave the order on a petition filed by Karnataka resident S. Vignesh Shishir, a BJP worker, challenging a January 28 order of a special MP/MLA court in Lucknow, which had rejected his plea seeking registration of an FIR against the Congress leader.

The High Court's Lucknow Bench said the allegation that Rahul Gandhi holds dual citizenship warrants an inquiry.

The petitioner moved the High Court against the lower court's decision that it was not competent to decide issues relating to dual citizenship, and challenged his eligibility to continue as a member of Parliament from

Minister Sridhar Babu inaugurates New Railway Over Bridge in Hyderabad

A major development in Hyderabad's infrastructure took place today as the new Shastripuram Railway Over Bridge in Hyderabad was inaugurated by Minister Sridhar Babu.

Built at a cost of ₹71 crore by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), the four-lane flyover stretches approximately 490 metres.

The project was realised through joint efforts between the GHMC and South Central Railway. The new flyover has eased traffic along the Mailardevpally to Falaknuma route, alleviat-



ing congestion at Uddamgadda level crossing.

It is expected to significantly reduce travel times and enhance connectivity between Mailardevpally, Vattepally, Falaknuma, and the RTC Bus Depot.



CM Revanth Reddy urges centre to procure Support from Union Minister

HYDERABAD, APRIL 17

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy met with Union Civil Supplies Minister Pralhad Joshi to discuss outstanding funds owed to the state and other issues.

They urged the Union Minister to procure 30 lakh metric tonnes of parboiled paddy for the 2025-26 Ravi and Kharif seasons.

The Chief Minister explained that the Yasangi crop

yield for 2025-26 is expected to reach 90 lakh metric tonnes and requested the full procurement to support Telangana's farmers.

Meanwhile, Revanth Reddy's visit to Delhi is busy, as he advocates for a "hybrid model" for constituency delimitation. He is working with southern state Chief Ministers to oppose the pro-rata formula and is also meeting Union Ministers to secure funds and schemes for Telangana.

13 officials facing corruption charges surrender before court

Patna, April 17

In a significant push against corruption, Bihar's Vigilance Investigation Bureau has intensified its crackdown, leading to the surrender of 13 absconding accused in various corruption cases across the state, an official said on Friday.

These individuals had been evading judicial proceedings for a prolonged period, prompting courts to issue warrants for their arrest.

Under sustained legal pressure and enforcement measures, all 13 accused surrendered before their respective special courts during February and March 2026.

The Bureau revealed that 7 accused named Bablu Singh (Begusarai), Ram Awtar Ram (Rohtas), Harendra Ram (Saran), Amresh Jha (Vaishali), Ravindra Prasad (Saharsa), Virendra Prasad Mandal (Muzaffarpur) and (Rinku Devi (Rohtas) are linked to cases involving misuse of official position and 6 accused named Raj Kumar (Lakhisarai), Sharda Prasad Singh (Bhagalpur), Sunil Kumar Rai (Muzaffarpur), Manish Kumar (Muzaffarpur) Dr Vijay Kumar Singh (Civil Surgeon Jehanabad), and Pranay Kumar (Muzaffarpur) are involved in trap cases, where they were allegedly caught red-handed while accepting bribes. These cases span multiple districts, including Patna, Muzaffarpur, and Bhagalpur.

The Vigilance Department had earlier issued a clear warning to all absconding accused to surrender by the end of March, failing which strict legal action would be initiated. With compliance achieved in these cases, the department is now preparing to further intensify enforcement drives in April.

Officials have reiterated that the campaign against corruption will continue with full force. The Bureau emphasised that no absconding accused will be allowed to evade the law, no leniency will be shown at any stage of corruption cases, and legal proceedings will be pursued rigorously to ensure accountability.

The development reflects a more aggressive and systematic approach by vigilance authorities, signalling that enforcement agencies are increasingly tightening the net around corruption in Bihar's administrative system.

Earlier in the day, the Bihar Vigilance Investigation Bureau had exposed a bribery racket in Purnea district, arresting two government employees red-handed while accepting a bribe of Rs 40,000.

The accused—Revenue employee Lal Babu Rajak and archives staffer Rumi Kundu—were caught during a trap laid by the Vigilance team at the Purnea East block office on Friday.



Indian Chronicle

English Daily

BBMB rule change dilutes riparian rights

THE Centre's decision to amend the rules governing the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) has triggered predictable outrage in Punjab and Haryana. But the issue goes far beyond routine political protest. At its core lies a fundamental question: how far can Central authority extend into institutions that were designed to embody cooperative federalism? By ending the longstanding convention that key technical posts in the BBMB would be held by officers from the partner states, the Centre has altered the delicate balance that underpins the management of crucial river waters. For Punjab and Haryana, whose agrarian economies depend heavily on these waters, the move is being seen as a dilution of their rightful stake.

The timing is equally significant. With summer approaching and water demand set to rise, any perception of reduced state control risks fuelling inter-state tensions, particularly against the backdrop of the unresolved SYL canal dispute. Trust, once eroded in water-sharing arrangements, is difficult to rebuild. The Centre may argue that broad-basing appointments enhances efficiency and professionalism. Yet, governance structures in a federal polity cannot be judged by technocratic logic alone. They must also inspire confidence among stakeholders. In river water management, where history, geography and politics intersect, legitimacy is as important as competence. What is needed is not unilateral change but consultation and consensus. The BBMB has long been a symbol of negotiated coexistence between riparian states. Undermining that symbolism risks reopening old fault lines. A course correction is still possible. The Centre must engage with the states to evolve a framework that balances efficiency with federal sensitivity.

MGNREGA Workers' Issues Mount Chalo Sub-Collector Office

Call on April 21 No Water, No Wages on Time: Labourers Protest in Kagaznagar



"Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, April 17: Telangana Agricultural Workers' Union district convener Munjam Anand Kumar inspected MGNREGA works at Battupalli and NGO Colony villages and interacted with labourers over their grievances. "He called for a "Chalo Sub-Collector Office" protest on April 21, urging workers to participate in large numbers for resolution of their issues. "He demanded immediate scrapping of the two-photo attendance system, alleging it is depriving many workers of employment. He also accused the Centre of weakening the scheme. "Amid 44-45°C heat, workers lack basic facilities like drinking water and tents, he said, blaming official negligence. Labourers also complained of delayed wages and rising travel costs to distant worksites. "He warned that protests would intensify if issues are not resolved immediately.

Workers Must Take Precautions at MGNREGA Worksites: DRDO Dattarao



Scheme (MGNREGA) works in Sarandi Gram Panchayat of Wankidi Mandal on Friday. Along with Sarpanch Moharle Bapuji, he inspected the progress of the works on site. "Speaking on the occasion, Dattarao emphasized that due to the rising summer temperatures, workers engaged in MGNREGA works must take necessary precautions to protect their health. He advised workers to cover their heads with cloth or scarves to prevent direct exposure to heat and hot winds. He also instructed officials to ensure the availability of drinking water, proper shade, and ORS packets at all worksites. He stressed that the health and safety of workers should be given top priority. "During the visit, Dattarao interacted with the workers and enquired about their issues. He stated that the objective of the MGNREGA scheme is not only to provide employment but also to ensure the safety and well-being of workers. APO Sravan Kumar, EC Mosin, TA Naresh, Panchayat Secretary Venkatesh, FA Shankar, Senior Mate Jade Raj Kumar, and MGNREGA workers were present on the occasion.

"Indian Chronicle. Jade Srinivas. April, 17" District Rural Development Officer (DRDO) Dattarao visited the ongoing Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee

Old Pension Scheme should be implemented 2nd PRC should be implemented

"Fourth Class Employees Association District President Aruna "Employees protest during lunch break "Petition to Additional Collector Latha to resolve demands"

"Jagtlial Correspondent , April 17 (Indian Chronicle): "Fourth Class Employees Association District President Kyarangula Aruna urged the government to cancel the Contributory Pension Scheme and implement the Old Pension Scheme as per the promise made by the government. "As per the call given by the Telangana Employees, Teachers, Gazetted Officers, Workers, and Pensioners United Action Committee state unit, employees wore black badges and staged a protest during the lunch break on Friday to resolve long-pending issues of employees. "Later, the employees submitted a memorandum to District Additional Collector Latha. "Speaking on the occasion, Aruna demanded that the report of the Shivashankar Committee, which was set up for implementing the 2nd PRC for Telangana employees, be obtained and implemented immediately with 51 percent fitment. "She said that the pending bills of over 13,000 pensioners should be released immediately in a lump sum. "Aruna requested that the Employees Health Scheme be implemented and that the 63



demands placed before the government regarding employees be resolved. "Fourth Class Employees Association District Secretary Ummadi Narayana, District Treasurer Chirra Satish Kumar, DTF District President Ennam Ramreddy, Srinivas Goud, Alishetti Raj, and employees Srinivas, Raju, Bhagya, Rajesh, Srujana, Sandhya, Lavanya, Prameela, and others participated in this program.

Mental Development in Children Improves Through Play: CDPO Mamatha Poshan Pakhwada held in 3rd Ward



"Jagtlial Correspondent, April 17(Indian Chronicle): ICDS Project Director, Jagtlial, Mamatha said that children's mental development improves through play. "As part of Poshan Pakhwada, an awareness program on ECCE was conducted at the Chilukavada Anganwadi Centre in the 3rd Ward of Jagtlial town. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of local ward councillor Ragula Pradeep and under the supervision of ICDS Project CDPO Mamatha. "Speaking on the occasion, CDPO Mamatha said that as part of Early Childhood Care and Education, physical changes occur in children through education combined with play and songs. She explained that good habits should be taught from a young age, and that play helps develop both fine and gross motor skills in children. Mamatha further stated that play also contributes to mental development in children. "She



created awareness among parents about developmental milestones — how a child physically develops month by month from birth, from crawling to standing and walking on their own. She stressed the importance of identifying any developmental delays early and providing appropriate treatment. She also explained the nutritious food that pregnant and lactating women should consume. "Ward Councillor Pradeep, speaking at the event, said that mobile phone usage among children should be reduced and that both mothers and children should consume a proper balanced diet. He advised parents to make use of Anganwadi services and send their children to the Anganwadi centre. "Supervisor Kavitharani, Anganwadi teachers Pavithra and Jyothi, ANM Madeshi Sirisha, Ayah, along with mothers and children participated in the program.

CPI (ML) demands State to constitute SIT to probe Jaganmohan Rao's acts

GNS News Agency, April 17

Mancherial: The CPI (ML) New Democracy leader A Lal Kumar demanded that the State government form a special investigation team to probe into land deals and wrongdoing committed by Jaganmohan Rao, an alleged henchman of MLA Premsagar Rao. He levelled serious allegations against Rao at a press conference here on Friday.

Lal Kumar alleged that Jaganmohan Rao was neither a leader of a political party nor a public representative, but he enjoyed more power than an elected representative. He wondered how the police machinery and revenue officials were supporting Rao's acts if he was not backed by the



legislator. He insisted that the Congress declare that Jaganmohan Rao was not associated with the party.

Kagaznagar Students Shine as District Toppers Girls Lead the Way in MPHWF Stream



"Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, April 17: Students of Government Junior College, Kagaznagar, achieved remarkable academic success this year, securing top positions at the district level, especially in the MPHWF vocational stream. "In the second year, M. Shruti emerged as the District Topper, while Sanaf Zareen secured top rank in the first year. "Principal C.H. Kalyani felicitated the achievers and praised their excellence, calling them a matter of pride for the district. Lecturer Syeda Firdaus Fatima also congratulated the students, attributing their success to hard work and proper guidance. "The college expressed confidence that students will continue to achieve greater milestones in the future.

Congress protests BJP MP's remarks on Telangana

Effigy burnt in Karimnagar; apology and disciplinary action demanded.



Karimnagar, April 17 (Correspondent): Leaders and workers of the Congress party staged a protest at Indira Chowk here on Friday against remarks attributed to BJP MP Tejasvi Surya, stating that the comments had hurt the sentiments of the people of Telangana. The protest was led by Karimnagar City Congress president Vaidyula Anjan Kumar. Demonstrators raised slogans and burnt an effigy of the MP as part of the agitation.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Anjan Kumar alleged that the remarks, in which Telangana was compared to Pakistan, were derogatory and undermined the sacrifices made during the Statehood movement. He demanded that Mr. Surya tender an unconditional apology to the people of Telangana and called upon the BJP leadership to take appropriate action. Recalling the formation of Telangana, he said the State was achieved after prolonged agitation and sacrifices, and added that such statements were not in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution. The Congress leaders also criticised what they described as the silence of BJP representatives from Telangana on the issue. Mr. Anjan Kumar said the party would consider approaching the police seeking legal action if an apology was not forthcoming. Several local leaders and party workers participated in the protest. Attempts to contact BJP leaders for a response were unsuccessful.

Bhagwant Mann calls ED action anti-democratic

Chandigarh: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday slammed the Centre after the ED raided premises linked to state minister Sanjeev Arora, saying democracy is being "murdered by harassing only non-BJP governments". Accusing the Centre of using agencies like the ED and the CBI as weapons, Mann claimed the raids show that the BJP has begun its "preparations" for the Punjab elections scheduled next year.

Shortly after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted searches at the premises of the minister and some others as part of a probe, Arora said that as a responsible citizen, he will cooperate with the agencies.

"Good morning! An action by the Enforcement Directorate took place at my premises. As a responsible citizen, I will fully cooperate with the agencies and I am confident that the truth will prevail," Arora said in a post on X. A few days back, the federal probe agency conducted searches at the premises of AAP Rajya Sabha MP Ashok Kumar Mittal and his educational institutions in Punjab and Haryana under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

Mittal was recently appointed AAP's deputy leader in the Rajya Sabha, replacing Raghav Chadha. Mittal is also the chancellor of the Lovely Professional University in Phagwara. Hitting out at the BJP over the ED raids, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal said it was the second such action by the agency at the premises of AAP leaders in three days.

"Will the prime minister tell us how much black money has been recovered from the countless raids conducted so far at the residences of AAP leaders? Not even a single rupee? The entire nation is watching the petty politics you are engaging in solely for the sake of power," Kejriwal said in a post on X in Hindi. Addressing a press conference here, Mann said, "A few days back, the ED conducted raids at Mittal's premises. Today, raids are going on at Sanjeev Arora's premises. He is our power, local bodies and industries minister, and he too became tainted today."

MP Tejasvi Surya should be dismissed. Telangana supporter, activist, artist Pradeep Kumar.



*Jagtlial Correspondent, April 17(Indian Chronicle): Alugunuri @ Morapalli Pradeep Kumar, a Telangana supporter, activist, and folk artist, demanded that the Government of India immediately dismiss MP Tejasvi Surya from his post for making remarks that ridicule the Telangana state formation process amid politics. "Speaking at Jagtlial district headquarters, he said it was unfortunate that a person at the level of an MP made comments that hurt Telangana society and Telangana Thalli. He said it was regrettable that such an ignorant person is in the house of public representatives who should work for the country's future, development, and public welfare. "He said comparing Telangana state — achieved through the sacrifices of 1200 people and the united struggle of four crore Telangana people — to the India-Pakistan partition is proof of his foolishness. He questioned the intent behind still venting malice against Telangana state, which has completed ten years of self-rule and stands as a role model in the country. "He said Tejasvi Surya should immediately apologize to Telangana society, and that it is not right to make statements intentionally and then claim they were distorted. Along with immediately dismissing him from the MP post, he appealed to the Government of India to disqualify him from contesting for any post in the future for attempting to incite hatred and damaging the self-respect of Telangana people. "He warned that they will not tolerate such remarks against the formation of Telangana state or against Telangana society.

Boost PM SHRI Schools' Performance: Collector Haritha



"Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, April 17: District Collector K. Haritha directed officials to improve the performance of PM SHRI schools by focusing on enrolment, infrastructure, and quality education. "At a review meeting with District Education Officer L. Lalitha, mandal education officers, and headmasters, she said 18 schools in the district have been selected under the scheme and funds must be used effectively to enhance teaching standards and pass percentages. "The Collector reviewed reasons for declining student strength in some schools and instructed officials to closely monitor performance. She also sought details of funds received and expenditure over the past two years. "Emphasizing punctuality and accountability, she urged teachers and officials to work towards measurable improvement in school outcomes.

Zonal Commissioners Inspect Uppal Flyover Construction Works“Officials review traffic management plan; order speedy completion of stormwater drainage works in Nagole



the ongoing construction works of the Uppal flyover on Friday. During the inspection, the officials reviewed the traffic management plan in view of the ongoing works and directed the concerned departments to expedite the completion of the Storm Water Drainage (SWD) works currently underway in the Nagole surrounding areas. They instructed officials to take all necessary precautionary measures to ensure that there are no disruptions in the implementation of traffic diversions. Emphasizing the need for advance planning, the commissioners said effective steps should be taken to prevent traffic congestion and ensure that the public does not face inconvenience during the execution of the works. The officials also stressed that the construction activities should be carried out efficiently and in a well-coordinated manner to minimize difficulties for commuters and local residents. The inspection was attended by the Traffic DCP, ACP, CI, Chief Engineer, Superintending Engineer, and other engineering officials from Uppal.

Uppal, April 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): GHMC Uppal Zone Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta and LB Nagar Zonal Commissioner Hemanth Kumar Patil inspected

Deadline set for 100% farmer registry ahead of Kharif

Karimnagar officials told to ensure full enrolment and input readiness within a month.



native places can complete the process at Mee Seva centres, she added, asking officials to reach out to such farmers through phone calls and messages.

The District Agriculture Officer also emphasised the need for timely completion of the Digital Crop Booking (e-Crop) programme. Accurate recording of crop details would enable farmers to access compensation and other benefits without delay, she said, directing AEOs and DCS volunteers to work in close coordination. Calling for crop diversification, Ms. Bhagyalakshmi urged farmers to shift focus towards pulses, millets, and oilseeds. She noted that diversification would not only improve soil health but also enhance farmers' incomes.

As part of efforts to promote sustainable farming, she said that three soil volunteers would be identified in each revenue village and trained in soil testing and balanced fertiliser application. This initiative is expected to help farmers optimise input use, reduce costs, and improve yields. Farmers were also advised to update their mobile numbers with AEOs to receive real-time information on government schemes, subsidies, and advisories, including updates through the urea application platform. To encourage diversification into horticulture, the Horticulture Department will appoint vegetable volunteers. Their services would be utilised to promote a shift from paddy to vegetables and oil palm cultivation, she said. Assistant Director of Agriculture Randheer Reddy, Agricultural Officers of Karimnagar Urban, Rural, and Kothapalli mandals, and AEOs participated in the meeting.

Karimnagar, April 17 (Correspondent): District Agriculture Officer B. Bhagyalakshmi has called upon officials to ensure comprehensive preparedness for the ensuing Kharif (monsoon) season, with a focus on timely input supply, farmer outreach, and digital integration of agricultural services. Chairing a review meeting at the Agriculture Department office here, Ms. Bhagyalakshmi directed officials to make quality seeds, fertilisers, and technical guidance available to farmers well ahead of the sowing season. She stressed that advance planning and field-level coordination would be key to achieving better crop outcomes.

Highlighting the importance of the Farmer Registry, she said that all future welfare schemes and subsidies of the Union Government would be linked to it. She made it clear that enrolment in the registry is mandatory and instructed Agricultural Extension Officers (AEOs) to ensure 100% coverage at the village level without errors within the next month. Farmers who are currently away from their

Maddela Padma Appointed as BJP Mahila Morcha President for Uppal Division

Pledges to strengthen party and connect with women at the grassroots level



Uppal, April 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Maddela Padma has been officially appointed as the President of the BJP Mahila Morcha for Uppal Division. The appointment orders were formally issued by BJP Uppal Division President Marineni Phanindra. Speaking on the occasion, newly appointed Mahila Morcha President Maddela Padma expressed her gratitude to the party leadership, senior leaders, and district leaders for reposing their trust in her and entrusting her with this important responsibility. She stated that she would work dedicatedly to uphold the party's prestige in the division and ensure the successful implementation of every programme decided by the party leadership. She further affirmed that necessary initiatives would be undertaken to strengthen the party at the grassroots level ahead of the upcoming Greater elections. Padma remarked that her appointment stands

as an example of the party's commitment to recognizing and rewarding those who work sincerely for its growth. She also assured that, as Mahila Morcha President, she would actively engage with women across the division and strive to ensure that every welfare scheme introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for women reaches its intended beneficiaries.

Annadanam Held with Devotion at Kushaiguda-Special Rituals at Pochamma Temple

Medchal- Malkajgiri, Staff Reporter, April 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The Pochamma Temple in Kushaiguda witnessed a spiritually charged atmosphere as a large number of devotees gathered on Friday. Marking the monthly Amavasya, Maruti Mitra Mandali organized an Annadanam (free food distribution) program with great devotion. On the occasion, special rituals and abhishekams were performed for the presiding deity, K. Karthik, owner of Inam Drilling, attended as the chief guest. He, along with Chittula Sridhar and Amara Srinivas Gupta, offered prayers and presented naivedyam before fulfilling their vows. Later, the Annadanam program was commenced, serving prasadam to hundreds of devotees who had gathered from nearby areas. Maruti Mitra Mandali, which has been actively involved in social service, organizes this Annadanam every month, drawing appreciation from the public. Among those present were Gurumanchi Ashok Chary (President), Varuganti Hanumanthu (General Secretary), Macha Babu Goud (Treasurer), senior Congress leader Sitaram Reddy, Singireddy Venkata Reddy, Gunti Anjaneyulu Yadav, Vikas, and others. Devotees from surrounding areas participated in large numbers and received the prasadam.



