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## Rajya Sabha ends Budget session with 110% productivity

New Delhi: The Rajya Sabha was adjourned sine die on Saturday, concluding the Budget session that began on January 28, with Chairman CP Radhakrishnan noting a remarkable 110 per cent productivity and thanking the members for their cooperation. The session witnessed the passage of several key legislations, including the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026, The Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026, besides the election of Harivansh as the Deputy Chairman for a consecutive term.

## CEC removal row: Opposition seeks broader support in Parliament

New Delhi: Undeterred by the rejection of their earlier notices, opposition parties are planning a fresh move to seek the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, sources said on Saturday.

According to highly placed sources, leaders from several opposition parties are in talks, and at least five senior MPs from different parties — including the Congress, the Trinamool Congress, the Samajwadi Party and the DMK — are working on drafting a new notice to initiate removal proceedings.

## Opposition guilty of 'foeticide' of women's quota, will pay the price: PM Modi in address to nation

Sabha due to a lack of the required 66 per cent majority, the Prime Minister assured the women of India that the government would realise the reservation agenda and that it was only "a matter of time."

Beginning his remarks with an apology to women, the PM criticised the Congress for being anti-reform and for disrupting every attempt made to strengthen India. "Every challenge the nation faces today is rooted in this very negative approach and indecision of the Congress," he said, in a no-holds-barred attack on the principal opposition party.

The Prime Minister said women of the country were watching how the Congress and its allies thumped desks in jubilation after defeating a measure aimed at strengthening women's political rights. "They were not thumping desks; they were launching an assault on the dignity and self-respect of Indian women. And women can forget anything but not their insult," he said.

He went on to criticise the Congress, DMK, TMC and SP for stalling the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam amendments, alleging that these "family-based parties were afraid to share power and do not want women from outside their own families to rise in politics."

"These dynastic parties are insecure about emerging women leaders and therefore opposed the amendment," he added.

The Prime Minister also rejected as "falsehoods" the opposition's claim that the amendments would harm the interests of some states. "This amendment was not about taking anything from anyone. It was about giving more opportunities to everyone. The government repeatedly assured the Congress and its allies that every state would see a proportional rise in seats and benefit from the change. Yet they voted against the amendment," he said.

He accused Congress-led parties of depriving women of their rights for decades by citing illogical technicalities. "The country has now identified this pattern of these parties, whose primary reason for opposing women's reservation is the fear of losing family-based political dominance," he said.

The Prime Minister added that the Congress and its

allies had lost an opportunity to atone for delaying women's reservation for decades. "The people of India will never forgive the Congress and its allies for opposing women's reservation," he said, adding that these parties had been spreading misinformation about delimitation to create divisions.

"Congress has inherited the divide-and-rule policy from the British. It has consistently fueled sentiments that promote division. False claims were made that some states would suffer due to delimitation, whereas the government clarified that neither representation nor proportional share would decrease. This amendment was an opportunity for all states — Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Kerala — to see an increase in seats. However, due to selfish politics, these parties betrayed their own people," he said.

Sharing what he described as the collective anguish of Indian women who had hoped for the realisation of their rights, the Prime Minister said his government would remove all hurdles in the path of women's reservation.

"We did not have the required 66 per cent votes to pass the Bill yesterday, but I know we have the support of 100 per cent of the women of India," he said, pledging to fulfil the agenda in a matter of time.

New Delhi, April 18

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday came down heavily on the Congress and its allies for opposing the Bill aimed at advancing the women's reservation plan to the 2029 elections. He said the opposition bloc would "pay the price for killing, in the foetus, the government's honest attempt to secure women's political rights."

Addressing the nation a day after the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, was defeated in the Lok

## INEIL sports will organise " Taekwondo Premier League"



Hyderabad April 18: INEIL sports will organise " Taekwondo Premier League" match here on April 19, Sunday at "The Park" in Hyderabad. The objective is to bring out talent and sportsmanship on one platform. Tournament participants would be boys from across India different states. " Addressing media person here at the Park hotel, Minister Vivek Venkat Swamy assured that he would recommend sports minister & authorities to encourage Taekwondo in Telangana regular sports. On this occasion, Mr. Raunaq Yar Khan, the 9th Nizam Asaf Jahi Dynasty expressed his concern with Telangana Govt to encourage youth in Taekwondo. " Participating Team owners named - Delhi warriors - Shyam Patel, Maharashtra Avengers - Rahul Patel, Rajasthan Rebels - Vamshi Krishna, Sree Ganitha, Gujarat Thunders - Vijay Kumar Bhansali, Telangana Risers - Devika Bora, North East Heroes - Nirmal Jain Praful Bora, Haryana Hunters - Shyam Patel.

INEIL sports - Co-founders - Mr. Ganesh & Ms. Navneetha informed that participants underwent today medical test, weighing - in, match- dras. They detailed that 8 teams would participate & 19 matches will be conducted in the tournament. Out of which 18 matches would be of round battles & 1 final would be of the knock - out match, they added.



## Opposition Defeat of Amended Women's Bill Thwarted Conspiracy to Abolish Quotas: CM Revanth Reddy

Hyderabad, April 18 Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Saturday said the Opposition had joined hands in the Lok Sabha to defeat the Constitution Amendment Bill, which he alleged was brought "to destroy the country." He charged that the BJP-led government at the Centre had used women's reservation as a pretext to increase Lok Sabha seats in northern states and secure a two-thirds majority to amend the Constitution to abolish reservations altogether.


Revanth Reddy, at a press conference in the Capital, alleged that the Centre's intent was "not clean" and that multiple bills were presented as a "mask" to link the women's reservation Bill with delimitation and increase of Lok Sabha seats. Referring to the BJP's "Char Sau Paar" slogan during the 2024 general elections, Revanth Reddy said it was aimed at securing two-thirds majority to amend the Constitution with its own strength and abolish reservations for SCs, STs and BCs.

Since the BJP failed to cross even 300 seats and was restricted to 240,

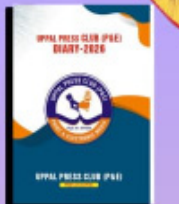
forming government with support of other parties, it had devised a strategy to increase seats — potentially to around 850 — primarily in northern states where it was strong, to secure the numbers needed for constitutional changes, he alleged.

Revanth Reddy said the defeat of the Bill in the Lok Sabha reflected a lack of sincerity on the part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He described the failure as not merely a setback for the BJP but as evidence of its intentions being exposed. He alleged that "Modi's arrogance" had led to the defeat.

Demanding that the Prime Minister prove his sincerity on women's reservation, Revanth Reddy proposed introducing a fresh Bill by Monday to reserve one-third of the existing 543 Lok Sabha seats and one-third of seats in all state Assemblies for women. He said the I.N.D.I.A. block would extend full support, as it did in 2023, and suggested the Bill could be implemented from Tuesday.



### INVITATION



## UPPAL PRESS CLUB ( P & E )

### DIARY LAUNCH - 2026

**Date: 19 - 04 - 2026 Time : 10:00Am**

**Venue:**

**Srirasthu Convention, Uppal Bagayat Phase-2**  
**Mini Shilparamam, Uppal**

*Invited by:*

## UPPAL PRESS CLUB ( P & E ) COMMITTEE



## Gorige Pedda Mallesh Kuruma Sworn in as Chairman of Uppal Velugu Gutta Temple Trust Board

Uppal Congress in-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy attends as chief guest