Road Safety is Everyone's Responsibility: District Collector Anudeep Durishetty



1.5 lakh worth of completely free cashless treatment. He stressed that these schemes aim to make effective use of the golden hour. Wearing helmets and seat belts is essential for personal safety, and avoiding them is dangerous. He added that not only drivers but also passengers must wear seat belts. The Collector informed that the top 30 accident-prone black spots in Khammam district have been identified and rectified, resulting in a reduction in accidents and saving around 15 lives this year. He assured that more such spots will be identified and addressed. To curb wrong-side driving, Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology will be used to detect violations, and heavy fines will be imposed. Repeat offenders may face license cancellation and vehicle seizure. Mayor Pudukollu Neeraja stated that the government is providing all necessary facilities and urged citizens to strictly follow traffic rules. She warned against drunk driving and emphasized the importance of passenger safety. Additional DCP Prasad Rao explained that "Arrive Alive" means ensuring that everyone who leaves home returns safely. He reiterated that helmets are mandatory for both riders and pillion passengers, and seat belts are compulsory in all four-wheelers. He also stated that strict enforcement will follow the awareness campaign. Earlier, the Collector inaugurated a medical camp organized by the District Medical and Health Department at the RTO office and reviewed eye check-ups being conducted for drivers. He highlighted that drivers' health plays a crucial role in preventing accidents. An audio-visual presentation on road safety measures was also showcased. The Collector urged everyone to strictly follow traffic regulations. Later, helmets were distributed to KMC DRF team members. Prizes were awarded to students who won essay competitions held during Road Safety Week, and appreciation certificates were given to the best drivers from the RTC Khammam region. The event was attended by officials including In-charge RTO J.N. Srinivasa Rao, District Medical Officer Dr. Rama Rao, DCHS Dr. Rajashekhar Goud, AMVIs, RTA members, councillors, drivers, and the public.

25,000 Reward Under Rah-Veer Scheme for Timely Help During Golden Hour"30 Black Spots Rectified in Khammam, Accidents Reduced"Strict Action Using AI Against Wrong-Side Driving"Helmets and Seat Belts Are Mandatory—Negligence Can Be Fatal"Medical Camp Launched at RTO Office Under "Arrive Alive" Program"Khammam, April 17 (Indian Chronicle) District Collector Anudeep Durishetty emphasized that road safety is the responsibility of every individual. As part of the 99-day action plan under Praja Palana-Pragati, the "Arrive Alive" program was organized at the RTO office. The event was inaugurated by the Collector along with Khammam Municipal Corporation Mayor Pudukollu Neeraja and Law & Order Additional DCP Prasad Rao by lighting the ceremonial lamp. Earlier, saplings were planted in the RTO premises. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector announced the implementation of two new schemes—Rah-Veer and PM Rahat. Under the Rah-Veer scheme, a reward of 25,000 will be given to individuals who help accident victims reach hospitals during the golden hour. Under the PM Rahat scheme, accident victims will receive up to

Attack on Telangana Self-Respect: AIYF Condemns BJP MP Remarks

Demand Raised for Removal of MP Membership; Effigy Burnt in Protest

Medchal- Malkajgiri, Staff Reporter, April 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The All India Youth Federation (AIYF) strongly condemned the remarks made by BJP MP Tejasvi Surya, stating that his comments belittle the formation of Telangana and amount to a direct attack on the self-respect of its people. Under the leadership of AIYF, a protest was held at Himayatnagar Y Junction in Hyderabad, where activists raised slogans, displayed placards, and burnt an effigy of the BJP MP to express their anger. Speaking on the occasion, AIYF State General Secretary Kalluri Dharmendra said that the formation of Telangana was not a result of political generosity, but the outcome of a prolonged struggle by students, youth, workers, and farmers. He emphasized that thousands of young people sacrificed their lives for the cause, and no one has the right to insult such a historic movement. He further alleged that the BJP continues to indulge in divisive politics by provoking regional sentiments and attempting to polarize people for political gain. According to him, the remarks made by Tejasvi Surya reflect not just an individual opinion, but the broader mindset of the BJP leadership. Dharmendra stated that the people of Telangana will firmly reject any attempt to insult their identity and dignity. He demanded that the BJP MP immediately withdraw his comments and issue a public apology to the people of Telangana. He also questioned the silence of



BJP leaders and Union Ministers from Telangana during discussions on the issue in Parliament. AIYF leaders demanded strict action against Tejasvi Surya, including the cancellation of his membership as a Member of Parliament. They warned that large-scale protests would be organized across the state against what they described as arrogant and irresponsible political behavior. Several AIYF leaders and members participated in the protest, including state executive president Nerlakanti Srikanth, leaders R. Balakrishna, Salman Baig, Kampalli Kalyan, Mohammed Akram, Lakshman, Nadeem, Ravi, Murali, and Pradeep.

Large-Scale Lake Beautification Projects Worth Over 100 Crore Planned Across Uppal Constituency



Medchal- Malkajgiri, Staff Reporter, April 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): KAPRA: Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy announced that 35 crore has been sanctioned for the development and beautification of Kapra Lake. He stated that, with the special initiative of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, lake development and beautification works across Uppal constituency will be taken up with funds exceeding 100 crore. On Friday, Parameshwar Reddy visited Kapra Lake along with

senior Congress leaders and party workers. He further informed that development works worth 20 crore at Uppal Nalla Cheruvu are in the final stage. In addition, beautification and development works will be undertaken at Nacharam HMT Nagar Lake with 30 crore and Ramanthapur Pedda Cheruvu with 17 crore. Former corporators Bonthu Sridevi, Swarna Raj Shivamani, Singireddy Dhanpal Reddy, Pavani Reddy, former councillor Rajender, senior Congress leader Sitaram Reddy, division presidents, senior leaders, and party workers participated in the program.

Weekly Friday Dry Day Initiative to Curb Mosquito-Borne Diseases

Medchal- Malkajgiri, Staff Reporter, April 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Kapra: As part of the Praja Palana Pragathi Plan-99, officials conducted a "Friday Dry Day" program in KCR Colony under Kapra Circle on Friday, focusing on environmental cleanliness to control dengue and malaria. Deputy Commissioner Srihari, along with DEE Ravinder, AE D. Ramesh (Assistant Entomologist), and sanitation staff, participated in the awareness drive. Addressing residents, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized that maintaining clean surroundings is the most effective way to prevent mosquito-borne diseases like dengue and malaria. During the program, Assistant Entomologist D. Ramesh explained the mosquito life cycle and highlighted preventive measures. He advised residents to regularly clean and replace water in air coolers, especially during summer, as stagnant water becomes a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Following the awareness session, officials inspected several houses in KCR Colony. They checked air coolers and removed mosquito larvae found in stagnant water. Sanita-



tion Supervisor Sudarshan, along with entomology and sanitation staff, also took part in the program. Officials stated that such "Friday Dry Day" activities should be conducted once a week to ensure community participation in maintaining hygiene and preventing seasonal diseases.

Implement Just and Legitimate Demands Immediately: Telangana Employees' JAC Urges Government



---Memorandum Submitted to Uppal Tahsildar Seeking Resolution of Pending Employee Issues... UPPAL, APRIL 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "Representatives of the Telangana Employees' Joint Action Committee (JAC), under the leadership of TG RSA General Secretary Biksham, submitted a memorandum to Uppal Tahsildar Pool Singh Chauhan, urging the government to address their long-pending issues without delay. "Speaking on the occasion, General Secretary Biksham stated that their primary objective

is to ensure the resolution of the problems faced by government employees. He demanded the implementation of the Pay Revision Commission (PRC/PRP) by June 2, 2026, along with the immediate release of the five pending Dearness Allowances (DAs). "The JAC also appealed to the government to clear all pending bills related to retired employees at the earliest. In addition, they requested the immediate issuance and implementation of health cards for both retired and serving government employees. "Among the major demands, the representatives called for the abolition of the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) and the restoration of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). They further urged that, in accordance with Central Government guidelines, employees who were notified before September 1, 2004, but appointed later, should be brought under the OPS system immediately. "The memorandum also highlighted the need to resolve the issues faced by VRAs who have completed 61 years of age. The JAC demanded the establishment of a special corporation for outsourcing employees to ensure job security and welfare. "Additionally, they sought the implementation of general transfers for employees and teachers, and called upon the government to formulate a special action plan for the timely resolution of issues concerning government staff. "Representatives from TPUS, pensioners' associations, and various JAC partner organizations participated in the programme.

Employees' protest rally..PRC should be implemented immediately..Government should respond to 63 demands.



Mulugu/Venkatapuram. April 17 (indianchronicle). "Telangana Employees Teachers Pensioners Joint Action Committee under the leadership of Telangana Employees Teachers Pensioners Joint Action Committee protested by wearing black badges. They participated in this program during the lunch break and reached the Tahsildar's office as a rally and submitted a memorandum on their demands. On this occasion, the trade unions demanded that Telangana second PRC should



be implemented immediately with 51 percent fitment, employee health scheme should be started soon, pending bills of employees and pensioners should be released. Similarly, the CPS system should be abolished and the old pension system should be reformed. On this occasion, JAC representatives made it clear that the government should resolve all the demands immediately. Teachers B. Jayaram, G. Ramdev, Shobhan, Rajeswara Rao, Venkat, Venkanna, revenue department employees and others participated in this program.

Every Student Must Acquire Reading Skills: District Collector Anudeep Durishetty

"Significant improvement in reading through "Every Child Reads""29,000 students gained reading skills due to teachers' efforts"Target: 100% achievement by Independence Day"Reading, comprehension, and fluency are essential"Collector participates in "Every Child Reads Celebrations" at Mudigonda Government High School"

"KHAMMAM ,MUDIGUNDA APRIL 17(INDIAN CHRONICLE): "District Collector Anudeep Durishetty emphasized that every student must acquire reading skills. "He participated in the "Every Child Reads Celebrations" held at the Government High School in Mudigonda. The Collector inaugurated an exhibition set up on the "Every Child Reads" program and interacted with students, assessing their reading abilities. "Speaking on the occasion, the Collector expressed happiness after witnessing students perform skits, read stories, and demonstrate confident reading. He stated that the objective of the "Every Child Reads" program is being fulfilled and appreciated the progress achieved so far. "He highlighted that reading is a fundamental skill, and once a child learns to read, writing and speaking become easier. He noted that children who cannot read often lack confidence, and this issue must be addressed at an early stage. Through this initiative, around 29,000 students in government schools have developed reading skills. "The Collector appreciated teachers for taking ownership of the program and making it successful. He noted that initially only 12-13% of students could read sentences, but now this has increased to 84%, which reflects the dedication of teachers. He urged efforts to ensure the remaining 16% also achieve reading proficiency. "He mentioned that one hour is being dedicated daily to improve reading skills. He suggested continuing the program with greater enthusiasm from June 12 in the upcoming academic year and achieving 100% reading proficiency by Independence Day. "He stressed that not only reading sentences but also reading fluently and understanding content is equally important. He set targets for reading speed: 30 words per minute for Class 3, 40 words for Class 4, and 50 words for Class 5. He also emphasized improving comprehension skills. "The Collector appreciated the Teaching Learning Material (TLM) prepared by teachers and praised the TLM fair and competitions conducted in Mudigonda. "He suggested showcasing "Every Child Reads" videos during the "Badi Bata" program to increase enrollment in government



schools. He added that this initiative has given him immense satisfaction as a Collector, stating that once children begin to read, there will be no barriers to their learning. "Later, the Collector distributed prizes, mementos, and certificates to meritorious students. "Officials from the education department, headmasters, teachers, and students participated in the program.

25,000 Reward for Saving Road Accident Victims During Golden Hour: Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar

"Medchal- Malkajgiri, Staff Reporter, April 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar announced that individuals who help shift road accident victims to hospitals during the "golden hour" and save lives will be awarded ₹25,000 by the Central and State Governments. The Minister was speaking as the chief guest at the "Arrive Alive - Road Safety Awareness Programme," organized at the RTO Office in Nagole as part of the Praja Palana - Pragati Pranalika initiative. He said that many road accidents occur due to minor negligence and mistakes, leading to loss of lives or leaving victims permanently disabled. These incidents not only affect the victims but also push their families into severe hardship. He emphasized that most accidents can be prevented by strictly following traffic rules. The Minister highlighted that hundreds of people lose their lives in road accidents and stressed the need for continuous awareness campaigns among motorists. As part of the programme, he administered a pledge to the public to follow traffic rules. He added that government initiatives can succeed only with active public participation. District Collector Manu Chaudhary stated that under the 99-day action plan of Praja Palana - Pragati Pranalika, a specific theme is taken up each week to create awareness. This week's focus is the "Arrive Alive" programme, conducted in coordination with Police, Transport, Revenue, and other departments. He noted that nearly 400 to 500 people lose their lives in road accidents every day due to various reasons. Locations with a high number of accidents are identified as "black spots," and necessary preventive measures are being implemented to reduce accidents. The Collector also mentioned that awareness programmes are being conducted for school students on the importance of wearing helmets, encouraging them to influence their parents. He stressed that public safety is a shared responsibility and urged ev-



eryone to follow traffic rules to ensure safe travel and return home safely. He appealed to the public to actively participate in road safety initiatives and adopt responsible behavior on roads to prevent accidents and save lives.

HPS Ramanthapur Erupts Over 141% Fee Hike Hundreds of parents stage massive protest; demand five-year fee freeze as BRS leaders extend support

"UPPAL, April 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "Tension prevailed at Hyderabad Public School (HPS), Ramanthapur, on Friday as hundreds of parents staged a massive protest at the school's main gate against what they termed an "arbitrary and exorbitant" 141 per cent increase in fees over the last four years. "The protest, which drew significant public attention, received support from BRS state leaders Gandham Nageswara Rao, Suram Shankar, Prashanth Goud and Manish Ravi, who joined the agitating parents and expressed solidarity with their demands. "According to the parents' core committee, the annual fee per student has surged from ₹83,630 in 2021 to over ₹2,01,628 in 2025, marking a steep 141 per cent rise. Parents alleged that repeated discussions with the school management over the past year have failed to yield any concrete outcome, forcing them to intensify their agitation. "Demanding immediate relief, the parents called for the fee structure to be frozen for the next five years, stating that the existing fee levels are already more than sufficient to meet the institution's operational and future expenditure. "In a major escalation, parents from the HPS Begumpet branch also extended support to the protest, with representatives from both branches jointly announcing a "fee strike." They resolved to withhold payment of the first-term fees until the management issues a written assurance that there will be no further fee hikes. "Beyond the financial burden, parents raised serious concerns over the declining quality of food, sports infrastructure and academic standards, despite the sharp rise in fees. They also accused the school management of failing to constitute a legally elected Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and refusing to share audited financial records explaining the utilisation of the increased fee collections. "The



protesters further demanded the immediate removal of the principal, alleging administrative failure in addressing the grievances. They pointed out that the principal has continued in the post for 14 years, with the tenure reportedly extended even after retirement. "Parents asserted that their agitation would continue until the management responds positively to their demands and restores transparency in fee administration.

Chilkanagar Leaders Submit Petition to Water Board GM Seeking Uninterrupted Drinking Water Supply



tervention from the department. "Responding to the representation, AGM Supriya assured the delegation that the existing issues in the Chilkanagar Division would be addressed immediately and that necessary field-level measures would be taken to restore smooth water supply in the area. "Among those who participated in the programme were Chilkanagar Division Congress Party In-charge Akiti Agam Reddy, Malkajgiri DCC General Secretary Kompalli Balaraju, Nallavalli Mahender, Naraju Radhakrishna, Sonu, Kiran, and several other party leaders and local representatives.

Uppal Press Club(P&E) Gears Up for Grand Diary Unveiling Ceremony; BRS Leader Bannala Praveen Invited

---Event to be held on April 19 at Srirastu Convention Hall under the leadership of President Vaddepalli Kishore... UPPAL, April 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "Preparations are underway for the grand unveiling of the Uppal Press Club (Print & Electronic) 2026-27 New Year Diary, scheduled to be held on April 19 at Srirastu Convention Hall in Uppal Bhagayat. "As part of the preparations, BRS State leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj was formally invited to attend the event. The invitation was presented by Uppal Press Club (P&E) President Vaddepalli Kishore, along with members of the executive committee, who met him courteously and requested his presence at the diary unveiling ceremony. "The organizers stated that the ?????????? Malkajgiri MP Etela Rajender, Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, and Congress in-charge for Uppal constituency Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy are also expected to attend. "Speaking on the occasion, BRS leader Bannala Praveen said that the role of journalists in society is highly significant and expressed his happiness at being part of such an important event. "



---Congress leaders, under the leadership of Division President Mulakalappalli Rajesh Mudiraj, urge immediate action on local water issues... UPPAL, APRIL 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "Demanding smooth and uninterrupted drinking water supply in the Chilkanagar Division, Congress leaders, led by Division President Mulakalappalli Rajesh Mudiraj, submitted a representation to the officials of the Water Board on Thursday. "Speaking on the occasion, Rajesh Mudiraj urged the authorities to take immediate steps to ensure regular drinking water supply to residents of the division, who have been facing persistent water-related issues. As part of the initiative, the delegation met Assistant General Manager Supriya of the drinking water supply department and submitted a formal memorandum highlighting the problems faced by the people of Chilkanagar. "The leaders explained the difficulties being experienced by residents due to irregular water supply and requested swift in-

Dalit Groups Secure Justice After Protest Over Statue Removal in cherlapally

"MEDCHAL- MALKAJGIRI, Staff Reporter, April 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Cherlapally: Tension prevailed at Peddacherlapalli crossroads after the removal of statues of prominent leaders triggered strong protests from Dalit groups and local residents. The issue drew sharp reactions, leading to a coordinated protest demanding immediate action and restoration. Local leader Bonthu Sridevi Yadav took up the issue promptly, joining hands with Dalit organizations and community members to press for justice. Responding to public sentiment, she escalated the matter to higher authorities to ensure swift resolution. With the intervention of Bonthu Ram Mohan and Bonthu Sridevi Yadav, the issue was brought to the attention of Minister Sridhar Babu, following which discussions were initiated with concerned officials. On Friday, a delegation met Malkajgiri Municipal Commissioner Vinay Krishna Reddy and submitted a formal representation, demanding the immediate return of the removed statues. The Commissioner responded positively and assured that necessary steps would be taken to release and restore the statues by evening. Following the assurance, community members and lead-



ers expressed relief and marked the moment by organizing a milk abhishekam to a portrait of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Speaking on the occasion, Bonthu Sridevi Yadav said that the collective effort of villagers, Dalit groups, and local leaders played a crucial role in achieving justice. The development was welcomed by residents and community leaders, who expressed satisfaction over the outcome and acknowledged the role played by those who led the protest and negotiations.

“We will not tolerate any insult to Telangana’s self-respect

of struggle and numerous sacrifices—to the India–Pakistan partition, calling it extremely unfortunate and deeply hurtful to the sentiments of the people of Telangana. “Protesting the remarks made by BJP MP Tejasvi Surya, who compared the formation of Telangana to the India–Pakistan partition, she, along with fellow MPs, staged a sit-in protest in front of the Parliament entrance on Friday. Holding placards, they raised slogans against the BJP. The Parliament premises echoed with slogans such as “BJP must apologise” and “Respect the sentiments of Telangana people.” Congress MPs demanded that both Tejasvi Surya and the Central Government immediately apologise to the people of Telangana. “On this occasion, MP Kadiyam Kavya stated that despite knowing it could politically harm the Congress party, Sonia Gandhi had magnanimously announced the formation of Telangana. She criticized BJP leaders for continuing an anti-Telangana stance and for hurting public emotions with remarks such as calling it a “Black Day.” Kadiyam Kavya strongly demanded that Tejasvi Surya withdraw his comments immediately and that the Central Government issue an unconditional apology to the people of Telangana.



“Saffron party” is spewing venom against Telangana. Kadiyam Kavya, Warangal MP. Warangal Staff Reporter, April 17 (Indian Chronicle): “Warangal MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya strongly condemned the comparison of the formation of Telangana state—achieved after decades

If everyone adheres to defensive driving principles, we can control road accidents, says Multi-Zone 1 IGP S. Chandrasekhar Reddy.

other motorists, followed by the distribution of eyeglasses to those in need. As part of the program, competitions were held to raise awareness regarding road safety and the importance of wearing helmets, and prizes were awarded to the participating students. Furthermore, through the collaborative efforts of the Dammmapeta Police and the Motor Vehicle Inspector, driving licenses were facilitated for 10 individuals who previously did not possess one. Finally, the IGP, SP, and Collector distributed helmets to 20 youths hailing from Poosukunta—a tribal village inhabited by the Konda Reddi community. Addressing the gathering at this event, IGP Chandrasekhar Reddy (IPS) urged everyone to act as responsible citizens by adhering to road safety regulations to help curb road accidents. He emphasized the importance of assisting victims at accident sites by ensuring they receive immediate first aid. He noted that providing timely first aid during the “Golden Hour” can significantly help in saving lives. Furthermore, he stated that motorists who practice disciplined driving and adhere to the principles of defensive driving are less likely to be involved in road accidents. The event witnessed a large turnout, with the participation of Palvancha DSP Satish Kumar, Aswaraopeta CI Nagaraju Reddy, Dammmapeta SI Kishore Reddy, Dammmapeta police personnel, Sarpanches and Panchayat Secretaries from various villages within the Dammmapeta Mandal, Anganwadi teachers, ASHA workers, members of Village Road Safety Committees, political leaders from various parties, and other prominent dignitaries.



performed the bhumi puja to kickstart the works. “Villagers expressed relief, hoping the long-pending issue will now see a permanent solution.

New Judges Assume Charge at Malkajgiri Family Court



“Bar Association Members Extend Greetings” Medchal- Malkajgiri, Staff Reporter, April 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Kushaiguda: Newly appointed judges at the Medchal–Malkajgiri Family Court assumed charge on Friday. Rachapudi Sridevi took charge as Principal Family Court Judge, while K. Umadevi assumed office as Additional Family Court Judge. On the occasion, members of the Malkajgiri Bar Association Executive Committee met the newly appointed judges and extended their greetings. They assured full cooperation to ensure the smooth func-



tioning of court proceedings. Those present included Bar Association President Rattaiah, General Secretary Durgaprasad, Vice President Harikrishna, Women Vice President Prasanna, Joint Secretary Ravi Shankar, Women Joint Secretary Jalaja, Treasurer Punya Raju, Library Secretary Sainath Goud, Sports and Cultural Secretary Pawan Kumar B.N., Lady Representative Sujatha, Senior Executive Member Navaneeth, and Executive Members Badrinath, Rakesh N., Narender, Naresh, Shobha Rani, Vimala, among others.

Free Drinking Water Booth Set Up in Kapra

---Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge M. Parameshwar Reddy Inaugurates Facility. Medchal- Malkajgiri, Staff Reporter, April 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Kapra: A free drinking water booth (Chalivendram) set up in Kapra was inaugurated by Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge M. Parameshwar Reddy. The facility was arranged by Kapra Division senior Congress leader Allam Rakesh Yadav in memory of his father, Allam Krishna Yadav. Speaking on the occasion, Parameshwar Reddy said that setting up a water booth during the summer season to quench the thirst of the public is a commendable initiative. He appreciated Rakesh Yadav for coming forward to serve the people and stressed that such efforts are essential during extreme heat conditions. The Chalivendram has been established on the Kapra–Dammaiguda main road for the benefit of commuters and local residents. He urged the public to make proper use of the facility. Former corporators Swarnaraj Shivamani and Pavani Reddy, senior Congress leader Sitaram Reddy, division president Naga Sheshu, Rajender, Allam Nagaraju, Allam Sudhakar, Allam Poorna, Allam Sai Kiran, Allam Mallesh, Allam Harikrishna, Allam Shankar, Allam Satish and others were present. Among Congress leaders, Medchal-Malkajgiri District Agricultural Market Committee Vice Chairman Vitthal Naik, AMC Director Poornayadav, District Congress General Secretary Raju, District Congress Secretary D. Murali, former councillor Rajender, former AMC Director Kobbanuri Nagaraju, senior leaders P. Pawan Kumar, Padamati Mallareddy, Baburao, Orla Sridhar Reddy, P. Narender Goud, Vinod Kumar, G. Satyanarayana, Tanneeru Srihari, Satish Yadav, Thotakura Srikanth, Santosh Chari, Adepu Srinivas, Jagadeesh, K. Raju, Allam Sai Kumar Yadav, Nagaraju Yadav, Shankar Yadav, Satish Yadav, Pradeep, Murthuja, Youth Congress president Prashanth Goud, and



Youth Congress leaders Manoj Kumar, Dayakar, Yashwanth, Imran, Shiva, Bharat and others participated in the programme.

Municipal Chairperson and her husband had darshan of Goddess Sri Katta Maisamma



? “Former Market Committee Chairman Vittal Naik requested allocation of land for the temple’s development.” Indian Chronicle Vikarabad (April 17) “On the occasion of Amavasya, the temple committee members organized an annadanam program at the Sri Katta

Maisamma temple located in the paatha kunta of Adarsh Nagar in Tandur town, Vikarabad district. “Tandur town Municipal Chairperson Neeraja Bal Reddy and her husband, along with former Market Committee Chairman Vittal Naik, attended the program as chief guests. They said it was very pleasing to have darshan of the Goddess, who is renowned as the divine protector that fulfills the wishes of devotees. “Chairperson Neeraja Bal Reddy said their support and cooperation for the temple’s development will always be there. Former Agricultural Market Committee Chairman Vittal Naik requested the Municipal Chairperson to allot land for the temple’s development, noting that an annadanam program for devotees is organized at the temple on every Amavasya. “He prayed that the blessings of the Goddess, who possesses divine powers, should always remain on the people of Tandur. Former Agricultural Market Committee Chairman Patlolla Bal Reddy and Vittal Naik, Sri Katta Maisamma Temple Committee executive members, and devotees participated in this program.”

Extramarital affair — wife’s plan leads to husband’s murder

— Police arrest five persons, including the deceased’s wife. Hanumakonda/ Parkal, April 17 (Indian Chronicle) : “The case of Madikonda Suman Bharat (38), who recently went missing in Parkal town, ended tragically. Police investigation revealed that it was a pre-planned murder carried out by hired killers at the behest of his wife, who allegedly conspired with her lover and younger brother to eliminate her husband. “Police arrested five persons in connection with the murder, including the deceased’s wife. East Zone DCP Ankit Kumar, along with Parkal ACP Satish Babu and CI Kranti Kumar, disclosed the case details to the media on Friday. “According to the police, Suman Bharat, a resident of Parkal, married Lavanya in 2012, and the couple had two children. Over time, Lavanya developed an acquaintance with Immadi Naresh from the same town, which allegedly turned into an extramarital



relationship. Suman Bharat frequently confronted and harassed his wife over this issue. Lavanya then allegedly decided to get rid of her husband and conspired with her younger brother Pendala Raju and Naresh. “They reportedly paid ₹5 lakh to a hired killer, Chiramsetti Venkateshwarlu from Govindaraopet in Mulugu district, to carry out the murder. To arrange the money, Lavanya pawned her gold ornaments. “As per the plan, on the 3rd of this month, Suman Bharat was lured to Mulugu with the promise of alcohol. There, Venkateshwarlu and Bhukya Rakesh allegedly

made him drink and, while he was intoxicated, attacked him and killed him. They then poured petrol on the body and set it on fire. “In a shocking detail, the accused allegedly recorded videos during the crime and showed them to Lavanya. “The following day, Venkateshwarlu reportedly collected the burnt remains into a bag and disposed of them in a nearby stream. Meanwhile, Lavanya returned to her in-laws’ house in Parkal, pretending to be unaware. On April 8, Suman’s father, Sambayya, filed a complaint, after which Parkal police began investigating it as a missing case.

Using technical evidence, the police tracked down the accused. “At the crime scene identified by the accused, police recovered burnt debris and remains. Six mobile phones of various brands were seized from the accused. “Arrested accused: 2012 Madikonda Lavanya (wife) Venkateswara (Immedi Naresh (alleged lover) Pendala Raju (Lavanya’s younger brother) Chiramsetti Venkateshwarlu (hired killer) Bhukya Rakesh (associate) “Police stated that all the accused have been arrested and remanded to judicial custody.

Lifeline for Tribal Village: Flood Protection Work Begins 48 Lakh Bund to Shield Manikguda

“Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, Asifabad, April 17: In a major relief for a tribal (PVTG) village, District Collector K. Haritha launched construction of a protective embankment at Manikguda to prevent flood damage. “The village, rehabilitated during the Kumram Bheem project, has long faced road disruptions during monsoons due to canal overflow. Responding to villagers’ complaints, the Collector inspected the area and pushed for a solution. “With support from Minister Jupally Krishna Rao, ₹48 lakh was sanctioned for the project. The Collector, along with MLA Kova Lakshmi,

performed the bhumi puja to kickstart the works. “Villagers expressed relief, hoping the long-pending issue will now see a permanent solution.

Surprise Hospital Check; Collector Warns Health Staff



“Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, Asifabad, April 17: District Collector K. Haritha directed medical staff to maintain punctuality and ensure better healthcare services for patients in government hospitals. “During a surprise inspection at a Primary Health Centre in Asifabad mandal, she checked attendance records, medicine stocks, and interacted with patients. “The Collector stressed adequate supply of medicines, especially ORS packets, and instructed health workers, ASHAs, and Anganwadi staff to spread

awareness on heatwave precautions. “She directed officials to ensure facilities and treatment readiness for heatstroke cases and advised staff to treat patients with care and empathy. “Supervisors were asked to closely monitor field staff performance to improve service delivery.

Thieves decamp with an LPG cylinder in Kothagudem’s Paloncha

Kothagudem: With the West Asia crisis affecting supply of LPG cylinders all over India, thieves seem to have shifted their focus and are stealing cylinders if an incident at Paloncha in the district is any indication. In an incident at the Oddugudem area in Paloncha town, a resident named Bhukya Hiran Gandhi recently booked a domestic LPG cylinder and it was delivered on Thursday.

The farmer with gudness of ganna and other medicinal herbs



GNS News Agency, April 17

Last year, Naresh Kumar visited the national capital twice — first as a special guest of the Central government at the Independence Day function on August 15, then as an awardee The double Delhi dash — and distinction — was powered by his work in his dusty and barren village fields. "I grew up watching these fields. My ancestors took care of them. Then came a time when the fields demanded care. I did my bit," he says. Naresh is still doing his bit, carrying another double distinction of being a jawan and kisan. He retired as a Havildar in the Army in November 2016 when he was 34, and started medicinal plantation in 2017. "My ancestors used to do medicinal farming. So, I decided to follow in their footsteps," he says. He planted sargandha, ashwagandha, tulsi, shatavari, moringa, kalmegh, gurmar, aloe vera and lemongrass on his seven-acre land. "Medicinal plants are good for the environment," he says. Naresh did not stop there. In June 2018, he formed a farmer producer organisation (FPO), Suhavi Producer Company, and the medicinal plantation expanded to 40 acres. The FPO

faces many kinds of problems, the most important being the marketing part. "Finding a market for our produce is always a challenge," says Surjit Kumar, who has been associated with the FPO since 2018.

Now the FPO has 110 members and is marching ahead without any external aid. "They are not getting any government aid. That is a sad commentary on the system," says Dr Arun Chandan, principal investigator of National Medicinal Plants Board for the northern region. When Covid came in 2020, Naresh turned to sugarcane farming. Now he grows sugarcane on two acres developed as Suhavi Natural Farm. Apart from growing sugarcane, he has an elaborate system for making cane juice, gud and shakkar. Strict quality control is the norm here. If he is not present, his wife Mamta monitors the manufacturing operations. "I love to be here and help my husband with whatever I can. Sugarcane has added more sweetness to our relationship," she says. Naresh has experimented a lot first by mixing into gud ashwagandha, amla, tulsi, moringa, alsii, haldi, and fruit flavours (guava, strawberry, peach, mango, banana); and then adding saunf, ajwain, adrak, haldi, dalchini, saund, laung, and kali mirch to shakkar. "But my focus is on plain gud and shakkar. I am not able to fulfil its demand," he says. He claims he gets 10 to 12 quintal gud from one acre and sells it at Rs 170 per kg and shakkar at Rs 250 per kg. Ask him about the profit he is making, and he says politely, "I never went into such details." One reason for that can be the pension he draws as an ex-serviceman, he admits laughingly. Not just this, he has also floated a new concept of "family farmer" — where a family adopts a farmer. "People in cities should adopt farmers who feed them. They should come to them on weekends, spend time with them and see for themselves how much hard work goes into what they produce," he says.

Three al-Qaeda-affiliate operatives sentenced to life for terror conspiracy



GNS News Agency, April 17

The convicts were held guilty of "waging, or attempting to wage, war against the Indian government, and collecting arms with the intent to wage war". The convicts were held guilty of "waging, or attempting to wage, war against the Indian government, and collecting arms with the intent to wage war". A special NIA court in Lucknow Monday awarded life imprisonment to three men who were arrested by the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) in July 2021 for allegedly conspiring to carry out explosions in various parts of the state at the behest of al-Qaeda's India affiliate, Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind. At the time of their arrest, police had claimed the three — Minhaz Ahmed and Maseeruddin alias Mushir of Lucknow, and Tawheed Ahmad Shah of Jammu & Kashmir — were also planning to execute suicide bombings in crowded public places. The case was later handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for probe. On Monday, the three were produced in the court for hearing under heavy police security.

"The NIA court in Lucknow found the three guilty on multiple charges and, later in the day, sentenced them to life imprisonment. The court also imposed a fine on them," said special counsel for prosecution Mithlesh Kumar

Singh. The convicts were held guilty of "waging, or attempting to wage, war against the Indian government, and collecting arms with the intent to wage war". They were also convicted under provisions of the Explosive Substances Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The court examined 42 prosecution witnesses and five defence witnesses during the trial, Singh said. Defence counsel Mohammad Shoib said they would file an appeal against the judgment. Minhaz Ahmed was employed as a laboratory technician before setting up a battery shop, while Maseeruddin was engaged in miscellaneous occupations, it was stated. According to the prosecution, the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terror Squad (ATS) received information that Umar Halmandi, who took over al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) after Asim Umar's death in 2019, was recruiting and radicalising youths in Lucknow. It claimed to have received information that al-Qaeda had directed Halmandi, believed to be operating from the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region, to initiate terror operations in India. Acting on the instructions of Halmandi, the accused became part of a larger conspiracy and were actively planning to carry out terrorist acts in various cities of UP, particularly Lucknow, it was claimed. For this purpose, they allegedly procured arms, ammunition and explosive substances, the agency said. Police had alleged that Minhaz and Maseeruddin were in contact with members of Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind. At the time of their arrest in July 2021, the UP ATS claimed to have recovered illegal weapons, explosives and an IED fitted into a pressure cooker among other things from the houses of Minhaz and Maseeruddin. Subsequently, the case was transferred to the NIA for further investigation. During the probe, the NIA is stated to have found that Minhaz, who was active on social media platforms, came in contact with an individual identifying himself as Tawheed Ahmad Shah. The two allegedly began communicating regularly thereafter, it was claimed, adding, Tawheed introduced Minhaz and Maseeruddin to other terror operatives.

First convocation of AIIMS Rajkot | Technology a big boost to medical field, but nothing can replace human empathy: President Murmu



GNS News Agency, April 17

President Droupadi Murmu on Monday said latest technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics and precision medicine will help doctors diagnose patients better, but nothing can replace human empathy in healthcare. She was speaking at the first convocation of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Rajkot on Monday. "You are entering the medical field at a time when there is a lot of technical development taking place. AI, robotics, precision medicine and digital medical services are changing the field. By using the latest technologies, not only will you update your knowledge, but also be able to diagnose patients better. But nothing can replace human empathy in healthcare. Your kind words, your smile and your patience in listening to patients is very effective," Murmu said, addressing the young doctors. "Being a good doctor is a big thing. But being a doctor with ethics, compassion and other human values is even greater," said Murmu, adding that a sensitive doctor can bring great change in the society.

The President said, "Saurashtra is home to holy sites such as Somnath and Dwarkadhish. The region is also associated with the birth and life of Mahatma Gandhi as well. It is not only a site of heritage, but also a treasure trove holding the memories of the struggle for independence. It is expected of everyone associated with the AIIMS Rajkot that

they emulate Bhagwan Shri Krishna's route of karma and work for the people."

On healthcare challenges in Saurashtra, she said, "The Saurashtra region is one which has varied geographical areas and rural populations. It presents unique challenges. There is a need to work on improvement in maternal and child health, and sickle cell. AIIMS Rajkot needs to turn these challenges into opportunities. I'm happy to know that the institution is contributing to medical services, tele-medicine and community medicine and education awareness." On the national role of all the AIIMS institutions, the President of India said, "It is important that the health of the people is maintained to achieve the aim of Viksit Bharat by 2047. The Government of India has taken many steps in this direction. But these efforts get support when all stakeholders work together. The role of institutions of national importance like AIIMS is even more crucial. They need to establish new heights in medical services and research and innovation and show the way to the national healthcare framework." Those present at the ceremony included Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat, Union Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel and Gujarat Health Minister Praful Pansheriya.

During the ceremony held at the AIIMS Rajkot campus, degrees were conferred upon the first batch of 49 MBBS graduates who successfully completed their internship. A total of 10 medals and certificates of merit were presented to students, recognising their academic excellence. These included one prestigious institutional medal, along with gold, silver, and bronze medals awarded across the first, second, and third professional years. The foundation stone of AIIMS Rajkot was laid on December 31, 2020, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with a sanctioned capacity of 750 beds. The institute commenced its Outpatient Department (OPD) services on December 31, 2021, followed by the inauguration of Inpatient Department (IPD) services on February 24, 2024. AIIMS Rajkot currently has 750 beds with 22 speciality and 6 super speciality departments.

I-PAC director's arrest before voting alarming, shakes the idea of a level playing field in election: Abhishek



GNS News Agency, April 17

Reacting to the arrest of I-PAC director Vinesh Chandel by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee called it alarming. In a post on X, the TMC MP wrote, "The arrest of Vinesh Chandel, co-founder of I-PAC, barely 10 days before the Bengal elections, is not just alarming- It shakes the very idea of a level playing field." "At a time when West Bengal should be moving toward free and fair elections, this kind of action sends a chilling message: If you work with the Opposition, you could be next. That's not democracy- that's intimidation!" he added. I-PAC is the consultancy firm hired by the TMC for the West Bengal Assembly polls.

"What makes it even harder to ignore is the double standard. Those facing serious corruption allegations seem to find protection the moment they switch sides, while others are swiftly targeted at politically convenient moments," Abhishek, who is considered number 2 in the party, said. "People are not blind to this anymore. When institutions meant to protect democracy start feeling like tools of pressure, trust begins to erode. On one side, the Election Commission. On the other, agencies like the ED, NIA, and CBI are stepping in at the most sensitive time. It creates an atmosphere of fear, not fairness," he wrote. "India has always taken pride in its democracy- loud, messy but free.

But today, many are beginning to ask: are we still that country? This is bigger than one arrest. It is about whether our institutions remain independent and whether every citizen, no matter their political belief, can participate without fear," he said, adding, "Because once fear replaces freedom, democracy becomes just a word". He also took aim at Union Home Minister Amit Shah and challenged that, despite the BJP's "power structure", the TMC will win the polls in West Bengal. To Amit Shah and the BJP's power structure- Be in Bengal on the 4th and 5th of May. Come with Gyanesh Kumar and every agency you deploy. Bengal will not be bullied, will not be silenced, and will not bow. This is a land that answers pressure with resistance, and it will show you exactly what that means," he posted.

GNS News Agency, April 17

The farmers' protest against land acquisition for GMADA's ambitious Aerotropolis expansion project continues to gain momentum, with agitators sitting on a hunger strike outside the GMADA office since March 25. Farmers have voiced strong resentment over the acquisition process, claiming that their fertile land is taken away, and in return, are offered plots at inferior locations — without any clarity on when they will even be allotted. Amid the ongoing agitation, a meeting between the administration and farmer representatives was held at the Circuit House, lasting nearly one and a half hours, where indications of partial agreement on several demands emerged. The meeting was attended by senior officials including Principal Secretary (PUDA) Vikas Garg, GMADA Chief Administrator Sakshi

Punjab to launch Rs 1,500 monthly aid scheme for women today, benefit to be transferred from July 1



GNS News Agency, April 17

Punjab will begin registering women beneficiaries for its proposed monthly financial assistance scheme from Tuesday, with Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann set to launch the exercise from Jalandhar. The scheme, named Mawan Dhiyaan Satkar Yojana, is expected to be rolled out from July 1, when eligible women will start receiving a monthly honorarium of Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,500 through direct bank transfer. An AAP spokesman said on Tuesday that the registration process will initially be carried out on a pilot basis in nine assembly constituencies from April 15 — Adampur, Malout, Sri Anandpur Sahib, Dirba, Sunam, Moga, Kotkapura, Batala, and Patiala Rural. The exercise will be extended to the remaining 108 constituencies from May 15, he added. Applicants will be required to submit a Punjab Aadhaar card, voter identity card, and bank passbook at

the time of registration. The documents will be used to verify eligibility and facilitate direct benefit transfer into beneficiaries' accounts.

The scheme is a delivery of the Aam Aadmi Party's 2022 Assembly poll promise of providing financial assistance to women. While the party had then spoken of a monthly payment of Rs 1,000 to women above 18 years, the government has since indicated that the final contours, including beneficiary criteria and the exact amount within the Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,500 range, will be notified as the rollout progresses. He said preparatory work for the scheme has been underway for months, including the creation of a beneficiary database and coordination with banks. The phased registration, he said, is intended to test systems on a smaller scale before a statewide rollout. Punjab is not the only state to come out with a financial assistance scheme for women. Neighbouring Haryana and Himachal Pradesh have also announced it. States such as Delhi and West Bengal have also implemented similar programmes in recent years, claiming financial assistance to household welfare and women's economic participation. The scheme is likely to burden the state exchequer by an annual expenditure of over Rs 10,000 crore. Punjab has one of the highest debt-to-GSDP ratios among states, and questions have been raised in policy circles about the fiscal space available for recurring welfare payouts. Government functionaries, however, maintain that the phased rollout will help with better implementation. The database thus collected would help determine the eventual number of beneficiaries.

Beyond monuments: UP gov't launches drive to capture 'local heritage, memory' via 'lived experience'



GNS News Agency, April 17

Moving beyond monuments and postcard landmarks, the Uttar Pradesh tourism department has decided to launch two citizen-led campaigns during the World Heritage Week, inviting people to document heritage through "lived experience", officials said. As part of the two campaigns — "UP Heritage Through My Lens" and "Share Your Personal Treasure" — the government is inviting submissions in the form of photographs or objects of personal significance till World Heritage Day on April 18, officials said, adding top entries will be displayed in the State Museum. According to officials, the objective behind the initiative is to broaden the definition of heritage beyond well-known sites to include how local memory is identified, recorded and shared.

In the first campaign, 'UP Heritage Through My Lens', participants can capture lesser-known or overlooked heritage sites through photographs and short videos, officials said. These could range from local temples and stepwells to traditional markets, streets, shrines or structures that hold cultural value within communities but remain largely undocumented. Officials said that the emphasis is not just on architecture but also on the everyday life around these spaces — rituals, gatherings and routines that give them meaning. The format has been kept deliberately simple, allowing submissions through mobile photography and short reels, making it accessible to students, young content creators and local residents who may not otherwise engage with formal heritage platforms, officials added. The second campaign, 'Share Your Personal Treasure', shifts the focus indoors.

Participants are invited to submit objects of personal or family significance — such as old coins, handwritten letters, heirloom utensils, jewellery or vintage photographs — along with brief written accounts explaining their history, officials said. The idea is to bring attention to forms of heritage that exist within households and are often passed down informally across generations. According to officials, such documentation can also help identify places and cultural elements with strong local relevance, which may be integrated into the state's wider tourism framework over time. Entries can be submitted online in specified formats to ensure authenticity, and top entries will be awarded prizes,

Aerotropolis land acquisition: Farmers continue stir, demand written assurance

GNS News Agency, April 17

The farmers' protest against land acquisition for GMADA's ambitious Aerotropolis expansion project continues to gain momentum, with agitators sitting on a hunger strike outside the GMADA office since March 25. Farmers have voiced strong resentment over the acquisition process, claiming that their fertile land is taken away, and in return, are offered plots at inferior locations — without any clarity on when they will even be allotted. Amid the ongoing agitation, a meeting between the administration and farmer representatives was held at the Circuit House, lasting nearly one and a half hours, where indications of partial agreement on several demands emerged. The meeting was attended by senior officials including Principal Secretary (PUDA) Vikas Garg, GMADA Chief Administrator Sakshi

Sawhney, Land Acquisition Collector Rohit Jindal, Sewerage Board Chairman Dr. Sunny Ahluwalia, and AAP leader Satinder Jain, while farmers were represented by leaders such as Jagrup Singh Kurdi, Gurpratap Singh Badi, Harminder Singh Patton, Advocate Gurveer Singh Antal, and several village sarpanches.