“UPPAL, APRIL 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):” “The oath-taking ceremony of the newly constituted Temple Trust Board at the Sri Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple, located at Velugu Gutta, was held on Saturday under the supervision of the Endowments Department. Senior Congress leader and noted social worker Gorige Pedda Mallesh Kuruma took oath as the Chairman of the Devasthanam Trust Board. Following the ceremony at the temple premises, he officially assumed charge of his responsibilities. Uppal Congress party in-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy attended the programme as the chief guest. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, he called upon everyone to work collectively for the development and progress of the temple. “The event was attended by Endowments Department Inspector Praneeth, Temple Executive Officer Srikanth, founder trustee Gorige Mallesh, High Court advo-

cate and former chairman Janni Raghu, along with Revu Krishna, Sagar Ravi, Uppal Kuruma Sangham Working President Barla Krishna Kuruma, Batkiri Dhan Sagar, Gorige Ailayya, Mote Narasimha, Ramanthapur Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple Chairman Shag Sridhar, Kandi Adi Reddy, Sudhakar Reddy, Shravan Kumar Reddy, Hamu Nayak, Batkiri Beerappa, Kuruma Women's President Bandaru Manjula, Batkiri Manjula, Kemidi Indira, Selvaji, Karre Srinivas Kuruma, Saga Pentayya, Banda Lakshmaiah, Ravula Beerappa, Ravula Jangaiah, Gorige Mahesh, Gorige Narasimha, Kaushik Satyanarayana, Narri Mahender, and Kankala Elender, among others. “The newly inducted committee directors, including Tejavat Raju Nayak, Maram Dileep Kumar, Chen Reddy Krishna Reddy, Rodla Srikanth Reddy, Gundu Raju, and Jyothi Nayak, also took oath during the ceremony. “Temple priest Konduru Ramesh Sharma was also present.”

## WJI Representatives Console Maha TV Khammam Bureau In-Charge Ramakrishna; Pay Tributes to Traffic Head Constable Srinivasa Rao

“KHAMMAM APRIL 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):” “Representatives of the Working Journalists of India (WJI), Khammam district, visited and consoled Maha TV Khammam Bureau In-Charge Ramakrishna following the demise of his relative, Traffic Head Constable Srinivasa Rao. “Srinivasa Rao passed away unexpectedly on Saturday due to a brain stroke. Upon learning of the incident, WJI district convener Gantela Anand and Khammam Assembly constituency convener K. Kalyan Chakravarthi, along with others, visited his residence at S.R. Homes on the outskirts of Khammam and paid their last respects to the deceased. “They offered heartfelt tributes, praying for the peace of his soul. Later, they met and consoled his son-in-law Ramakrishna, who serves as Maha TV Khammam Bureau In-Charge, and his brother Narayana, who is the TV9 Khammam Bureau In-Charge. The representatives



expressed deep condolences to the bereaved family members.

## 40-Lakh CC Road Works at Beerappa Gadda Inspected by BRS State Leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj



“UPPAL, APRIL 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):” “BRS party State leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj on Saturday inspected the ongoing CC road construction works being taken up at Beerappa Gadda at an estimated cost of ₹40

lakh. “The road is being laid from ARK Residency to the residence of Vanjari Narsinga Rao, extending up to Shankaraiah Kirana Store. During the inspection, Mr. Praveen, along with officials and local residents, reviewed the progress of the works and directed the contractor to commence the construction without delay. “He specifically instructed the contractor to ensure that the road width is maintained at not less than 4.5 metres. He also stressed that the work should be completed at the earliest without causing inconvenience to the residents of the basti. “Appealing to the local residents for cooperation, he requested them to extend support to the contractor during the construction period so that the road works could be completed swiftly. “Among those present on the occasion were senior BRS leaders Kokkonda Jagan, Vanjari Narsinga Rao, Srinivas Yadav, Pandla Kishan Tirupathi Yadav, Gorigi Ailesh, Banti Goud, and basti elders Buchchi Reddy, Salla Raji Reddy, Satyanarayana, and Shankaraiah, besides others.

## Ramanthapur Division Congress President Mohammed Rafiq Intensifies ‘Basti Bata’ Outreach, Addresses Civic Issues



“UPPAL, APRIL 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):” “As part of the Basti Bata public outreach programme, Ramanthapur Division Congress Party president Mohammed Rafiq undertook an extensive visit to Nehru Nagar in Ramanthapur on Saturday. “During the visit, he interacted directly with local residents and personally took note of their grievances. The residents brought to his attention several pressing civic issues, including the deplorable condition of internal roads, underground drinking water supply problems, and concerns related to electricity poles in the colony. “Responding promptly to the issues raised, Mr. Rafiq assured the resi-



dents that he would immediately take up the matter with the concerned officials and also bring it to the notice of Uppal constituency in-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy to ensure a permanent solution. “Resolving people’s problems remains our top priority,” he stated. “Among those who participated in the programme were Gangaputra Bhaskar, Mogili Lingam, Laghusani Srinivas Goud, Narasimha Gayatri Goud, Varalakshmi, Cable Ashok, MD Shakeel, MD Nayeem, Raj Kumar, Mahesh, Venkat, Chotu Boy, Surya Icon, Swami Madhu, Sai, MD Siddiq, and Muthyala Ravi, along with several others.

## Democracy Defeats Authoritarian Move, Says CPI Leader

Koonamneni Sambasiva Rao Calls Delimitation Bill a Threat to Federal Balance and Equal Representation” “MEDCHAL- MALKAJGIRI, Staff Reporter, April 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):” CPI State Secretary and MLA Koonamneni Sambasiva Rao stated that the proposed Delimitation Bill poses a serious threat to the democratic framework of the country. He said that democracy has prevailed over authoritarian tendencies, referring to the united opposition stance against the bill. He was speaking as the chief guest at the CPI Medchal-Malkajgiri district executive committee meeting held at Raj Bahadur Hall in Himayatnagar. Addressing the gathering, Sambasiva Rao alleged that the Central Government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, attempted to introduce the Delimitation Bill in an authoritarian manner in Parliament. He said that opposition parties united and defeated the bill, thereby protecting democratic values. He criticized the bill as an attempt to distort the process of fair representation for political advantage. He explained that delimitation should be carried out based on population to ensure equal representation, but the current proposal may lead to injustice for certain states. He expressed concern that the bill could discriminate against southern states while politically favoring northern states. He emphasized that every vote in a democracy must carry equal value, and warned that implementation of such a bill could increase regional imbalances and weaken the federal structure. He termed the move as being against the spirit of the Constitution and strongly condemned it on behalf of CPI. He also criticized the lack of transparency and public consultation in taking such a crucial decision. On the Women’s Reservation Bill, he stated that it was already approved by Parliament in 2023, and alleged that attempts to revisit or dilute it under the guise of delimitation indicate a conspiracy to delay women’s reservation. He called on people to counter what he described as misleading propaganda by BJP. He expressed full support for the ongoing RTC workers’ strike in the state and urged local leadership to actively participate and ensure its success. He stressed the need for



strengthening the party by addressing local issues and working towards solutions. He also called for focused efforts in upcoming municipal elections, with assurance of support from the state leadership. He added that people are increasingly looking towards CPI, and urged party leaders to connect with the public, build confidence, and work towards organizational growth. CPI State Secretariat member V.S. Bose, speaking at the meeting, criticized the decision to allot double bedroom shops through open tenders, stating that it benefits only the financially strong. He suggested that such opportunities should be given to local unemployed youth and called for agitation on the issue. He also demanded allocation of double bedroom houses to eligible applicants and urged the party cadre to prepare for struggle. The meeting was presided over by Laxmi. CPI Medchal-Malkajgiri District Secretary Uma Mahesh, State Council members Damodar Reddy, Kalluri Dharmendra, Sailu Goud, Swami, and district executive members Shankar, Krishna, Harinath Rao, Racha Kishan, Shankar Rao, Satya Prasad, along with mandal secretaries, were present.