During the discussions, consensus was reached on key issues such as allotment of plots under the land pooling scheme, allocation of residential and commercial plots on corner locations and along main roads, waiver of CLU fees, and extension of the validity period for facilitation certificates. However, the core demand regarding expansion of the land pooling area remained unresolved, as the administration's proposal to increase residential area by 20 square yards and commercial area by 10 square yards was

rejected by farmers, who termed it insufficient. The farmers stated that they would consult all affected villages before arriving at a final decision and reiterated that the hunger strike would not be called off until a written assurance addressing their demands is provided. Meanwhile, farmers from Sekhanmajra village have also joined the hunger strike, raising slogans against GMADA and the Punjab government, further intensifying the protest. The Aerotropolis Project, a flagship initiative of GMADA, aims to develop a modern urban ecosystem around the Mohali International Airport by creating integrated residential, commercial, and industrial zones. The project is expected to attract investment and generate employment opportunities, but the ongoing resistance from farmers continues to pose a significant challenge to its progress.

Dharam Yudhh Morcha welcomes anti-sacrilege Bill, 'will decide on lifting stir after reading hardcopy'



GNS News Agency, April 17

The Dharam Yudhh Morcha Monday welcomed the unanimous passing of the anti-sacrilege Bill in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha but added that a final call on lifting its ongoing dharna will be taken after reviewing the complete text of the legislation. Members of the morcha are on a protest at Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Chowk in Samana constituency of Patiala since February 24, demanding stricter punishment for sacrileges.

"We are happy that the Bill mentions life imprisonment, harsher punishment and bigger fines for the accused but at the same time, we will like to read the hard copy and only then will decide whether to lift the dharna or not," said Kaka Singh Kotda, general secretary of Bharti Kisan Union (Sidhpur) adding that they would also consult Gurjeet Singh Khalsa, who has been sitting atop a BSNL tower in Samana since October 14, 2024, for the same cause. The morcha had earlier submitted a draft to the Punjab government outlining the amendments it sought in the existing sacrilege law. Kotda indicated that most of their suggestions appear to have been incorporated.

Sources said that if the morcha accepts the bill, the members are likely to organise an akhand path and, on the day of bhog, invite government representatives to formally lift the dharna and bring Khalsa down from the

tower. Meanwhile, rebel Akali Dal MLA from Dakha constituency of Ludhiana district Manpreet Singh Ayali also supported the Bill. "In the past years, many sacrilege incidents took place that hurt Sikh sentiments. Even when the SAD was in power, firing took place in Behbal Kalan on sangat protesting against sacrilege in which two persons got killed. SAD had to pay for this incident a lot. Though the culprits were arrested, the punishment received was very less. I hope the Bill is passed at the earliest. I also have a few suggestions that court trails in such cases should be done in a set time framework so as to punish the culprits at the earliest. Because when justice is delayed, many evidences are destroyed in the due course of time," Ayali said. Delhi Akali chief Paramjit Singh Sarna termed the Bhagwant Mann government's Jagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Bill, 2026 as a calculated political instrument aimed at weakening the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC).

Reacting to the proposed legislation introduced in a special session of the state assembly, Sarna argued that beneath the language of reverence and protection lies an attempt to shift control of Sikh religious institutions into the hands of the state. The Bill dresses itself in the language of 'satkar', but its structure reveals something else entirely," Sarna said, adding, "It creates pathways for administrative and legal intrusion into areas historically governed by the Panth through the SGPC." The panthic leader observed that the Bill in its current form is nothing but largely a refurbished version of an earlier legislation that failed to secure presidential assent. In this bill though, Sarna pointed specifically to provisions mandating detailed record-keeping and digital uploading of information related to the saropos of Sri Guru Granth Sahib within a fixed timeframe, followed by monthly updates certified by authorised officers. He said this effectively places religious practice under bureaucratic supervision. "Every granthi, every sewadar, becomes answerable to a legal framework that invites police intervention into matters that demand sensitivity, not surveillance," he said.

After massive worker protests in Noida, UP govt hikes minimum wage rates

GNS News Agency, April 17

Noida workers For Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad, the interim monthly wages have been increased to Rs 13,690 for unskilled workers, Rs 15,059 for semi-skilled workers, and Rs 16,868 for skilled workers. The Uttar Pradesh government has hiked minimum wages for workers across categories, after a protest by thousands of factory workers from dozens of units across Noida's industrial belt, demanding better wages and working conditions, turned violent on Monday. The revised interim rates will come into effect from April 1, 2026, retrospectively, officials said.

This comes after a high-level committee set up by the UP Labour Department to resolve the dispute between workers and industries held discussions with all stakeholders. What will workers earn now According to a statement, the revised wages vary across regions and skill levels — unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled — covering areas such as Gautam Buddha Nagar, Ghaziabad, other municipal corporation regions, and the rest of the state. For Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad, the interim monthly wages have been increased to Rs 13,690 for unskilled workers, Rs 15,059 for semi-skilled workers, and Rs 16,868 for skilled workers. Noida is home to footwear, textiles, and auto parts manufacturing units. In other municipal corporation areas, the revised wages stand at Rs 13,006 (unskilled), Rs 14,306 (semi-skilled), and Rs 16,025 (skilled).

Revised rates come into effect from April 1 retrospectively. Revised rates come into effect from April 1 retrospectively. For the remaining districts, the interim wages have been fixed at Rs 12,356 for unskilled workers, Rs 13,591 for semi-skilled workers, and Rs 15,224 for skilled workers, the statement said. Officials said the revision has



been carried out in line with provisions under the new Labour Law codes, with an aim to ensure a more balanced and realistic wage structure amid changing economic conditions. The government also clarified that claims circulating on social media about a uniform minimum wage of Rs 20,000 per month are incorrect. "Such information is misleading and not based on official notifications," the statement said. Highlighting the rationale behind the revision, the government said industries are currently navigating global and economic challenges, including rising input costs and fluctuations in demand, necessitating a balanced approach that safeguards both workers' welfare and industrial stability. The statement added that discussions are ongoing with stakeholders, including employer organisations and labour groups, and their suggestions are being considered before finalising a comprehensive wage framework. The government reiterated its commitment to workers' welfare, stating that efforts are being made to ensure timely payment of wages, social security benefits, and safe working conditions across industries.

ED searches 11 premises in Kharat case; probe flags over 130 accounts, Solapur land buys



GNS News Agency, April 17

ED ponzi scheme The ED has raided 11 premises in Nashik, Pune, and Shirdi linked to self-styled godman Ashok Kharat, uncovering a network of 130 bank accounts and 260 crore in suspicious transactions. The Enforcement Directorate on Monday searched 11 premises in Maharashtra — five in Nashik, three in Pune and three in Shirdi — as part of its money laundering probe into self-styled godman Ashok Kharat, accused in multiple cases of sexual exploitation and financial irregularities.

The searches come as investigators examine a wide financial network of over 130 bank accounts and transactions exceeding Rs 60 crore, along with land purchases and assets linked to Kharat and his associates. The action follows registration of ECIR on April 6, based on an FIR filed on March 25 at Sarkarwada police station, Nashik, which includes allegations of extortion, religious manipulation and drug-facilitated assault. Kharat was arrested last month in the case. According to the ED, preliminary findings suggest that Kharat opened multiple bank accounts in the names of third parties across cooperative credit societies in Nashik district, while remaining the nominee and using a common mobile number to control their operations. Investigators have identified more than 130 such accounts.

These include over 100 accounts linked to Samata Cooperative Credit Society, with transactions of around Rs 60 crore. The agency also identified 30 accounts linked to Jagdamba Cooperative Credit Society, with transactions of about Rs 2.7 crore. Kharat was chairman on Jagadaba credit society till 2024. Officials said funds did not remain in a single account but appear to have moved across multiple

accounts, a pattern being examined to trace how money was routed and redistributed. Officials said the recurrence of the same nominee and contact details across accounts is being examined to determine whether they functioned independently or as part of a coordinated financial network. Deposits were often made by individuals who had visited Kharat, they said. The agency claimed that money collected from victims and through extortion was invested in land purchases through chartered accountant Prakash Pophale and his sons.

Karnataka clears projects worth Rs 18,430 crore; to generate 15K jobs

GNS News Agency, April 17

These projects will be implemented in Bagalkote, Bidar, Belagavi, Ballari, Chikkaballapur, Dakshina Kannada, Tumakuru, Chamarajanagar, Bengaluru Rural, and Bengaluru districts of Karnataka.

Among the major new projects are JSW Vijayanagar Metallics Ltd. in Ballari with an investment of Rs 4,600 crore. JSW is already an established firm in the mine-rich Ballari region. A firm called Energy Transition will invest Rs 1,600 crore in the Dakshina Kannada district, while the Swedish firm Volvo Group will invest Rs 1,500 crore in the Bengaluru Rural district. Last year, Karnataka emerged as the top investment destination in the country. In September last year, the state surpassed Maharashtra for the first time in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). At the 66th SHLCC meeting held last October, Karnataka cleared investments totalling Rs 27,607 crore, expected to create 8,704 direct jobs in the state.



Traffic solutions for citizens, by citizens — Delhi Traffic Police rolls out new collaborative platform



GNS News Agency, April 17

Following directions from Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu earlier this month, the Delhi Traffic Police rolled out Project SANGAM — Synergistic Action and Networked Governance for Area Mobility. This is a collaborative platform that brings together Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), Market Welfare Associations (MWAs), and civic agencies such as the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and Public Works Department (PWD). It is based on a simple but significant idea — traffic management as a shared civic responsibility rather than a top-down enforcement exercise. The project has already begun to reshape how local traffic issues are identified and addressed in key neighbourhoods like Connaught Place, Khan Market, Chanakypuri, Defence Colony, South Extension, Rajouri Garden, Saket and Karol Bagh. "Participatory governance could be key to long-term behavioural change. When residents are involved in framing solutions, compliance tends to improve. For instance, RWAs can help ensure that parking norms are followed within colonies, while market associations can regulate loading and unloading practices," said Sanjay Tyagi, Joint Commissioner of Police, Traffic.

Since the project's launch on April 3, over 30 meetings involving more than 6,000 residents have been conducted, said officers. "During these interactions, we note

down suggestions on the ground and translate them into actionable measures. For instance, in Chanakypuri, issues like unauthorised parking, traffic issues especially during VIP movement were flagged, and steps such as installing barricades along central verges, including stretches like San Martin Marg, have been taken," said Shobhit Saksena, DCP, Traffic, New Delhi. Even around Hanuman Mandir and on Baba Kharak Singh Marg, residents highlighted congestion on specific days like Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, he said.

"We streamlined parking near Shivaji Stadium and Bangla Sahib Lane by ensuring vehicles halt in a single line and coordinated with civic agencies like NDMC. Enforcement has also been strengthened, including challans for buses and action against unauthorised parking," Saksena added. What has emerged is a granular understanding of everyday problems, unauthorised parking outside homes and markets, chaotic e-rickshaw movement, rampant wrong side driving, and encroachments that shrink already narrow roads. Unlike traditional grievance systems, SANGAM feeds these citizen inputs into a central digital repository, allowing authorities to track each issue from suggestion to implementation. Officers say more than 50 actionable suggestions have already been logged.

The impact is already beginning to show on the ground. In several of these areas, enforcement has been sharpened through targeted e-challans, towing and clamping drives. At the same time, civic agencies have stepped in with structural fixes, adjusting signal timings, redesigning stretches prone to bottlenecks, and improving pedestrian safety measures. What sets SANGAM apart is its emphasis on localisation. Traffic problems in Connaught Place are vastly different from those in Saket or Rajouri Garden. By involving RWAs and MWAs, authorities are able to tailor solutions — whether it is regulating peak-hour parking in busy markets or managing last-mile e-rickshaw congestion near residential clusters. The initiative also attempts to bridge coordination gaps between multiple agencies often cited as a major hurdle in Delhi's traffic management. With the traffic police, MCD, and PWD working in tandem, implementation delays can potentially be reduced. However, the real test will lie in sustaining the rigour. Citizen participation often wanes over time, and enforcement fatigue can set in. "SANGAM will soon be expanded to other parts of the city, with a focus on keeping engagement continuous rather than episodic. If it succeeds, Project SANGAM could mark a shift in how Indian cities tackle urban mobility not just through more policing, but through partnership with the people who navigate these roads every day," said DK Gupta, Additional CP, Traffic.

Workers encouraged by Haryana's revision of minimum wage, social media — what triggered protests in Noida

GNS News Agency, April 17

Workers who began dharmas at factories in Noida on Friday were upset that their counterparts in Haryana had been promised higher wages for the same work, several protesters told The Indian Express on Monday morning. The four-day-old protest by workers escalated on Monday and quickly degenerated into vandalism and arson across Noida's industrial belt. Following labour unrest in Manesar, Haryana, the Haryana government last Thursday issued a notification revising minimum wages with effect from April 1, 2026.

Anuj Kumar (20), who said he had been hired by a garment export unit named Richa Global through a contractor, said workers had taken up the issue with the general manager and human resources manager of the unit in Noida on Friday. Richa Global has operations in Gurgaon as well. "We work for the same company, why are we paid differently? I earn Rs 11,000 a month, and the salary of workers in Manesar has increased to Rs 18,000. We got to know this through our friends and social media," Anuj said. "They (the company representatives) said our wages would be increased by Rs 361 from the salary of April, and that we should raise this matter with the government and not with the company," he said. On Saturday, the Uttar Pradesh government announced a series of measures for workers' welfare, including mandatory double overtime pay and timely wages. A representative of Richa Global declined to comment.

On Monday, stones were thrown at the gates of the factory of automotive parts manufacturer Motherson in Sector 84. A large group of workers blocked the road in front of Staunch Electronics' factory in Sector 83. They let an ambulance and a school bus through, but refused to allow any other vehicles to pass. Protests at both these factories had been ongoing since Friday, workers said.

"We have been asking them to increase our salaries for years," claimed Rahul, who said he does soldering work. "We got to know from social media that some workers in Manesar managed to get a hike in salaries after protesting.



We thought if they could do it, so could we," he said. Workers alleged that Rs 550 was deducted from their salaries every month for an "ITI diploma" which they said they suspected did not exist. "They just make us take tests every year," Rahul said. Workers complained that rising rents and inflation were squeezing their budgets. "The landlords increase rents every year. My landlord increased the rent by Rs 300 this year. After work, I come back home and cook on a chulha. I can no longer afford to buy gas, and if I don't have the strength to look for firewood after work, my family goes hungry that night," said Renu, who was protesting in front of Staunch.

Several women workers alleged that conditions inside their workplaces were unhygienic, including only one bathroom for dozens of workers, which was often not kept clean. "If we complain, they tell us it's our fault that the bathrooms are so dirty," one of the protesters said. Other workers alleged they were not provided adequate safety equipment, and the cost of aprons and slippers were deducted from their salaries. Working hours were long, and there were often no days off, the workers alleged. "We are supposed to work for 26 days a month and get a weekly day off. But they tell us to come to work on Sundays too. If you don't, they cut a day's salary. Even if we work all 30 days, we don't get paid overtime. We don't even get our full salaries... they tell us there was something wrong with our attendance, that we didn't punch in properly, etc," Rahul said.

Delhi Police to take control of CCTV, restrict public's access to feed

In a move that could significantly restrict public access to footage of CCTV cameras installed by the government, Delhi Police Commissioner Satish Golchha is learnt to have directed one of his Special CPs to prepare a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Public Works Department (PWD), ensuring footage "passwords are no longer shared with the general public".

The previous AAP-led government began installation of CCTV cameras across the city, and 1.40 lakh each were installed in two phases. Mostly, CCTV cameras are installed by the PWD on roads, key public spaces, in government buildings and establishments, as well as underpasses. "Currently, residents and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) have passwords of most of the CCTV cameras to view feeds from the street and neighborhood cameras. They could independently check footage in case of incidents like thefts, children going missing, or minor crimes and share it with the police," a senior police officer said. Now, the PWD, however, is set to transfer control of its camera feeds to the Delhi Police. "Golchha, in a recent crime review meeting, said that all CCTV cameras installed in Delhi should be listed out by the district DCPs concerned. A proforma will be circulated in the coming days. He also asked the Special CP (Tech & PI) to finalise the MoU with PWD officials so that passwords of CCTV cameras installed by PWD are not available to the general public," the officer

said. Now, under the proposed arrangement, passwords and access to footage from PWD-managed CCTV cameras, deployed across key public spaces in the national capital, will be exclusively held by police personnel. "After handover, residents and RWAs, who previously received passwords to view CCTV feeds, will now need to visit local police stations for assistance," the officer added. "District DCPs have been tasked with mapping all cameras in their areas to optimise usage for law enforcement.

The control room will also shift to police oversight, streamlining monitoring," the officer said. Another officer said that under the new arrangement, police can also prevent sensitive footage of heinous crimes from going viral on social media, which often spark public outrage and scrutiny on police. Since 2020, the vast network of CCTV cameras managed by the PWD has aided the Delhi Police in over 10,000 cases. "The PWD has shared 12,000 CCTV footage with the police to date. Besides this, more than 10,000 court summons have been attended to by the PWD and Bharat Electronics Limited, the company awarded work for installation and maintenance of CCTV cameras in Delhi," according to a government document. A query has been sent to the Delhi Police spokesperson and their response is awaited. Nowadays, CCTV footage of crimes committed in the Capital often find their way to the social media.

A 'second chance' school that outlasted the British. Maharashtra just scrapped the law governing it.



GNS News Agency, April 17

In one corner of the busy Gole Colony — tucked between the bus stand and Thakkar Bazar — the Nashik Borstal School stands behind closed wrought-iron gates, its fate uncertain after the Maharashtra government scrapped the 1929 law governing it. "Restricted area," reads the white lettering on a reddish-brown board. "Entry of outside vehicles is prohibited." Inside, a short walk through a canopy of trees leads to a white government building — imposing and bereft, its faded yellow gates shut. Unlike the noise and traffic outside, it's quiet here: not a soul in sight, save for the odd two-wheeler; the large courtyard lies mostly empty. "Kishore Sudharalaya, Nashik," the austere blue lettering announces in Devanagari. Outwardly, nothing signals what the institution is. Yet there is little ordinary about it. Standing on 300 acres, the Nashik Borstal School once provided an alternative to prison for adolescent offenders between the ages of 16 and 21, often acting as a bridge between childhood and adulthood.

A 'second chance' school that outlasted the British. Maharashtra just scrapped the law governing it. Experts believe there is a need to redefine the borstal system within the changing context of criminal justice. (Express Photo) On March 17, the Maharashtra government repealed the little-known Bombay Borstal Schools Act, 1929 — one of 80 laws repealed that day. For the Nashik Borstal School, already functioning in a grey zone — with its inmates under the Juvenile Justice Act but its structure and administration under the prison department — the move raises questions about its future. "We have not been informed yet if there is going to be any change after the Act was repealed," says one official at the borstal. A prison department official, too, confirms this.

For their part, experts believe there is a need to redefine the borstal system within the changing context of criminal justice. "There could have been amendments made to the law to change the age criteria and overhaul the infrastructure, redefining industrial training and rehabilitation," says Asha Mukundan, associate professor at the Centre of Criminology and Justice, Tata Institute of Social Sciences. She adds: "The repeal of the Act and the closing of such an institution without consultation may not have been a good idea. There could have been a revival of the Act. The JJ Act, 2025, requires a 'place of safety' for those between the ages of 16-18, with a focus on correctional services. The Borstal School could have been formally declared as an institution under the J J Act." According to Prison Statistics of India, 2023, there are 10 borstal schools in India. While the law exists in some states, most homes function under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000. Started in the UK, borstals were introduced in India during colonial rule as "second chance" institutions for young offenders. Unlike present-day correctional homes, these borstals did not take offenders under 16. Courts sent young male offenders between 16 and 21

to such borstals, focused on education and training. They were released at 21. Borstals were introduced in India in 1925 following recommendations of the Indian Jail Committee Report, 1919-1920. The school, set up in Dharwar in 1930, later moved to Kolhapur and then to Nashik in 1990 from a repurposed sub-jail. Borstal schools come under the prison department, with jail authorities identifying eligible young offenders. While the borstal law continued to be enforced well into the late 90s, the enactment of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000, made its application complex due to conflicting provisions. The JJ Act redefined a juvenile as "a person less than 18 years of age" — meaning nobody under that age could be sent to prison. Borstal schools differed from special homes under the JJ Act. Unlike special homes, the head of a borstal is called a principal, with posts such as housemaster, teachers and counsellors.

As the JJ Act eclipsed the borstal law, inmate numbers dwindled. In the early 2000s, the Nashik school began enrolling juveniles. "It began working as a special home under the JJ Act, where children in conflict with law are sent after the inquiry by the Juvenile Justice Board," one official said. "Two minors involved in the gangrape at Shakti Mills in 2013 were sent to the Nashik Home in 2014 for three years." "Many boys were sent here as they were seen as unmanageable by the Observation Home and Special Home staff," a former vice-principal at the school says.

On a campus built for 105, only five inmates now remain. Two of the five are playing carrom while one sits reading; two others are asleep inside. "Even though the inmates are sent to the Nashik Borstal School under the J J Act, the functioning of the institute continues to be like a borstal school under the Maharashtra prison department," one official says. For inmates, this means a strict schedule — with education at its core. Industrial training, including computer courses, is also held. "They wake up around 6 am and have to undergo physical training or yoga. After breakfast and bathing, they sit for educational classes for two hours," the official says, while another staffer adds: "Based on the educational qualification of the inmates, an education plan is drawn." Of the five young men at the school, one is pursuing his MA in Social Sciences, while another is in his second year of college, both through distance learning. The three others are in Classes 10 and 12.