## BRS leader Gandham Nageshwar Rao inspects colony on MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy’s directions

“UPPAL, APRIL 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):” “Acting on the instructions of MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, BRS senior leader Gandham Nageshwar Rao visited Pragathi Nagar Colony in Ramanthapur Division on Saturday to address the persistent drainage issues in the locality. “As part of the follow-up to the MLA’s visit conducted three days ago, officials from the Water Board, including DGM Supraja and AE Ravinder, along with several colony leaders, participated in the inspection and prepared proposals for the required works. “Speaking on the occasion, Gandham Nageshwar Rao said that the drainage problem in Pragathi Nagar Colony has arisen mainly due to the absence of a proper outlet. He stated that MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy has already issued necessary instructions to the concerned officials to ensure a permanent resolution to the issue. “He further noted that the MLA has been actively taking up public grievances brought to his notice and coordinating with



officials to resolve them at the earliest. “Prominent members of the colony association, including chief advisor Venkat Reddy, general secretary Jagadeeshwar Reddy, and BRS leaders Srikanth Goud, Manish, Ravi, and Vinod Goud, were present during the programme.”

## Drone-Based Mosquito Control Drive Conducted in Peerzadiguda Lakes

----Thungathuri Ravi Thanks Municipal Officials, Seeks Permanent Solution”



“MEDCHAL- MALKAJGIRI, Staff Reporter, April 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):” Boduppal: Municipal authorities carried out a drone-based mosquito control spraying operation in the lakes of Peerzadiguda Division under Boduppal Circle of Medchal-Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation on Saturday. Officials said the initiative was taken in response to a sharp increase in mosquito population in recent days. The spraying was conducted using drones to ensure wider and more effective coverage across the water bodies. They also stated that the tender process for removal of accumulated



waste and sludge in the lakes has been completed, and comprehensive cleaning works will begin soon. Welcoming the initiative, Congress leader and RV Foundation Chairman Thungathuri Ravi thanked Boduppal Circle Deputy Commissioner A. Shailaja and the municipal team for taking up mosquito control measures. He also urged authorities to provide a permanent solution to the mosquito problem in Peerzadiguda, Medipally, and Parvathapur areas. DE Jahnavi, AEE Mahesh, Entomologist Rambabu, SFA Naresh, and other MMC staff participated in the programme.

## Anganwadi hosts pre-school graduation, awareness drive.

Karimnagar, April 18 (Correspondent): A pre-school Graduation Day and an awareness programme for parents on the ill-effects of excessive mobile phone use and junk food were organised at the Mukarampura 3rd Anganwadi Centre in Santosh Nagar sector as part of Poshan Pakhwada. Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) Sabita said early childhood is a crucial phase, with nearly 80% of brain development occurring at this stage. She noted that activities conducted at Anganwadi centres aid cognitive and physical growth. The children pre-



sented songs and activities as part of the graduation event. Ms. Sabita cautioned parents against excessive mobile phone usage among

children, stating that it could adversely affect brain development. She also advised against the consumption of junk food, citing health

concerns. Supervisor Nirmala, BC Satish, Pratham Rajender, DHEW Sriatha, Anganwadi staff, pregnant women and lactating mothers participated. “[

# RTC Workers' Issues Must Be Resolved to Avert Strike: BC Employees Welfare Association



2026. He said RTC employees are facing severe dissatisfaction due to increasing workload and growing uncertainty, especially with the introduction of electric buses in the Greater Hyderabad region. Drivers and maintenance staff are reportedly concerned about job security. Orders to convert surplus staff into conductors or transfer them to other regions have further increased anxiety among employees. The association requested the management to reconsider these decisions and address the concerns of workers. While appreciating the implementation of free bus travel for women, Niranjana said that employees have played a key role in making the scheme successful. He also demanded that the government fulfill its pre-election promises without delay. Key demands include implementation of the 2021 and 2025 pay scales and merger of RTC into the government. The association called on both the government and RTC management to take immediate initiative in resolving the issues. Kushaiguda Depot Honorary President Gaddam Yadagiri also urged the government to set aside differences and address workers' problems at the earliest. Others present at the meeting included State President S Tirupatayya, State Treasurer Mangamma, Kushaiguda Depot President Chira Upender, Secretary Thodeti Srinivas, Treasurer Machha Babu, and Executive President Surender Goud.