"Unlike a jail, where there are other gangs looking to recruit youngsters, the borstal school attempts to give them a second chance and a follow-up aftercare programme, where counsellors keep in touch after release," one official says. At a 2015 consultation by the Centre of Criminology and Justice, TISS, and the Maharashtra State Judicial Academy, the legality of sending juveniles to borstal schools was discussed. While some believed it wasn't permitted, others argued it could be included as a 'place of safety' — a designated secure facility for those between 16 and 18 accused or convicted of heinous offences — in the JJ Act. A circular was issued to identify young offenders in jail to send them to the borstal school, but found no takers. Mukundan of TISS believes the law's relative anonymity was part of its present state. "The law, when it existed, was not known at all, not taught in law schools. Even though the young population in jails could have benefited from it, it was not used," she says. For the Nashik school, all this means uncertainty. But many also believe it did what it had set out to do. "We cannot say that the institution was perfect, but we saw many turn a new leaf. As the number was low, we tried to come up with a personalised education and vocation plan. We feel happy that many did not return to crime and actually received a second chance," says the former Nashik borstal school principal.

Undercover cops, a woman observing 'Ramzan fasts', conversion allegations: How a tip-off triggered seven arrests at TCS's Nashik unit



GNS News Agency, April 17

In February this year, when a local political party worker in Nashik, located 180 km north of Mumbai, approached the Nashik City police alleging that a Hindu woman in her early 20s working at a BPO unit of TCS there was observing fasts during Ramzan, it would set off a series of events that would end with nine FIRs ranging from allegations of sexual abuse and religious conversion, seven employees being placed under arrest, and a pause in the unit's operations. On Monday, N Chandrasekaran, the Tata Sons chairman, said a thorough investigation is underway to ascertain what transpired.

According to the police, the local political party worker told them that the woman had been influenced to follow the teachings of Islam at her workplace, where "something amiss" was going on. Police did not disclose which party the worker is affiliated with. When the police contacted her family, the girl's parents said they had stopped her from going to work after she started observing fasts and living "in an Islamic manner", an officer, who was part of the team assigned to probe the matter, said on condition of anonymity. It was then that they decided to investigate what was happening at the 147-employee BPO. "We got some of our constables hired there as housekeeping staff to keep an eye on what was happening," the officer said. "After two weeks of our people — both men and women — working there, we felt their probe had revealed enough to take action," the officer said. "We registered the first FIR on charges of rape in the case of the woman who had observed fasts. She was in a relationship with a now-arrested accused, Danish Shaikh, who allegedly hid the fact that he was already married. In February, a month before the FIR, Danish's wife had messaged the woman and then told her on a call that he was married and had two children," the officer said. "The rape case was registered since he had established sexual relations with the woman with the promise to marry her. Also, the section on hurting religious sentiments was added as he influenced her to follow his religion." ACP (Crime) Sandeep Mitke, heading the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in the case, said that they first arrested Danish and his friend Tousif Attar for allegedly seeking sexual favours from the woman. When police checked Tousif's phone, they allegedly found a photograph of a Hindu colleague wearing Muslim attire. "It was the questioning of this man (from the photo) that led to the second FIR and the names of more accused being added," Mitke said, adding that the man claimed the accused would argue with him about his religious practises and promote Islamic teachings.

The lawyers for the arrested accused, who have been suspended by the company in the wake of the allegations, claimed that things said in jest and people's voluntary choices have been criminalised to deflect attention from other issues plaguing Nashik. Lawyer Baba Sayyad, who, along with Rahul Kasliwal, is representing four of the six accused, said, "These are flimsy allegations. During Eid,

even my non-Muslim friends who visit home come dressed in sherwanis. That does not mean that they are being converted." "The police say they (the accused) said wrong things about the religion of the victim. But one can have discussions about various things, including religion, and that does not mean that the intention is to influence the other person," he said. Police claimed they had leads about other women allegedly being harassed at the workplace, too. "Initially, women were not willing to complain as they had no clue we had arrested the accused in the first case. Later, we found a few more cases where molestation and attempts to influence the other's religion were found. In all, nine FIRs were registered, which included six where influencing religion was included, between March 26 and April 3," Mitke said. Seven of the nine FIRs had similar content, where women employees alleged personal comments about their married lives, inappropriate touch, obscene advances, double-meaning comments, and increased workload if they did not play along. In all, eight accused — six men and two women — including a Pune-based operations manager, were named, and seven persons have been arrested. One Nida Khan is absconding, with the police saying she is accused of explaining to women how to pray.

The arrested accused have been identified as Shafi Shaikh (34), Asif Ansari (22), Tausif Attar (36), Shahrukh Qureshi (34), Raza Memon (35), Danish Shaikh (34) and Ashwini Chainani. "We have not found an organised conspiracy or the accused acting on someone else's instructions to carry out conversions," Mitke said. "Tausif, after undertaking a religious visit two years ago, became religious and influenced the other accused, who then influenced others still. It was their own religious zeal that led them to influence those working around them. There was no external factor or conspiracy driving them." Sayyad, the lawyer, said, "If you see the FIRs, some of it mentions the person complimenting a victim — that she looks good in a saree — or other personal discussion related to their families. These people work around each other for several hours each day, and one can develop a bond. Since when has complementing someone or discussing personal issues become a crime?" Regarding the operations manager, Mitke said she has been arrested because some of the victims allegedly filed oral complaints against the accused, but no action was taken. "While no written complaint was given, the manager was on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) committee, where even a verbal complaint is enough to take action," Mitke said. When The Indian Express visited the BPO office, there were only a few security guards and no employees. According to the police, most of the accused held senior positions, such as team leaders, while the complainants worked on their teams. Most of the victims are said to be in the age group of 18-25 and earn between Rs 18,000 and Rs 25,000. On Monday, Chainani was produced before the court and remanded to police custody till Thursday, while the other six accused are currently in judicial custody. The statement by Chandrasekaran said, "The complaints and allegations emerging from the Nashik branch have been gravely concerning and anguishing. This incident is being treated with the utmost seriousness. Action has already been initiated against the accused employees, and the company is extending its full cooperation to the ongoing investigations." "The group maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of coercion or misconduct by its employees. A thorough investigation is underway to establish the facts and identify all individuals responsible for this situation. Ms Aarthi Subramanian, Chief Operating Officer at TCS, will lead this investigation. Appropriate and stringent action will be taken against those found guilty," it said.

Trump and Leo chronicles: A president and a pope square off over Iran and its aftermath

GNS News Agency, April 17

Washington: Pope Leo XIV, a studious and soft-spoken cleric, and Donald Trump, an unapologetically bellicose and pugilistic politician, have long been on a rhetorical collision course. Now their disagreement over the war in Iran has escalated in spectacular fashion, and their comments show how differently each see the conflict and its impact. On social media, Trump said Leo was "Weak" and captive to the "Radical Left," even suggesting that Leo somehow owed his position to Trump. The pope has declared Trump's threats toward Iran "truly unacceptable" and pointed his flock to Biblical text and church doctrine on war and peace, explaining that his purpose is not about Trump at all.

"I'm not afraid of the Trump administration," Leo said Monday on the way to Africa, "or of speaking out loudly about the message of the Gospel, which is what the Church works for." It's an unusual spectacle involving the world's two biggest megaphones, both held by Americans for the first time. Here is how they got to this point. Before the papacy, Robert Prevost did not mince words.

WHAT HE SAID: When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, the future pope was a bishop in Peru. He did not shy away from assigning clear blame to Moscow. On a Peruvian show "Weekly Expression," Prevost described an "imperialist invasion in which Russia wants to conquer territory for reasons of power given Ukraine's strategic location." The clip resurfaced in Italian media soon after he was elected pope on May 8, 2025. In early 2025, then-Cardinal Prevost used social media to share a news analysis that criticized US Vice President JD Vance, a converted Catholic, for justifying harsh immigration policy by arguing that Christianity sets a pecking order of caring for others, putting one's family, immediate community and fellow citizens above foreigners. JD Vance is wrong: Jesus doesn't ask us to rank our love for others," read the headline that the future pope shared.

CONTEXT AND WHY IT MATTERS: Catholic bishops comment often in their local media, and some achieve considerable influence. But they vary widely in how detailed they are about public policy and politics. Many stick to broad statements about church doctrine and values and avoid taking stands at odds with individual politicians. With his comments in Peru and then his rare retweet as a cardinal in Rome, Prevost showed he kept abreast of world affairs and was willing to be quite direct in his critiques. Trump celebrated the Great Honour of Pope Leo's election.

WHAT HE SAID: "Congratulations to Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, who was just named Pope," Trump posted on Truth Social on May 8, 2025. "It is such an honor to realize that he is the first American Pope. What excitement, and what a Great Honor for our Country. I look forward to meeting Pope Leo XIV. It will be a very meaningful moment!" Trump later said at the White House that "we were a little bit surprised and very happy" with Leo's election. By Monday, he was using Truth Social to take credit for Leo's election: "He wasn't on any list to be Pope, and was only put there by the Church because he was an American, and

they thought that would be the best way to deal with President Donald J. Trump." WHY IT MATTERS: Trump sees Leo in terms of nationalistic pride and loyalty. The immediate look toward meeting Leo (something that still hasn't happened) reflected his typical embrace of power and celebrity, even when it isn't a natural political fit. Further, Trump's takes do not reflect any nuance about Leo's origins or the Vatican's relationship with the US.

The College of Cardinals historically has viewed the U.S. with some skepticism — specifically because of how Washington's military and economic policy have affected the world, especially poor nations, and with a general reluctance to grant the papacy to someone from the world's pre-eminent superpower.

Leo grew up, was educated and then ordained in the States but spent decades as a church leader elsewhere, including in poor areas of South America. "He was the least American of the Americans," said Steven Millies, a professor at Chicago's Catholic Theological Union, where a young Leo earned his master of divinity. Pope Leo reflected church teachings on war and peace. WHAT HE SAID: "Peace with you all ... the first greeting of the risen Christ, the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the flock of God." Those were Leo's first words from the balcony of St Peter's. When he returned to the loggia for his first Sunday blessing, he addressed the Russian war on Ukraine and violence between Israel and Gaza, decrying a "third world war in pieces."

The following Monday, Leo opened an audience with journalists by quoting Jesus. "In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus proclaimed: Blessed are the peacemakers," the pontiff said. WHY IT MATTERS: Leo's earliest statements all emphasized "peace" as a central message of Jesus — and previewed a likely theme of his papacy.

Adding mentions of Ukraine, Russia, Israel and Palestine affirmed his willingness to go beyond theory and apply doctrine to what's happening to people around the world. The pope was careful about any US branding. WHAT HE SAID: Just as important as the words of his opening papal statements on peace were the languages the polyglot Leo used: None of them were English.

At his introduction to the world from St Peter's Square, Leo opened in Italian and then used Spanish to address Peruvian Catholics and citizens where he'd served. Leo's Sunday blessing was in Italian. He briefly greeted the journalist assembly in English, with the obvious inflection of a Chicago native, but then quickly transitioned to Italian for his remarks. Even in recent encounters with reporters, Leo has opened in Italian before then answering in English.

WHY IT MATTERS: Latin and Italian are the official languages of the Vatican so it's no surprise that Leo speaks the local vernacular. But it's a conscious choice for the polyglot Leo to use his fluent Italian and Spanish. It underscores that he's the leader of a global institution with 1.4 billion followers. "He doesn't want to be perceived, I think, as coming from the American side or as relying on his authority as American," said Catholic University professor William Barbieri. "He wants to speak in the name of the church." Holy

Week and Easter revealed a chasm

WHAT THEY SAID: Trump escalated threats to Iran around Easter, when Christians celebrate the story of Jesus' resurrection. Leo used his Palm Sunday message to call Jesus the "King of Peace" and say God "does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war, but rejects them, saying: Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen: your hands are full of blood." Trump welcomed conservative religious leaders to the White House for a Holy Week observance. His spiritual adviser Paula White compared the president to Jesus, saying they're both persecuted figures who endured. In Rome, Leo washed the feet of others, as the story of the Last Supper records Jesus doing for his disciples. Speaking to reporters, Leo named Trump directly for the first time and said he hoped the president would seek an "off-ramp" in Iran.

On Easter, Trump threatened widespread bombing of Iran's civilian infrastructure and eradication of a "whole civilization." Leo called that threat "truly unacceptable." WHY IT MATTERS: Their starkly different viewpoints and personalities, combined with the gravity of the Iran war, finally stripped away any pretense or possibility that Trump and Leo could avoid engaging directly. Trump is still treating Pope Leo as a domestic political rival.

WHAT THEY SAID: In Trump's post Sunday blasting Leo as "weak," among other things, the president said, "I don't want a Pope who criticizes the President of the United States because I'm doing exactly what I was elected, IN A LANDSLIDE, to do." He added that Leo should "focus on



being a Great Pope, not a Politician." Leo, meanwhile, said again that he's not speaking as a politician. "To put my message on the same plane as what the president has attempted to do here, I think is not understanding what the message of the Gospel is," Leo said aboard the papal flight to Algeria. "And I'm sorry to hear that but I will continue on what I believe is the mission of the church in the world today." WHY IT MATTERS: It's all a rare exercise for the papacy, whose occupants often comment on global affairs without specifically naming secular politicians. And while Trump routinely lashes out at anyone he perceives as an enemy, these dynamics are uncommon for the president, too: This time, Trump is picking a fight with someone who does not accept the president's terms and faces no measurable political pressure to do so.

Google expands Gemini capabilities with notebook integration for better productivity

Hyderabad: As users increasingly rely on the Gemini app for complex tasks—from exam preparation to exploring new hobbies managing information efficiently has become a growing challenge. To address this, Google has expanded its integration with NotebookLM by introducing a new feature: notebooks.

Designed as personal knowledge bases, notebooks allow users to organise chats, documents and other resources in a single space within the Gemini app. The feature builds on last year's update, which enabled NotebookLM as a source, and now offers deeper cross-platform functionality. Users can create notebooks via the app's side panel, move previous conversations into them, add custom instructions and upload files such as PDFs and documents to provide better context. Gemini then uses these curated inputs alongside its built-in tools and web search to generate more relevant and accurate responses. A key advantage of the feature is seamless synchronisation between

Gemini and NotebookLM. Any content added in one platform is automatically reflected in the other, enabling continuity in workflows. This also allows users to leverage advanced NotebookLM features—such as video overviews and infographics—regardless of where the

For instance, students can compile class notes into a notebook, generate a visual overview using NotebookLM, and later return to Gemini to draft essays based on the same material. According to Google, notebooks will support a larger number of sources depending on subscription tiers, making them suitable for more extensive and long-term projects. The rollout of notebooks in Gemini has begun this week for Google AI Ultra, Pro and Plus subscribers on the web. The company plans to expand the feature to mobile devices, additional regions, including parts of Europe, and free users in the coming weeks. Google described the update as an initial step, adding that further enhancements to notebooks are already in development.

India raises clean-energy ambition with 60% non-fossil fuel power goal by 2035



Updating its climate goals, India has pledged that by 2035, 60% of its installed electric capacity will comprise of non-fossil sources. It also aims to reduce by 47% the intensity of emissions per unit of GDP from 2005 level and to increase its carbon sink to 3.5 billion tonnes - 4 billion tonnes. These targets make up its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which are to be communicated to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). "We will easily achieve these goals... (with) the speed with which we are expanding our non-fossil sources," Union Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said at a briefing on Wednesday following a Cabinet meeting.

As a signatory to the Paris Agreement, India was required to issue an updated NDC in 2025, which spells out its voluntary actions towards transitioning away from fossil fuel and improving energy-efficiency measures. At the 30th edition of the Conference of Parties in Belem, Brazil, in November last year, Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav said that India would announce the NDC by the "year-end. The Conference of Parties, or CoP, is a body of nations that convenes annually to discuss climate issues and transition their economies away from fossil fuel.

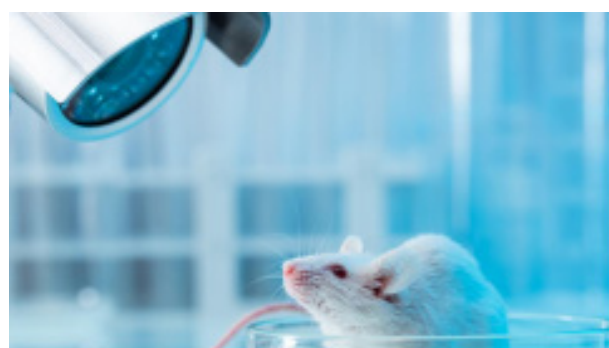
India and Argentina were the only two G-20 countries that had not announced a 2035 NDC as of December 31, 2025. A total of 128 parties, representing about 78% of global greenhouse gas emissions, had submitted new NDCs by that date. These included 21 Small Island Developing States, 19 Least Developed Countries, and 18 G-20 members.

India's current NDC, officially conveyed to the United Nations in August 2022, commits to the following by 2030:

having 50% of its installed electric power from non-fossil sources; reducing the intensity of emissions per unit of GDP by 44%; and increasing its carbon sink to at least 2.5 billion tonnes to 3 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent. Currently, about 52% of India's installed electric capacity comes from non-fossil fuel sources — a target achieved well before the deadline — though only about 25% of the power generated is non-fossil. These sources include solar, wind, hydropower, biomass, and nuclear power. As of 2019, say official estimates, India has achieved an emissions intensity of 36% from 2005-2020.

A carbon sink of 1.97 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent had already been created from 2005 to 2019. However, forest and tree cover accounts for about 24.6% of India's geographical area as of 2021, which is higher than the 21% in 2005, but still less than the national policy goal of 33%. "In shaping India's NDC for 2031-2035, the government has considered the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake (GST), principle of Common but differentiated responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC), and equity with a view to harmonize national realities, developmental priorities, energy security and the need for greater ambition in climate action, in line with the purpose and long-term goals of the Paris Agreement," the Environment Ministry said in a statement. Initiated in 2021, the GST assesses the world's collective progress towards limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, concluding that nations are not on track. Several independent analysts have suggested that while India may meet its 2030 NDC targets, it isn't enough to keep the globe on a 1.5C pathway. Independent analysts said India was picking up the slack for developed countries. India's NDC target had come amid a "rollback of climate policies" and "unilateral trade measures" by developed, rich countries, Vaibhav Chaturvedi, senior fellow, Council for Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), told. "It demonstrates a strong resolve to address transmission and land availability constraints faced by the renewables sector. The 47% emissions intensity target shows that energy security and prices cannot be taken for granted." "At a time when developed countries are backtracking on ambition, deepening their fossil fuel entrenchment, and dragging the world towards military conflict, the signal from India shows that Global South (developing country) leadership on climate ambition is concrete and real," Avantika Goswami, of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), an influential think tank, said in a statement.

How BioPharma SHAKTI can transform biologics with non-animal models



In 2006, London woke up to a tragedy. Six healthy men involved in a phase I clinical trial of theralizumab, a monoclonal antibody (mAb) designed to treat rheumatoid arthritis, developed multiple organ failure. The antibody triggered an intense immune reaction that the researchers didn't observe in rhesus monkeys in preclinical tests because their immune cells responded differently from human immune cells. The Northwick Park Tragedy, as it was called, became a textbook example of why animals can't be used as proxies to test human drugs. Similarly, in 2022, the mAb semorinab failed to work in 457 patients with Alzheimer's disease during phase II trials despite demonstrating effectiveness in a preclinical mouse model.

mAbs, vaccines, and insulin all belong to a growing class of drugs called biologics — large, complex molecules produced by living cells. Their use is rising worldwide as they treat many chronic diseases. Recognising their importance, the 2026 Union Budget of India announced the Biopharma SHAKTI strategy to boost domestic production of biologics and their generic counterparts, biosimilars. However, animal models may not reliably predict the safety and efficacy of biologics. This has prompted a shift towards bioengineered, human-relevant systems such as organoids, organ-on-a-chip, and 3D bioprinting, which are derived from human cells and thus replicate human biology more faithfully. Human-relevant models

These models are collected under the term non-animal methodologies (NAMs) and are used worldwide to reduce the use of experiments in animals. For example, last year, the U.K. published a roadmap to phase out animal experiments and promote the adoption of NAMs. Thanks to the New Drugs and Clinical Trials (Amendment) Rules 2023, India is also promoting the use of NAMs in the development of novel drugs. However, their potential remains untapped in the domain of biologics and biosimilars.

"Biologics are highly specific," University of Illinois adjunct professor Sarfaraz Niazi said. "They bind to particular receptors in the human body. But those receptors are sometimes missing or function differently in animals, which makes animal testing less predictive." One 2024 study in Cell reported a breast cancer-on-chip model to study the effectiveness of CAR T-cell therapy, a leading biologic therapy, against solid tumours. While CAR T-cell therapy has proven effective against blood cancers, solid tumours like breast cancers pose additional challenges like abnormal blood vessel formation and difficulties for T-cells to find and attack the cancerous cells. The breast cancer-on-chip model recreated this tumour environment in the lab, and the authors of the 2024 study perfused T-cells through it to observe whether they could enter the tumour and mount an immune attack, assessing both treatment benefit and potential safety risks without animals. These models can also reduce costs and shorten development timelines, making them attractive to pharmaceutical companies. A 2019 analysis in Drug Discovery Today estimated that organ-on-chip technologies could lower overall drug development costs by 10-26%. They also found the time required for lead optimisation, when scientists identify a promising drug candidate from a pool of molecules, could drop by 19%.

Future of biologics Even if NAMs are promising models, they are not as accessible as animal systems. More than 90 academic labs in India are working on these models. However, the innovation here is not translating into industry use. "Translating NAMs into industry-ready assays

requires a clear context of use, robust documentation, and standardised, reproducible protocols, even before qualification. While institutions support entrepreneurship, sustained commercialisation needs stronger, modern policy support," Kasturi Mahadik, Chief Manager at the Centre for Predictive Human Model Systems (CPHMS), AIC-CCMB, said. (Note: the author works at CPHMS.) The development of NAMs also requires sustained funding and infrastructure. With an outlay of ₹10,000 crore, Biopharma SHAKTI can provide the necessary backing. "I think the best use of these funds would be not to develop a single product but to build systems that enable many companies to do so," Dr. Niazi added. "The culture of entrepreneurship is also a challenge in India," Narendra Chirmule, CEO of SymphonyTech Biologics, said. "Although there is an increase in the number of start-ups and MSMEs in biologics (supported by DBT, ICMR, and other grants), exponentially greater investment, as well as support for the development of supply chain materials, is needed to create real impact. Additionally, investors are not well versed in the risks and potentials of the biologics industry." Another area supported by Biopharma SHAKTI is biosimilars, generic versions of biologics that are reverse-engineered once the original product goes off patent. However, there are additional financial risks and regulatory adjustments involved, which require greater attention from the government. One challenge is patent evergreening, which allows the exclusive rights of an original biologic to be extended. For example, although the intravenous form of the cancer drug trastuzumab was approved in 2000, the manufacturer later introduced a subcutaneous formulation with a separate patent. Because of this prolonged market exclusivity, cheaper biosimilar versions weren't available until 2018.

Before being commercialised, biosimilars also have to receive a nod from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), India's apex regulatory body. These approvals are based on set guidelines; however, the updated guidelines are still in draft form. "While India has been updating its biosimilars guidelines to accommodate NAMs, implementation has been slow, and regulatory confidence in independently validated NAM models is still evolving. If accelerated, this would expedite the adoption of NAMs in the biologics and biosimilars field, helping Biopharma SHAKTI achieve its goals," says Mahadik. Therefore, aligning with industry realities and securing regulatory clarity for their use will make biosimilars and biologics manufacturing in India faster, more predictive, and cost-efficient, thus realising the vision set by Biopharma SHAKTI. Mohit Nikalje is a science communicator at the Centre for Predictive Human Model Systems, Hyderabad.

Fuel crisis paralyses Hyderabad's gig economy as drivers suffer sharp income loss

Hyderabad: Thousands of app-based drivers in Hyderabad operating LPG and CNG vehicles are facing a severe crisis triggered by Middle-East tensions. Inordinate delays in supply have led to massive queues at fuel stations, resulting in fewer trips and immediate loss of income for workers already struggling with high operational costs.

The 'panic buying' witnessed over the last few days has also crippled the food delivery sector. As LPG supplies to eateries become limited, reduced food preparation capacity has directly slashed order volumes, further denting the daily earnings of delivery partners. "The ongoing fuel crisis and panic buying have severely impacted gig and platform workers across Telangana. Long queues are reducing daily earnings and increasing working hours and stress. Many are struggling to sustain livelihoods as incentives remain stagnant despite these soaring operational hurdles," says Shaik Salauddin, Founder President of the Telangana Gig and Platform Workers Union (TGPWU).

How the OpenAI-Microsoft deal is coming undone



There is a kind of awkwardness in a relationship when both parties know something has changed, but neither wants to say it out loud. The partnership between Microsoft and OpenAI seems to have arrived at exactly that moment. The duo that joined hands even before the ChatGPT-triggered AI boom took the tech world by storm. Microsoft invested a billion dollars in OpenAI, back in June 2019, to "build beneficial AGI." The move was aimed at extending Microsoft's cloud capabilities in large-scale AI systems that were still not completely built. The logic was clean and mutually beneficial. OpenAI needed Microsoft's money and cloud infrastructure to build large language models, and Satya Nadella needed Sam Altman researchers and cutting-edge technology. The partnership worked fine for both sides.

In late 2022, ChatGPT exploded into public consciousness, making Microsoft increase its funding in OpenAI with a \$10 billion investment in January 2023 as the software maker rushed to integrate the technology into Bing — the company's search engine — and its broader Office suite, which is now rebranded as Copilot. At that point Mr. Nadella taunted Google's Sundar Pichai, asking to show what his company could do with AI, making Mr. Pichai's researchers double down on building Gemini. But the past few years have been quite dynamic and signs of strain in the partnership between the ChatGPT maker and the Windows maker were becoming visible. The first crack

The first real crack appeared when Microsoft was blindsided in November 2023 when OpenAI's board abruptly fired Mr. Altman. Mr. Nadella quickly moved to bring Mr. Altman back. After Mr. Altman took back his position, dissolving most of the board, Microsoft obtained a non-voting observer seat — a concession that looked like influence but was, in practice, something far more modest. What then followed was a slow, deliberate unravelling. In March 2024, Microsoft worked on a strategy that would make it build its own in-house AI. In a \$650 million deal, the Redmond-headquartered company acquired Inflection AI and hired its founder, Mustafa Suleiman to lead Microsoft AI. OpenAI read that signal and responded accordingly. In June 2024, it signed a roughly \$300 billion deal with Oracle, a move that would loosen Microsoft's grip on the startup for compute infrastructure. Rather than end the exclusivity clause with Microsoft, this collaboration was presented as a three-way deal between Microsoft, OpenAI and Oracle, in which OpenAI would continue to pre-train its frontier models on Microsoft Azure. It was the beginning of a pattern that would repeat itself with increasing boldness.

According to a report by The Information, OpenAI had proposed capping Microsoft's future equity stake at 33% in exchange for it foregoing rights to future profits. Microsoft, which by this point had invested over \$13 billion, had balked at these terms. OpenAI also wanted to eliminate the clause that gives Azure exclusive cloud hosting rights. A truce was eventually reached in which Microsoft and OpenAI signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding in September 2025, fundamentally restructuring how enterprises would deploy artificial intelligence. The formal renegotiation came in October, when Microsoft acquired a 27% stake in OpenAI Group PBC, valued at approximately \$135 billion at the time of signing. In exchange, Microsoft's former right of first refusal to be OpenAI's sole compute provider was formally removed. Unresolved

The deal was packaged as a new chapter, but the underlying discomfort had not been resolved, only paused.

Why is Chennai's microplastic problem bigger than it looks? | Explained

GNS News Agency, April 17

Microplastics, especially nylon fibres, seem to be present rather sparsely in Chennai's beach sediments but could still wreak long-term ecological damage, new research has cautioned. A study by researchers at V.O. Chidambaram College in Thoothukudi examined the abundance, sources, and ecological risks of microplastics from beach sediment samples from 15 sites along the Chennai coast. The findings show fibres dominating, with most particles smaller than 1000 µm. Why does low abundance not mean low risk?

"This study is important because it shows that microplastics are already present in Chennai's beach sediments, even if we don't always see them," Sekhar Selvam, senior assistant professor at the Department of Geology, V.O. Chidambaram College, Thoothukudi, said. "What is new here is that the problem is not just the amount of plastics but also the type of plastics. We found that most of the microplastics are nylon fibres, which are more harmful than many other plastics." In other words, even though Chennai's beaches have fewer microplastics than many global ones, the risk to marine life remains significant. "This study helps us understand that early-stage pollution can still cause long-term damage if ignored," Dr. Selvam said. While there have been several studies worldwide about microplastics, data from rapidly urbanising tropical coastal regions like Chennai remain scarce. Shaji Erath, professor of geology at the University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, said. He added that the new study thus "sheds new light by demonstrating that low overall microplastic abundance does not necessarily imply low ecological risk." An additional insight from the study is the disconnect between abundance-based assessments and risk-based evaluations, Mr. Erath said. Traditional monitoring often focuses on microplastic counts alone. However, the study has shown that polymer type, shape, and aging characteristics are equally, if not more, important in determining ecological risk, he added.

What are the ecological concerns? Ecological concerns in the study are chiefly centred on marine life and coastal ecosystems, Dr. Selvam said. Small organisms living in beach sand, such as worms, crabs, and shellfish, easily ingest the small plastic fibres, which can go on to block or injure their digestive tracts. Toxic compounds in plastics can also enter and poison their bodies. Over time, these plastics move up the food chain and affect fish, birds, and other animals. "So even small particles can slowly disturb the

Per a CNBC report citing a document circulated to prospective investors, OpenAI said that Microsoft is responsible for "a substantial portion of our financing and compute," and warned that any modification or termination of the commercial partnership could adversely affect OpenAI's business. The AI company also stated that its operating results would depend on its ability to successfully develop relationships with partners beyond Microsoft. While an OpenAI spokesperson told the outlet "This is a standard legal risk factor disclosure, unrelated to any potential IPO prospectus," it does reflect the reality that a company is telling investors that its most important relationship is also one of its greatest vulnerabilities. And OpenAI has also been busy raising funds and partnering with other players in the ecosystem. In February, the company announced a combined \$110 billion funding at a valuation for \$730 billion from Amazon, Nvidia and Softbank. After this funding round, the ChatGPT maker has expanded its access to compute infrastructure as Amazon's compute commitments to OpenAI now exceeds Microsoft's.

Separately, OpenAI is also selling ChatGPT Enterprise, a product that rivals Microsoft's Copilot offering. This effectively makes the two companies competitors even as they are bound together by billions of dollars in contracts, IP licences and revenue-sharing agreements. Microsoft, to its credit, has been playing its own long game. It has begun to offer Anthropic's Claude 4 within Office 365, revealing that it isn't trapped by OpenAI's models. In fact, Microsoft began its reassessment exercise back in 2024 when it added OpenAI to the list of companies it considers competitors in its annual report. And with the Inflection AI acquisition the software maker sent a clear signal that OpenAI is not its AI strategy, but merely a part of it.

What remains in place, for now, is the contractual scaffolding that neither side has fully dismantled. Azure remains the exclusive cloud provider for stateless OpenAI APIs, and Microsoft maintains its exclusive license to OpenAI's intellectual property across all models and products. Microsoft will relinquish rights to OpenAI's research once an independent expert panel verifies AGI, or by 2030, whichever comes first. The AGI clause, in particular, is one of the stranger provisions in recent tech history — a contractual trigger for an event that most experts believe does not yet exist. Both companies felt it necessary to restate in February 2026 that its definition remained unchanged. The fact that they needed to say so tells you something about the state of trust between them. The growing-up phase

There is a school of thought that says all of this is simply what successful partnerships look like when the companies involved grow up. What starts as a patron-and-dependent relationship inevitably evolves, and evolution is not the same thing as collapse. Microsoft got what it needed from the partnership — an early lead in the AI era, the credibility of being the company that backed ChatGPT, the infrastructure deals and Azure growth that followed. OpenAI, in turn, got the capital and computing resources it needed to become the defining AI company of its generation. Both parties have now outgrown the original arrangement. But outgrowing a partnership and peacefully departing from it are two different things. OpenAI is headed toward a public market debut — expected in the second half of 2026 — at a potential valuation approaching one trillion dollars. That valuation will be scrutinised intensely, and prospective shareholders will spend a great deal of time reading precisely the kind of risk disclosures from OpenAI. The message to investors is mixed and, on close reading, somewhat alarming. We are, says OpenAI, a company with 900 million weekly active users and \$13.1 billion in 2025 revenue. We are also a company whose future is materially dependent on the goodwill of a partner that now competes with us and which has been preparing its own AI capabilities for years. The clouds over this particular affair have been gathering for a while. The renegotiated deal of last year bought time, but it did not buy resolution. OpenAI is diversifying its way toward independence, and Microsoft is hedging its way toward self-sufficiency. And somewhere in the fine print of investor documents, the truth will keep quietly presenting itself.



entire coastal ecosystem," Dr. Selvam said. According to Dr. Erath, besides feeding by marine microorganisms, plankton, and marine animals, hazardous polymers such as nylon pose higher ecological risks due to their persistence, chemical additives, and capacity to adsorb pollutants. Fibre-shaped microplastics in particular can alter habitats by modifying the structure of sediments, affecting the benthic — or bottom layer — of seas and the microbial communities there, he explained. There could also be prolonged environmental exposure and long-distance transport of microplastics, highlighting the transboundary nature of microplastic pollution. "These concerns collectively threaten coastal biodiversity, ecosystem stability, and biogeochemical processes," he said. How do human activities contribute? Most microplastics found by the Chennai study team were clearly linked to human activities, according to Dr. Selvam. These include fishing, where damaged nets and ropes shed plastic fragments that break up into microplastics; synthetic clothes, which release minuscule fibres when they are washed; tourism and beach use; and urban sewage and stormwater drains that carry plastics into the sea. "Simply put, everyday plastic use on land eventually reaches the coast," Dr. Selvam said. After reaching the coast, they reenter human bodies via seafood contaminated by microplastics, among other pathways. Seafood in particular can ferry both harmful chemical substances and disease-causing bacteria and other microorganisms into the body, causing tissues to become inflamed and affecting the hormonal and immune systems over longer periods. "Research is still ongoing, but the concern is clear: what pollutes the ocean can eventually affect our health," Dr. Selvam said.

Consumer prices rose 3.4% in March, early signs of West Asia war's impact



The war in West Asia has pushed up energy prices globally, with the price of India's crude oil basket surging more than 60% in March compared to February. The war in West Asia has pushed up energy prices globally, with the price of India's crude oil basket surging more than 60% in March compared to February. (File Photo) India's headline inflation rate rose to 3.4% in March, as the impact of the war in West Asia was only felt in small pockets and to a limited extent, according to data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on Monday.

At 3.4%, the March inflation rate as per the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is only slightly higher than February's 3.21%. However, food inflation rose at a faster clip of 3.87%, up from 3.47% in February. Inflation measures the change in price in one month compared to the same month last year. While the March headline inflation numbers are fairly similar to those of February and along expected lines, there was a sharp rise in a key underlying number, with the inflation print for the 'electricity, gas and other fuels' category at 1.65% from 0.14% in February.

The war in West Asia has pushed up energy prices globally, with the price of India's crude oil basket surging more than 60% in March compared to February. And while petrol and diesel have not become dearer for consumers at petrol pumps due to the oil marketing companies leaving their prices unchanged, the government increased the price of domestic LPG cylinders by Rs 60 in early March. Kerosene prices have also been raised. With consumers being shielded by the higher energy prices being caused by the US and Israel's war against Iran, the inflationary impact is likely to be far more visible in Wholesale Price Index (WPI) data for March, which will be released by the commerce ministry on Tuesday. In February, WPI inflation stood at 2.13%, with 'fuel and power' prices 3.78% lower compared to February 2025. According to Union Bank of India economists led by Kanika Pasricha, India's wholesale inflation

likely jumped to 3.08% in March. This would be the highest in almost two years.

Increases in wholesale prices usually feed into consumer prices with a delay. And even if oil marketing companies don't raise pump prices of petrol and diesel, companies across various sectors such as consumer durables, paints, and fast-moving consumer goods have already started passing on the higher costs to consumers. These higher costs arise from not just more expensive fuel but also by-products of petrochemicals, such as plastics used for packaging and other purposes, that are inputs. "We expect the impact of higher energy prices to gradually percolate over the coming months, as replacement supplies arrive with a lag. At the same time, we continue to monitor the risk of a fuel price increase in the weeks ahead," Radhika Rao, Senior Economist at DBS Bank, said. Debopam Chaudhuri, Chief Economist at Piramal Finance, noted that while OMCs have so far absorbed the higher import costs, "this cushion may be nearing its limits unless crude prices correct meaningfully".

While the small increase in CPI inflation in March will be of comfort to policymakers, they will be keeping a close eye on how prices evolve going forward, especially in the wake of peace talks in Islamabad failing. Last week, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) left its policy repo rate unchanged at 5.25%, forecasting that inflation would average 4.6% in 2026-27 – more than double that in 2025-26. The Indian central bank also sees GDP growth declining to 6.9% in the current fiscal from 7.6% in the year ended March. Within the 'electricity, gas and other fuels' category, while electricity charges were little changed in March, the price of 'LPG cylinder and piped natural gas' was 5.3% higher compared to last year. In February, the corresponding inflation figure was 1.6%. Kerosene sold via the public distribution system was 2.5% more expensive in March compared to February. And while diesel and petrol prices were unchanged, airfares jumped 14.2% year-on-year in March after having dropped 7% in February. In response to a rise in the price of aviation turbine fuel due to the West Asia crisis, Indian airline companies in March announced a fuel surcharge, which passed on some of the cost to air passengers. According to Rajani Sinha, Chief Economist at CareEdge Ratings, even if the West Asia crisis is resolved soon, global crude oil prices are likely to average \$85-90 per barrel in 2026-27. "The burden of higher global crude oil prices will be shared by households, government and OMCs... While there will be limited pass-through to retail consumers in the form of higher petrol and diesel prices, there will be indirect impact with rising input prices," Sinha added.

US blockade: India says monitoring developments, calls for 'unimpeded freedom of navigation' through Hormuz

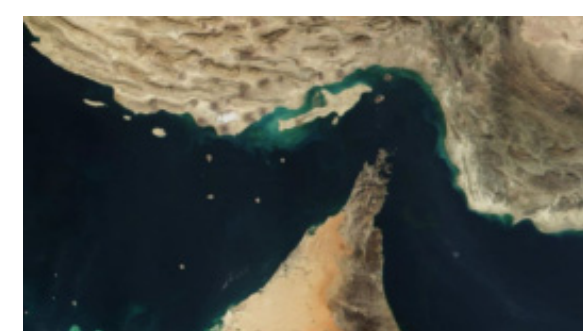
Following the announcement from the US that its forces will start blockading Iranian ports around the Strait of Hormuz from Monday, India again advocated "unimpeded freedom of navigation and global flow of commerce" through the critical maritime chokepoint, through which about a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) usually transit. Vessel movements through the narrow waterway between Iran and Oman, which connects the Persian Gulf with the Arabian Sea, have effectively been halted due to the West Asia war; India has consistently pressed for free and safe navigation through the Strait.

"We are closely following the developments in the West Asia region. As we have continuously advocated earlier, de-escalation dialogue, and diplomacy are essential to bring an early end to the ongoing conflict. We expect that unimpeded freedom of navigation and global flow of commerce would prevail through the Strait of Hormuz," Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at the government's inter-ministerial media briefing on the West Asia crisis.

After the failed Islamabad peace talks between the US and Iran over the weekend, Washington said it will commence a blockade of Iranian ports from 10:00 ET (8:30 pm India time) on Monday. Initially, US President Donald Trump had posted on Truth Social that the US Navy will "blockade any and all ships" attempting to enter or leave the Strait. The US Central Command (CENTCOM) later clarified that it will not impede vessels transiting the Strait to or from countries other than Iran. Oil prices climbed to over \$100 per barrel over these fresh uncertainties and resurgent tensions pertaining to the Strait of Hormuz. "The blockade will be enforced impartially against vessels of all nations entering or departing Iranian ports and coastal areas, including all Iranian ports on the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. CENTCOM forces will not impede freedom of navigation for vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz to and from non-Iranian ports," the US CENTCOM said in a statement. "Additional information will be provided to commercial mariners through a formal notice prior to the start of the blockade. All mariners are advised to monitor Notice to Mariners broadcasts and contact U.S. naval forces on bridge-to-bridge channel 16 when operating in the Gulf of Oman and Strait of Hormuz approaches," it added.

Throughout the war, which began on February 28, India has maintained that vessel movements through the Strait should be free and safe. Last week, when there was growing speculation that a toll system might be formalised by Iran and the US, under which Tehran would charge a toll or a transit fee from merchant vessels, India had stressed the need to have free and safe navigation through the Strait. There have been reports that Iran was already charging a "toll" from some vessels before allowing them to cross the Strait. The Indian government has categorically denied the payment of any toll or charge to the Iranians for the passage of India-flagged ships through the waterway. Free and unimpeded flow of maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz is critical for India. The country depends on imports to meet over 88% of its crude oil needs, 40% of which depend on the Strait of Hormuz. As for natural gas, India's import dependency is about 50%, and 55-60% of India's LNG imports come via the Strait. In the case of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), India's reliance on imports is 60%, and a whopping 90% of those come through the critical waterway.

Before the war, around 150 vessels a day crossed the Strait of Hormuz on average; the number for the entire month of March was about 150 vessels, as per estimates. Nearly all the vessels that have crossed the Strait since early March have done so with Tehran's nod, with reports indicating that some had to pay tolls or transit fees to safely cross the chokepoint. Iran has been saying that any vessel looking to cross the Strait should do it in coordination with the country's armed forces.

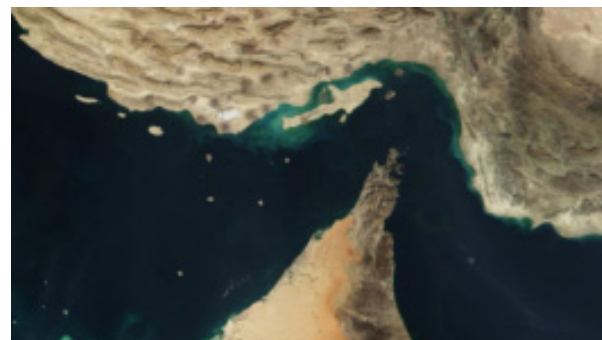


There are questions on how exactly this US blockade will be enforced, and its efficacy. For instance, how would the US Navy be able to ascertain which vessels paid a toll to Iran? Will US forces use weapon systems to target merchant vessels or board them to take control of the ships? How will countries—to whom these vessels belong or where they may be headed with cargo—react, particularly China that buys a lot of Iranian oil? So far, the US has not provided any significant details on most of these counts. According to some experts, whether or not the Americans achieve their objective with this blockade will hinge on how effective they are in keeping the blockade limited to Iran, while facilitating maritime traffic movement to and from non-Iranian ports in the region. Other key factors include whether Iran will respond by targeting foreign-flagged merchant vessels stranded in the region, and the risk of Yemen-based Houthi rebels targeting the Red Sea shipping route. How trade flows evolve hereon will also depend on whether ship-owners and maritime insurers would be willing to take the risk of ignoring Iran's warnings and depending on the American blockade. The medium-term impact of the American blockade on oil and gas prices remains to be seen. If the Iranian oil supply goes off the market due to the blockade, while much of the non-Iranian Gulf oil flows also remain largely suspended through the Strait of Hormuz, global oil availability would tighten further, which could lead to higher prices. But if the Iranian flows stop but oil from other West Asian countries starts flowing more freely due to this selective blockade, supply tightness as well as prices would ease.

Fuel price freeze: Rs 18/litre loss on petrol, Rs 35 on diesel

New Delhi: Losses on petrol have widened to Rs 18 per litre and to Rs 35 on diesel as state-owned fuel retailers continue to keep pump prices frozen despite a sharp rise in input costs, sources said. Despite prices being deregulated more than a decade back, state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) have not changed the retail petrol and diesel price since April 2022. Global crude oil prices have seen sharp fluctuations over this period – from above US\$ 100 per barrel following the Russia-Ukraine war, to easing to around US\$ 70 a barrel earlier this year, before surging again to about USD 120 last month after the US-Israel attacks on Iran triggered fresh supply concerns. The three firms were incurring losses of about Rs 2,400 crore per day at the peak last month, which have since narrowed to around Rs 1,600 crore daily after the government cut excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 10 per litre each – a reduction that was not passed on to consumers but used to partly offset losses, industry sources said.

Hormonal imbalance, fertility issues now affecting women in 20s, say experts



New Delhi: A growing number of young women are experiencing hormonal imbalance and fertility-related issues much earlier than previously seen, with experts attributing the trend to a combination of biological shifts and modern lifestyle factors. Doctors say there is a noticeable change in clinical patterns, with conditions once common in women in their late 30s now increasingly being diagnosed in those in their 20s. "There is a clear and concerning shift in women's health today, where issues related to hormonal imbalance and fertility are appearing much earlier than we traditionally observed," Priti Arora Dhamija, senior consultant and lead IVF, gynaecology at the Sitaram Bhatia Institute of

"One of the key reasons is the earlier onset of puberty with many girls now attain menarche as early as 8-9 years, which can lead to a relatively earlier decline in ovarian reserve," she said. Studies published in journals such as The Lancet Child and Adolescent Health have documented a steady decline in the age of puberty onset over the past few decades, linked to improved nutrition but also rising obesity and environmental exposures. However, experts emphasised that biology alone does not explain the trend, with lifestyle factors playing a significant role.

"Today, young women are growing up in a high-stress, high-performance environment, often marked by erratic sleep cycles, excessive screen time, poor dietary habits, and limited physical activity. These factors contribute to rising rates of obesity, PCOS, and metabolic disturbances in the early 20s," Dhamija said. Chronic stress, she added, disrupts the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis, leading to hormonal imbalance and irregular ovulation. "In addition, behavioural factors such as early sexual activity, multiple partners, and lack of medical supervision in contraceptive

use are contributing to higher incidences of sexually transmitted infections and uterine health issues, which can further impact fertility. Environmental exposure to hormone-like substances through food and pollution is an emerging concern as well," she said.

Juhi Bharti, Additional Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at AIIMS, Delhi, said clinicians are increasingly observing diminished ovarian reserve in younger women. "Clinically, we are now observing diminished ovarian reserve in women in their late 20s, a trend that was previously more common in the late 30s. While not necessarily irreversible, this shift highlights the need for early awareness and timely intervention," she said. Supporting this trend, data from the Indian Society of Assisted Reproduction (ISAR) and international fertility studies indicate a rise in cases of diminished ovarian reserve and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) among women under 30. PCOS alone is estimated to affect nearly one in five women of reproductive age in India, according to various epidemiological studies. Experts stressed that fertility should be viewed as a reflection of overall health rather than just age. "Poor sleep doesn't just cause fatigue, it disrupts hormonal signalling, may accelerate reproductive ageing, and impacts fertility potential. Aligning sleep with natural circadian rhythms is therefore a key, yet often overlooked, pillar of reproductive health," Dr Bharti said.

Echoing similar concerns, Bhawani Shekhar, Associate Consultant at the Centre of IVF and Human Reproduction at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, said, "We gynaecologists are increasingly observing a shift in women's health with signs of hormonal imbalance and fertility issues appearing in the 20s," she said. She added that many patients now report irregular menstrual cycles, PCOS, infertility and early signs of ovarian ageing, largely linked to modern lifestyle patterns. "Unhealthy diet, sedentary routine and lack of regular exercise play a significant role, with smoking and alcohol further contributing to the problem. In addition, chronic stress increases cortisol levels and poor sleep affects the circadian rhythm, further impacting hormone levels and ovarian health," she said. These trends are a warning sign but what is reassuring is that all these factors are modifiable, she said. "So the focus needs to shift towards prevention. Prioritising balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, adequate sleep and stress management can help in maintaining hormonal balance and reproductive health," Shekhar said.

Rajeev Khandelwal, 50, on why he never developed a taste for fast food: 'Mummy khilaati thi sprouted dal, amla'

Kaahin To Hoga actor Rajeev Khandelwal, 50, opened up about his fitness, admitting that he has never developed a taste for junk food. "My taste buds have never developed a taste for junk food. People may think I have a lot of control, but the truth is, I don't have any taste buds for junk food. It doesn't appeal to me, I don't eat," he said. **DISCLAIMER:** This article is based on information from the public domain and/or the experts we spoke to. Always consult your health practitioner before starting any routine.

Adding, how growing up as an Army kid, nutritious, simple food was always emphasised at home, he continued: "Fit toh rakhna padta hai. (I have to be fit). I am not fit because I am an actor. I am fit because I really like to be fit. It was right from childhood before becoming an actor. I used to have sprouted dal, amla... mummy khilaati thi bachpan se... ab samajh me aata hai kyun khilaati thi... ab samajh mein aata hai ki usse fark kitna padta hai... baatein toh bahut karte hai (My mother used to feed us moong dal, amla... Now I realise why... and how it is beneficial). At a certain age, we don't understand much, so we think fruits are for older people... I think it's very important that you start at the right age... You have to sow the seeds, really. I used to eat amlas every day. I used to pluck fruits and eat them fresh. I have 33 different varieties of food being grown at my home in Goa," he told Bharti Singh and Harsh Limbachiya on their YouTube podcast. He also spoke about his eating habits and shared his fondness for homemade, simple food. "Preferably, I am a vegetarian because I come from such a background. In childhood, I never ate. After coming to Mumbai, you feel the need for protein to build muscles, so you eat. I have married a Maharashtrian. They eat fish, so I also started having it. So I eat, but not so much. My favourite meal is moong ki dal, gobi ki sabzi and bajra or such roti. This has continued from childhood. This is my ideal meal. I don't think of chicken or mutton."

Dr Amreen Sheikh, chief dietitian, KIMS Hospitals, Thane, said early food habits play a significant role in shaping long-term health. "Foods like sprouted dals and amla are nutrient-rich, packed with antioxidants, fibre, and essential vitamins. When children regularly eat these simple, healthy foods, they tend to have better digestion, stronger



immunity, and steady energy levels. The real benefits show up later in life, such as improved metabolism, better gut health, and a lower risk of lifestyle diseases. At that age, it may not feel like 'fitness,' but these small, consistent habits create a solid foundation for future health," said Sheikh. Traditional foods are usually balanced, seasonal, and minimally processed. Items like sprouts, homemade dals, fresh fruits, and fermented foods promote gut health and overall well-being. "Unlike highly processed options, these foods provide sustained energy and important nutrients without excess sugar or unhealthy fats. Over time, this helps maintain weight, boosts immunity, and supports lasting heart health. What seems simple and routine in childhood often becomes the most sustainable way to stay healthy," added Sheikh. Emphasising that fitness is not just about exercise, but begins with daily food choices, Sheikh said: "People who grow up eating balanced meals often find it easier to maintain healthy eating habits as adults. This lowers the risk of obesity, diabetes, and metabolic disorders. Good nutrition in early years also aids muscle development, bone strength, and hormonal balance, all of which are important for long-term fitness." Going back to basics can make a big difference. "Adding sprouts, seasonal fruits like amla, home-cooked meals, and regular meal timings are practical steps. Staying hydrated, limiting packaged foods, and keeping consistency are more important than following strict diets. These simple, familiar habits are sustainable and often work better than quick-fix trends."

'Love is not everything': Actor Trisha's cryptic reflections on choosing peace spark buzz after Chennai wedding appearance with Vijay

Actor Trisha Krishnan recently shared a series of cryptic posts on Instagram that have drawn attention amid ongoing speculation about her personal life. Without directly addressing any rumours, her messages focused on themes of love, inner peace and self-worth. One of the quotes she shared read, "Love is not everything, and yet everything is meaningless without love." She followed this with motivational video posts that emphasised choosing peace over conflict, not feeling the need to explain oneself to those who have already formed opinions, and continuing to live with integrity regardless of external judgment. Together, these messages point towards a more introspective approach to relationships and emotional well-being. Her posts come shortly after she was seen with Vijay at a wedding reception in Chennai, where their joint appearance sparked widespread conversation online. The timing drew further attention as it followed reports that Vijay's wife, Sangeetha Vijay, had filed for divorce after 26 years of marriage, citing serious allegations. While none of the individuals involved has publicly addressed the speculation, the situation has amplified public interest in Trisha's reflective posts.

Why do people often turn to ideas like 'choosing peace' and 'self-worth' during emotionally uncertain or stressful phases?

Psychologist Rasshi Gurnani tells indianexpress.com, "During emotionally uncertain phases, the mind seeks psychological safety. Ideas like 'choosing peace' and self-worth act as grounding mechanisms that restore a sense of control and identity. When relational ambiguity triggers anxiety, individuals often re-centre on internal validation rather than external reassurance. This reflects a shift from anxious attachment patterns toward self-regulation." Maintaining emotional balance when faced with judgement or assumptions from others. Emotional balance in the face of judgment requires strong internal boundaries and cognitive clarity. Instead of reacting impulsively, individuals benefit from practising response inhibition and self-validation. Over-explaining often stems from a need for approval or fear of misinterpretation. "Developing a secure self-concept reduces this urge. Techniques such as cognitive reframing, mindfulness, and selective disclosure help individuals stay composed without engaging in unnecessary justification. The goal is not to control others' perceptions but to remain aligned with one's values while tolerating ambiguity and external noise," reveals Gurnani. What does it mean to build a healthy relationship with oneself? A healthy relationship with oneself involves self-awareness, self-acceptance, and emotional regulation.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi likely for T20I tour to Ireland, to become youngest India player



GNS News Agency, April 17

Likely to be picked for this June's India T20I tour to Ireland, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi could become the youngest player to represent the country. Understands that the selectors might give the 15-year-old the big break in the short series just before a white-ball tour of England. "He is in contention for the Ireland tour and the selectors have shortlisted his name along with those of many other players," a source in the Indian cricket board confirmed.

The left-hander, who has taken some of the best bowlers in the world to the cleaners in the last edition and continues in the same vein this year as well, has already hit a 26-ball 78 against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, a 17-ball 52 against Chennai Super Kings and a 14-ball 39 against Mumbai Indians so far this season. He doesn't seem overawed by reputation and has taken on the likes of Jasprit Bumrah – whom he hit for a six on the first ball he faced – and Josh Hazlewood with aplomb. The national selectors are in no mood to wait before blooding the teenager into the Indian team, but are likely to give him his chance against slightly lesser opposition. It is learnt that a largely second-string side will be picked for the series, which will be held less than a month after the culmination of the IPL. The selection committee is keen to give Sooryavanshi and other players who have caught the eye in recent times exposure to international cricket in that series. It will be followed soon after by a tour of England where India will play five T20Is and three ODIs starting July 1, for which many of the senior players are expected to return. Describing his approach to batting, Sooryavanshi said he never thinks about the bowler against him, but the projectile coming towards him. "At the back of my mind, it is there (thought about who is bowling). But I try to play the ball and not the bowler, and play my own game... My dad, my coaches, my guardian (Rajasthan Royals team manager) Romi (Bhinder) sir, keep telling me that the journey is long, and to focus on my process and my game, without diverting my mind to different things," he had said after the his team's six-wicket win over RCB on Friday.

'As a captain, I felt there was some miscommunication going on...': Ishan Kishan on his decision to not to keep wickets

GNS News Agency, April 17

With his 44-ball knock of 91 runs against the Rajasthan Royals, Sunrisers Hyderabad captain Ishan Kishan hit his second fifty of this IPL season. The 27-year-old, who was announced as the captain of SRH this season with Australian pacer Pat Cummins not available for the first few weeks of the tournament, Kishan has also been wearing the wicket-keeper's hat along with the captain's hat. On Monday evening, Kishan did not keep wickets with Sailesh Arora taking over from him. Post the match, Kishan shared how not donning the gloves helps him in captaincy, discussing plans with the bowlers and setting more time with the fielders and how donning the wicket-keeper's role resulted in some miscommunication with the players.

"I think, you know as a captain, I felt there was some miscommunication going on. You know, sometimes when you are keeping, the time is not there. You are not able to communicate with the bowlers about the plans. So I think it's better to be there, discuss with them when they are going to bowl so that we can set the field accordingly. And that was the plan and I think it worked pretty well for us. Hopefully, yes, this is the way forward," said Kishan in the post match presentation.

Hyderabad has so far scored two wins in IPL this season with three losses. Kishan who was bought by the franchise for Rs 11.40 crore in the mega auction in 2024, has so far played in 19 matches for the Hyderabad side. Last season, Aussie pacer Cummins had captained Sunrisers Hyderabad and the team had finished sixth in the points table with a total of 13 points. Former South African captain Faf du Plessis termed Kishan getting runs is helping him as a captain. "Ishan would know his role is twofold. One is Ishan Kishan the batter and role he plays in that team and then secondly as a captain. We saw it tonight. How important it is for him and his own captaincy. Just to score runs. Because what that does is it just gives you confidence. You walk around the field knowing that you have done your job.

Will Varun Chakaravathy, MS Dhoni return when Kolkata take on Chennai?



GNS News Agency, April 17

IPL 2026, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) vs Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) Playing 11, Squad List: The 9th and the 10th team will lock horns on Tuesday as Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders go head to head in the battle of the laggards at the Chepauk. Kolkata lost to Lucknow Super Giants in a match they looked favourites to win even until the 16th over before Mukul Choudhary played an innings of a lifetime to keep KKR from their first win of the season. Chennai, meanwhile, finally won their first match of the season after defeating Delhi Capitals to take them to 1 win in 4 matches. All eyes will be on both camps to see if CSK talisman MS Dhoni makes his long awaited return or if KKR can include mystery spinner Varun Chakaravathy in their lineup after he missed the last 2 matches due to injury. But if reports are to be believed, these returns look unlikely on Tuesday but fans will keep their fingers crossed. CSK vs KKR Predicted XIs

Chennai Super Kings: Ruturaj Gaikwad (c), Sanju Samson (wk), Ayush Mhatre, Sarfaraz Khan, Dewald Brevis, Shivam Dube, Jamie Overton, Akeal Hosen, Noor Ahmad, Khaleel Ahmed, Anshul Kamboj, Gurjapneet Singh, KKR Squad: Sanju Samson (w), Ruturaj Gaikwad (c), Ayush Mhatre, Sarfaraz Khan, Shivam Dube, Dewald Brevis, Jamie Overton, Noor Ahmad, Anshul Kamboj, Gurjapneet Singh, Khaleel Ahmed, Matthew Short, Akeal Hosen, Kartik Sharma, Prashant Veer, Matt Henry, Ramakrishna Ghosh, MS Dhoni, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Chahar, Spencer Johnson, Mukesh Choudhary, Urvil Patel, Aman Khan, Zakary Foulkes

dence from one of the top functionalities of the board. "What an amazing batting display by Vaibhav Sooryavanshi this @IPL 2026 season. This prodigy certainly deserves to debut for Team India @BCCI as the youngest given his performances. It's rare you get chance to pick up someone so talented and soooooo young too. Certainly deserves his name to be recorded as youngest debutant for India," IPL chairman Arun Dhimal wrote on X.

Even former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan has asked the national selectors not to delay and pick Sooryavanshi immediately. Sachin Tendulkar is the youngest male cricketer to represent India, when he made his Test debut against Pakistan in Karachi in 1989 at the age of 16 years and 205 days. Overall, Shafali Verma is the youngest cricketer to play for India at the age of 15 years, seven months and 27 days. If Sooryavanshi plays on the tour to Ireland, he will break Shafali's record. The two T20Is are scheduled for June 26 and 28. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi The national selectors are in no mood to wait before blooding the teenager into the Indian team, but are likely to give him his chance against slightly lesser opposition. It is learnt that a largely second-string side will be picked for the series, which will be held less than a month after the culmination of the IPL. The selection committee is keen to give Sooryavanshi and other players who have caught the eye in recent times exposure to international cricket in that series. It will be followed soon after by a tour of England where India will play five T20Is and three ODIs starting July 1, for which many of the senior players are expected to return. Describing his approach to batting, Sooryavanshi said he never thinks about the bowler against him, but the projectile coming towards him. "At the back of my mind, it is there (thought about who is bowling). But I try to play the ball and not the bowler, and play my own game... My dad, my coaches, my guardian (Rajasthan Royals team manager) Romi (Bhinder) sir, keep telling me that the journey is long, and to focus on my process and my game, without diverting my mind to different things," he had said after the his team's six-wicket win over RCB on Friday.



And then when you walk on the field, your decisions are clear, your thinking is clear because you are on your own head, around your own form and your own batting. So it's always connected to how you play and how you captain," Plessis told JioHotstar. While Cummins is expected to join the Hyderabad side in next few days, former Indian all-rounder Irfan Pathan believes Kishan has done well as a captain of the side. "Ishan wants to score runs but he wants to lead the side. This is what it shows. He has not taken the gloves in his hand and he wants to be on the field. He wants to speak with the players. He wants to have clear communication between the bowlers and him. So he has actually made things very clear. Going forwards, obviously I would like to see Livingstone in and get a chance. He has done well. He has made things very clear. And the management is backing him. "It is important to actually trust your leader. He is a young leader. Pat Cummins is your first choice captain. He is actually a leader in place of him. So good on SRH camp to trust him and give him whatever he wants. As far as being one the field. Being onboard the boundary line being involved, being communicated with the players very clearly and it has certainly worked for him tonight," said Pathan on JioHotstar.

Narine, Navdeep Saini, Kartik Tyagi, Vaibhav Arora

CSK vs KKR IPL 2026 Squads Kolkata Knight Riders Squad: Ajinkya Rahane (c), Finn Allen, Angkrish Raghuvanshi (w), Cameron Green, Rinku Singh, Rovman Powell, Ramandeep Singh, Anukul Roy, Sunil Narine, Navdeep Saini, Kartik Tyagi, Manish Pandey, Vaibhav Arora, Tejasvi Dahiya, Rahul Tripathi, Tim Seifert, Blessing Muzarabani, Saurabh Dubey, Sarthak Ranjan, Rachin Ravindra, Prashant Solanki, Varun Chakaravathy, Matheesha Pathirana, Umran Malik, Daksh Kamra Chennai Super Kings Squad: Sanju Samson (w), Ruturaj Gaikwad (c), Ayush Mhatre, Sarfaraz Khan, Shivam Dube, Dewald Brevis, Jamie Overton, Noor Ahmad, Anshul Kamboj, Gurjapneet Singh, Khaleel Ahmed, Matthew Short, Akeal Hosen, Kartik Sharma, Prashant Veer, Matt Henry, Ramakrishna Ghosh, MS Dhoni, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Chahar, Spencer Johnson, Mukesh Choudhary, Urvil Patel, Aman Khan, Zakary Foulkes

I can be the best player in the world, says Ayush Shetty

New Delhi: Ayush Shetty expressed pride and optimism after clinching silver at the Badminton Asia Championships, calling it a "great tournament" that boosted his belief of becoming "the best player in the world," while acknowledging disappointment in the final and crediting Shi Yu Qi as the better player on the day. "I think it was a great tournament for me... really happy with the way I played throughout. I had really tough matches, but happy with the way I pulled through all of them. As for the final, a bit disappointed... I wanted to finish on a high note, but credit to Shi Yu Qi, he was the better player. Grateful for the silver," Shetty told IANS. The 20-year-old Indian, ranked 25th in the world.

'Main isko pehli ball par bouncer mar ke out karunga...': IPL pace sensation Praful Hinge on dismissing Vaibhav Sooryavanshi off first ball on debut



GNS News Agency, April 17

With his three wickets in his maiden over in the IPL in the match against Rajasthan Royals at Hyderabad on Monday evening, pacer Praful Hinge became the first bowler in the league's history to take three wickets in the opening over. While he finished with a match haul of four wickets during Hyderabad's 57-run win over the Royals, Hinge took his maiden IPL wicket in the form of IPL sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi off the second ball of his maiden over. The 15-year-old, who had become IPL's youngest centurion last year, tried to hit Hinge for a six, but the extra pace and bounce meant that the U-19 World Cup winner mishit the ball and gave a catch to wicket-keeper Sailesh Arora, resulting in Hinge's maiden wicket. Post the match, Hinge spoke about how he had planned for Sooryavanshi's wicket and had told a few people that he would remove the attacking opener off the first ball.

"Of all the wickets, the best one was the first one, of (Vaibhav) Sooryavanshi. Because he was in form. So I wanted that. Maine 2-3 logon ko bta ke rakha tha ki main isko pehli ball par bouncer mar ke out karunga. Ya fir koi ball pe par out karna hai pehli ball par. (I told 2-3 people that I will get him out first ball with a bouncer. Or with some other ball, but I will get him out first). And bowling coach

Varun (Aaron) also helped me a lot," shared Hinge while talking in the post match presentation. The 24-year-old Vidharbha pacer picked up the wickets of Sooryavanshi, Dhruv Jurel and Lhuan-dre Pretorius in his first over before he removed Royals' skipper Riyan Parag in his spell. At once, Hinge's bowling figures read 1 for 3 in one over. His four wickets coupled with fellow pacer Sakib Hussain's four wickets meant that Royals were never into the game and the Hyderabad side won the match by 57 runs. With Sooryavanshi in blazing form this season having scored 200 runs in four matches prior to Monday's game, Hinge had his task cut out. Sooryavanshi had earlier hit bowlers like Jasprit Bumrah and Josh Hazlewood for sixes in their first over and with Hinge removing him off the first ball of the Royals' innings, former South Africa captain Faf du Plessis was left awestruck in the commentary box.

"We were just blown away in the commentary. Guy coming to bowl in his debut match and there were such high expectations. Sooryavanshi, a guy that attacked the first ball as Irfan was saying. Give it a thought. Easy game today. I am not facing Bumrah, I am not facing Hazlewood. I am facing some guy on his debut. I am going to take him down with a six. And he bowled a beautiful ball. Make the ball rise up and bounce a little bit extra," said du Plessis while speaking on JioHotstar. Sunrisers Hyderabad captain Ishan Kishan also showed praise on the pace duo of Hinge and Hussain post the match. When asked about the move to give chance to the young pace duo, Kishan spoke about how hungry the young bowlers were. "I think you also have to look at how hungry your young bowlers are, how motivated they feel and you know how hungry they are to play these games. I think they were working out through the season. They were working with the bowling coach and they were just trying to give their best talking to all the experienced players. So I think that was something we were looking for and we had to give them a chance and we were paying in our home ground. They especially did well in practice matches as well. So I think this was the right move today," Kishan said in the post match presentation.

Vaibhav wicket is special for me, says Praful Hinge

GNS News Agency, April 17

Hyderabad: Debutant Praful Hinge, who made IPL history by becoming the first bowler to take three wickets in the first over of an IPL match, dismissing Rajasthan Royals' Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Dhruv Jurel, and Lhuan-dre Pretorius for ducks, said he had written it somewhere that he would take 4-5 wickets on his debut. "I thought of dominating the PowerPlay," Player-of-the-Match Hinge said in the post-match press conference.

The Vidarbha fast bowler also said that form batter Sooryavanshi was his favourite wicket, saying, "I had told people that I would bowl a bouncer to him and get him out. I just wanted to get him out. Varun bhai (our bowling coach) helped me plan it, so thank you." Praful Hinge also dedicated his award to his family and thanked the MRF Pace Foundation for supporting him. And the other debutant 21-year-old Sakib Hussain, who also picked four wickets said that every player hoped for a debut like this, so it felt really good. "I'm very happy. The bowling coach informed me a day before the game that I would be playing. From then on, my focus was simply on performing well." Sakib also credited SRH bowling coach Varun Aaron for his improvements.

"Varun bhai has been working with me for the past four years. Whatever improvement you see in my bowling is because of him. I give him full credit," the Bihar pace bowler said. For his part, Sunrisers captain Ishan Kishan



luded the bowlers for the victory. "What we were looking for from the bowlers to just come here, play freely, execute their plans and I think they did that today and credit goes to all the bowlers," he said. "You have to see how hungry they are hungry to play these games, and I think they were working out throughout the season," Ishan said. "They were working with fielding, our bowling coach Varun Aaron and they were just trying to give their best, talking to all the experienced players," said Ishan who batted brilliantly. So, I think that was something we were looking for and we had to give them a chance when we were playing in our home ground. They especially did well in the practice matches as well," he said.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi 'not happy' being Impact Sub in IPL 2026, reveals RR coach: 'Not because he's a poor fielder'



Vaibhav Sooryavanshi suffered his first low score in the IPL 2026 on Monday night, a golden duck in Hyderabad. While the first-baller against Sunrisers Hyderabad debutant Praful Hinge would have hurt the 15-year-old sensation, Sooryavanshi is also unhappy with not receiving more game time in the last two matches as RR have deployed him as the Impact Player substitute.

In the previous game in Guwahati, where Rajasthan walloped defending champs Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Sooryavanshi came in as the impact sub and smashed a spell-binding 78 off 26 deliveries against a world-class bowling line-up led by Josh Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar Kumar. After SRH piled on a 216 for six score at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad on Monday night, Sooryavanshi walked in for the chase as the Impact Sub, replacing seamer Sandeep Sharma. However, the left-hander fell on the first ball of his innings, mistiming a pull with a top-edge to the wicket-keeper. According to RR fielding coach Trevor Penney, Sooryavanshi is unhappy with not being regarded as a key man on the field, with South Africa batter Donovan Ferreira taking his spot in the main XI. The coach revealed that with Ferreira passing his fitness test from a recent injury, RR could not afford to miss out on an exceptional fielder on the ground.

"The last game he missed out on, he wasn't very happy because he loves his fielding. It's not because he's a poor fielder," Penny told the broadcasters during the SRH-RR clash. "Donovan has passed his fitness test. He broke his collarbone in the SA20. He's a gun fielder. It's good to

have him back on the field. Sadly, Vaibhav misses out," he added. In only his second season with the experience of only a handful of professional T20s, Sooryavanshi has had the entire tournament take note of his extraordinary capabilities with his 200 runs in five innings coming at a jaw-dropping 263.15 strike rate, the highest among all batters in the league.

Vaibhav wicket is special for me, says Praful Hinge

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Vijay Varma on excessive social media hate after breakup with Tamannaah Bhatia, says 'too many lies' out there: 'Sab kuch ulta hai'



years.

"When we were growing up, saying something bad about someone on a public platform was frowned upon and not appreciated. Those who badmouthed were considered to be wrong. Abhi sab kuch ulta ho gaya hai. Jo gaali de raha hai, usko koi kuch nahi bol raha hai (Now everything is upside down. No one is saying anything to the person who is abusing). The one who's being subjected to these abuses will, in fact, have more people badmouthing rather than supporting them," he said during a conversation with News18. Pointing out that he's unable to catch up with the rapidly evolving world around him, Vijay noted, "There has been an entire shift in the culture. The way people communicate and write comments is a little too excessive, direct and personal. Sometimes, there's too much fabrication and too many lies [written about you]."

Upon realising that this wasn't what he had entered Tinseltown for, the actor shared that he subsequently went back and focused on what worked for him. "That also gave me a chance to reconnect with my family. I recently moved into a bigger house. I make sure that my family visits me more often," he noted, adding that he has also started spending more time with his friends. After two years of dating each other, Vijay and Tamannaah reportedly parted ways in March 2025. In a later interview, she shared her plans for the kind of partner she wants to become. "I am trying to work on becoming a great life partner. So that's the quest at the moment. I want to be that life partner that someone feels like they have done some good karma in their past life. That's why I have come into their life. Whoever the lucky person is, I am working for it. The package shall arrive soon," she shared during a conversation with NDTV. While Vijay Varma was most recently seen in the romantic drama Gustaakh Ishq, where he shared the screen with Fatima Sana Shaikh and Naseeruddin Shah, Tamannaah's most recent screen appearance was in the comedy drama series Do You Wanna Partner.

Revealing that he decided to take a step back upon realising that the discussions about him centred on anything and everything but his work, Vijay Varma stated that this also helped him reconnect with his family and friends. After two years of dating each other, Tamannaah Bhatia and Vijay Varma parted ways in March 2025. (Credit: Instagram/@itsvijayvarma) Once Bollywood's most favourite power couple, actors Vijay Varma and Tamannaah Bhatia's breakup took the entertainment industry and its followers by shock, as many had been hopeful that they would stick together for a long time. However, without much noise or mudslinging, they parted ways early last year and have since been graceful enough not to drag the reasons for their split into the public eye.

Although they have been civil to each other, it seems others haven't been the same towards them. Vijay himself recently opened up about facing unnecessary hate on social media. Revealing that he decided to take a step back upon realising that the discussions about him centred on anything and everything but his work, the actor stated that this also helped him reconnect with his family and friends, whom he hadn't been making time for over the past few

'My first house represents new phase of my life': Inside Tara Sutaria's minimalist, all-white Bandra home with piano, vintage records

Farah Khan recently visited actor Tara Sutaria's new home—an elegant space done up in whites and ivories, featuring a dedicated piano corner, a European-style kitchen, wooden flooring, silverware, and a curated collection of vintage and limited-edition records. Arriving with her longtime cook Dilip, Farah was pleasantly surprised. "Is this your new house?" she asked, to which a proud Tara replied, "Yes." Congratulating her, Farah added, "Let me tell all of you, Tara's father and I are longtime college friends," before joking, "Can you believe I am that old?"

Tara Sutaria's house tour The sitting area of Tara Sutaria's house. (Photo: Farah Khan/YouTube) Clearly impressed, Farah said, "I love your house." Tara responded, "Thank you, it's a nice mix of Parsi..." prompting Farah to ask who designed it. Turning around instantly, Tara quipped, "Me! I am obsessed with interiors and décor." Farah called it "lovely" and even admitted she regretted missing one of Tara's dinner parties. Tara Sutaria's house tour The piano corner. (Photo: Farah Khan/YouTube)

Curious about her culinary skills, Farah asked when Tara's interest in cooking began. "I think it started around the COVID-19 pandemic," Tara shared. They also touched upon Tara's viral moment with AP Dhillon. Farah remarked, "It went so viral. It was crazy," while Tara, steering clear of the controversy, said, "That song did so beautifully well. It was really fun." Tara Sutaria's house tour The decor wall near sitting area. (Photo: Farah Khan/YouTube) Tara also spoke about her upcoming film Toxic, saying, "It's releasing on June 4. I am so excited that it's finally coming out." Farah couldn't stop admiring the home, especially the thoughtfully curated sitting area and Tara's record collection, which included the Love Story album. Tara revealed, "This is my dad's collection. There's much more, but this is one of my favourite films. My record player is still at my family home—I need to get it here." Tara Sutaria's house tour 'Newness' painting. (Photo: Farah Khan/YouTube) Tara also showcased a clapboard from Student of the Year 2, gifted by Karan Johar to her and Ananya Panday, with a note also written by director Punit Malhotra. "There are a lot of very special things in this house," she said, also displaying a limited-edition The Phantom of the Opera record. Pointing to the piano, Farah joked, "This is such a typical Parsi house piano." Tara clarified, "No, this one is very special—it's the same piano my accompanist used during my concerts." She added that she always wanted a baby grand piano for her home, especially since she often



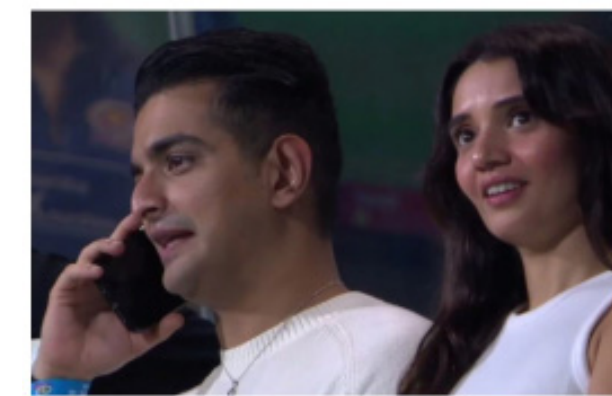
hosts musical evenings with friends. "All my friends are from Bandra. They all know to play the piano. So they play, I sing. We dance." Tara Sutaria's house tour The dining area. (Photo: Farah Khan/YouTube) Speaking about her art collection, Tara pointed to one of her favourite pieces: "A dear friend from Goa painted this for me. It's called Newness—it represents this new phase in my life and my first home." Looking at the art, Dilip said: "Ma'am, it seems your painting is leaking." One wall in the house is dedicated to her magazine covers from films like Heropant 2 and Ek Villain 2. Noticing a pattern, Tara laughed, "How many sequels?" Farah joked, "You're a sequel queen! I must say."

Tara Sutaria's house tour The cover page wall. (Photo: Farah Khan/YouTube) The tour continued into the dining area—featuring white tones, black chairs, and silver plates—where Farah remarked, "Beautiful. There's a bit of Gujarati influence too." In the kitchen, she exclaimed, "This looks like a London kitchen! How do you keep it so clean?" The visit ended on a warm note with cooking Tara's signature green chicken and a small gifting session. Tara Sutaria's house tour European themed kitchen. (Photo: Farah Khan/YouTube) According to nrobroker.in, Tara's luxurious apartment is located in a heritage building (Anand House) in Mumbai's Pali Hill, Bandra West, and is estimated to be worth between Rs 15–25 crore. Tara Sutaria has been performing since her teenage years. She first appeared on television with Entertainment Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega in 2011, which was judged by Farah Khan and Anu Malik, among others. She later went on to feature in shows like Best of Luck Nikki. Tara made her Bollywood debut at the age of 23 with Student of the Year 2 in 2019.

Who is Juhi Bhatt? Ranveer Allahbadia confirms 'girlfriend ke sath hoon' while fielding a fan at IPL match

After months of speculation, Ranveer Allahbadia has finally confirmed he's dating Juhi Bhatt. The YouTuber was spotted holding hands with Juhi and walking into the Mumbai Indians vs Royal Challengers Bengaluru Indian Premier League match at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai on Sunday evening. If that wasn't obvious enough, Ranveer spelled it out to a zealous fan who requested a selfie.

Ranveer Allahbadia confirms relationship "Girlfriend ke saath hoon," said Ranveer, known for his screen name Beer Biceps, while dodging a fan who tried to click a selfie with him as he walked towards the stadium. Juhi walked right besides him and smiled widely as Ranveer confirmed their relationship. They also wore colour coordinated outfits for the match, which they were seen enjoying together from the stands later. Though Ranveer kept the identity of his girlfriend a secret, he did confirm he's in a new relationship this past Diwali. Back then, he shared a picture of the two together, but with the Ghibli-style Artificial Intelligence-generated filter in order to conceal her identity. But both of them were seen posting pictures of the same floral rangoli on their Instagram handles on the occasion of Diwali 2025. Before Juhi, Ranveer was dating actor Nikki Sharma, best known for the daily soaps Rop – Mard Ka



Naya Swaroop and Pyaar Ka Pehla Adhyaya Shiv Shakti. However, they broke up early last year and unfollowed each other on Instagram. Ranveer would often talk about his girlfriend on his popular podcast The Ranveer Show, claiming that his girlfriend is also a "deep person" like him. Juhi Bhatt is also an actor, best known for the 2023 movie Tumse Na Ho Paega and the horror show Bhay:

After saying he has only Rs 20 lakh debt left, Rajesh Kumar reveals he sold his car, prefers to use public transport: 'People see me as bechara'



Rajesh Kumar, best known for playing Rosesh Sarabhai in the much-loved sitcom Sarabhai vs Sarabhai, recently shared that he has only 10-15% of his Rs 2 crore loan left to repay. In a new interview, Rajesh shared that he sold his car, not because of any financial troubles, but because he doesn't like wasting time in the Mumbai traffic, and likes to use public transport. The actor had switched to farming during the Covid pandemic, but his initiative didn't succeed as the actor didn't understand the intricacy of the endeavour by his own admission, leading him to accruing debt.

'People saw me as 'bechara' after they learnt of my bankruptcy' In a chat with Aftab Puntoo on his YouTube channel, Rajesh said that when people saw him taking an auto rickshaw earlier, they saw him as a "bechara". "When I shared that I have taken up farming, went bankrupt... And during that time, when people saw me taking an auto rickshaw, they would say, 'Bechara, he can't afford a car, he is taking an auto'. Now, when I take an auto, after working so much, they call me 'down to earth', he shared with a laugh. He said that this wasn't about owning a car, as he sold his car because of the traffic in Mumbai. "I sold my car because of traffic. I only use local transport. Even for shoots, I take Ola or Uber. I prefer that, I prefer Rapido," he said. When asked if he gets recognised by any of the drivers who are driving him, he said, "Then he takes a selfie. Even auto drivers take selfies." Rajesh said that his point is to get

to his destination and the "mode of transport could be anything." When asked if there was "any ego" that stops him from doing this, he laughed and said, "Pagal hai kya (Are you mad?) My upbringing tells me that convenience is more important. Show off is another thing. Even if I buy an expensive car, I will be stuck in the same traffic." Rajesh said that he uses the metro quite often as it is close to his house. When asked if he ever gets spotted by fans, he said, "That's not a problem. People come up to you, talk to you, take pictures. They do that at the airport too. So how is metro any different? Even if you are abroad, people from the Indian community recognise you, take pictures. That's the perk of your job." He concluded by saying, "You should stop giving so much importance to yourself. You should be happy. Inner happiness is the best way." Rajesh Kumar's sisters moved back to India to help with farming business

In a recent chat with Bollywood Bubble, Rajesh said that most of his financial problems are now over and shared, "I'm out of that financial cycle now. Only about 10–15% of the debt remains. Soon, I am going to surprise people with something new—still related to farming, but something unique." He added that his sisters, who had high paying jobs in Finland and the US, have now moved back to India and are helping him in his farming business as they want him to focus on acting. "After I became obsessed with agriculture, my sisters—who have been citizens of the US and Finland for the past 25 years—decided to join me. Around my 50th birthday in January this year, my elder sister, who is four years older than me, resigned from her job in America and flew down to India. That was her birthday gift to me. She came to Bihar and told me, 'You take a backseat and focus on acting, I'll handle farming here.' Because of her, my younger sister also resigned and said she would join us in March," he said.

About Rajesh Kumar Rajesh first shot to fame with Sarabhai vs Sarabhai. However, in the years after that, he faced severe financial losses because of his organic farming business. He had previously shared with Dainik Bhaskar that at one point, he actually set up a vegetable cart outside his son's school and sold vegetables. "That was also when my EMIs began bouncing. Credit card agents started coming home. I had accumulated a lot of debt. We had to leave the farm and walk away," he said. The actor had said that it took time for him to understand farming and its intricacies.

Ranveer Singh's new ad with father-in-law Prakash Padukone features a hidden jab at Dhruv Rathee; eagle-eyed fans spot Dhurandhar 'peak detailing'

Ranveer Singh is the most talked-about actor of the year following the back-to-back success of the Dhurandhar films. Now, the actor has shared another treat with fans by appearing on screen for the first time with his father-in-law and former badminton player Prakash Padukone in an advertisement. While the commercial includes peak detailing about Ranveer's personal life, fans were quick to notice how the ad seemingly takes a dig at YouTuber Dhruv Rathee.

Did Ranveer Singh troll Dhruv Rathee? The RuPay commercial shows Ranveer talking to Prakash Padukone, mentioning how they can use the app to make payments everywhere, including toy stores, gyms, theatres and other places. In one scene, when Ranveer and Prakash are in a theatre, a film poster featuring Ranveer Singh is shown in the backdrop. The poster has Ranveer with the title Bavandar: The Tornado written on it. Fans were quick to notice this, and many claimed that it was strategically placed to take a dig at Dhruv Rathee, who had shared videos criticising Dhurandhar and Dhurandhar: The Revenge while discussing an imaginary film with the same name, 'Operation Bhavandar'. In his videos, the YouTuber alleged that both these films were "propaganda" for the ruling party.

Reacting to Ranveer's latest ad, a fan wrote, "Never mess with Hamza." Another comment read, "This is so meta joke... Bhavandar..." Another comment read, "Ranveer Singh in his latest ad roasted Dhruv Rathee's Bhavandar which he made for criticising Dhurandhar. Peak detailing by Ranveer...." Fans were also quick to spot other detailing in the commercial. It shows Ranveer and Prakash at a gentlemen's club with badminton rackets, a nod to Prakash's iconic career. It also shows Ranveer calling Prakash "Pappa," teasing how Deepika Padukone ad-



dresses her father. The next scene shows them at a cute ice cream shop, with Ranveer holding a colourful unicorn—a subtle nod to the actor being a girl dad. In his previous videos, Dhruv Rathee had called Dhurandhar a "nonsense propaganda". After Dhurandhar 2 released in theatres, he shared another such video criticising the film. He said, "Dhurandhar 2 is not a film made for entertainment... it is the BJP's most expensive election advertisement, for which you pay Rs 500 to watch," he said. In the clip, he also argues the film's glorification of demonisation and claimed that it was done to obscure the economic disruption the policy caused.

Rashmika Mandanna rejected traditional wedding makeup at Udaipur nuptials, transformed into bride in 90 minutes: 'She was radiating joy'

Rashmika Mandanna's makeup artist, Tanvi Chemburkar, recently revealed that she completed the actor's makeup in just an hour because she had given specific instructions. Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda tied the knot at an intimate wedding in Udaipur. (Credit: Instagram/@rashmika_mandanna) Although celebrity weddings never fail to turn heads with their opulence and the presence of the who's who of the entertainment industry, actors Rashmika Mandanna and Vijay Deverakonda's high-profile wedding in Udaipur, Rajasthan, grabbed attention for reasons beyond that. While the ceremony was exquisite, it won over fans' hearts as the couple embraced their respective roots wholeheartedly and opted for authenticity over grandeur.

Even as Rashmika kept her appearance clean and minimal, her bridal look quickly became one of the most talked-about in recent times, winning over the internet. Although she wore intricate jewellery and apparel that radiated everything she is, it took Rashmika just 90 minutes to be fully ready. Recently, her makeup artist, Tanvi Chemburkar, revealed that she completed the actor's makeup in just an hour because Rashmika had given specific instructions.

During a conversation with Masoom Minawala, Tanvi shared that she never expected Rashmika's bridal look to go so viral. Revealing that the actor wanted to keep her

look "super clean," Tanvi recalled asking her, "Really? It's your wedding day. Don't you want to add coal?" The actor, however, was very clear about things. "She wanted to keep it very true to how she looks. I didn't expect the makeup to get so much appreciation. I was a bit taken aback when it did, and she was like, 'See, I told you keeping it super clean and minimal would help.' She has beautiful eyes. So, when we keep the makeup minimal, her eyes would do all the talking."

Mentioning that Rashmika had a vision for her styling, hair, and makeup for all occasions, Tanvi shared that she really enjoyed working with her, even though they were on a hectic schedule. "She was radiating with so much joy," Tanvi recalled, noting that Rashmika's mood added to the overall elegance of her appearance. Even though her bridal look attracted significant attention, Tanvi revealed that she and her hairstylist, Sourav Roy, pulled it off in just over an hour. "Since there was an event the previous evening, she hadn't slept enough. She came up to us and said, 'Guys, you all have 40 minutes to get me ready.' However, we ended up taking an hour. Overall, she took just 90 minutes to be fully ready from top to bottom," Tanvi noted. Rashmika, Vijay had no-phone policy at wedding Interestingly, the couple had a no-phone policy at the wedding. "We locked our phones and kept them away."