---Appeal to State Government and RTC Management---MEDCHAL- MALKAJGIRI, Staff Reporter, April 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Kushaiguda: The BC Employees Welfare Association has urged the state government and RTC management to immediately resolve the issues of RTC employees and prevent the proposed strike. State General Secretary Niranjana stated that the association extends full support to the strike call given by the RTC Joint Action Committee, scheduled to begin from April 22,

# Milk Abhishekam to Teenmaar Mallanna Portrait at Sainikpuri Crossroads



---MEDCHAL- MALKAJGIRI, April 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): AS Rao Nagar, A milk abhishekam was performed to the portrait of TRP Party president and MLC Teenmaar Mallanna at Jyotirao Phule statue, Sainikpuri crossroads, as a mark of gratitude for his sustained struggle behind the release of the caste census report by the Telangana government. The programme was organized under the leadership of Telangana Rajyadhikara Party

Medchal-Malkajgiri district president Panagattla Chakrapani Goud. District youth president Singam Arun Patel and women's wing president Neerudu Shalini, along with party leaders and cadre, participated and celebrated the occasion. Speaking at the event, Chakrapani Goud said the caste census in Telangana was conducted due to the continuous efforts of Teenmaar Mallanna. He criticized the government for not disclosing caste-wise data to the public for a long time, calling it unacceptable. He stated that Mallanna consistently questioned the government through various platforms and in the Legislative Council, forcing it to release the caste census report into the public domain. He described Mallanna as the only leader who fought persistently until the report was made public. He added that the party would move forward with the goal of achieving BC political empowerment in the state under Mallanna's leadership. District vice presidents Sunkari Praveen and Appala Abhiram, labour wing vice president Rachalamalla Laxman, Anil, youth general secretary Mahesh Goud, secretary Nursing Babu, joint secretaries G Krishna, official spokesperson Machha Pandu, youth leaders Anoop, Rajasekhar, Srinath, Murali, Praveen, Sai Kiran, women leaders Nazreen Sultana, Saubhagya, Vanaja, social media convener Murali, division presidents Kasula Nandam, Neela Ramesh, Bikshapathi, Raju, Dileep and others participated in the programme.

# Women must rise collectively in politics



---Telangana State Mahila Congress President Errabelli Swarna---BJP MP must apologize unconditionally for insulting the sentiments of Telangana people---Hanumakonda, April 18 (Indian Chronicle) : Telangana State Mahila Congress President Errabelli Swarna strongly condemned the remarks made by BJP MP Tejasvi Surya, who compared the formation of Telangana state to the partition of India and Pakistan. She spoke as the chief guest at a joint Warangal district Mahila Congress review meeting held at the District Congress Party office in Hanumakonda on Saturday. She said it was shameful for a BJP MP, who does not even have basic knowledge about Telangana, to speak about it. She reminded that when the Telangana movement began, Tejasvi Surya was not even born, and that Telangana was achieved after six decades of struggle, the aspirations of several generations, and the sacrifices of thousands of youth. She stated that from 1969 onwards, at every stage of the Telangana movement, students, employees, and farmers came onto the streets to fight for their rights. Many families lost their children, and many mothers were left in tears. As a result of those sacrifices, Telangana state was formed in 2014. She criticized that comparing such a historic movement to the India-Pakistan partition not only insults the self-respect of Telangana people but also disrespects a dignified platform like Parliament. She recalled that even Sushma Swaraj from the BJP had supported the Telangana Bill in Parliament and said that criticizing such a leader shows the BJP's double standards. She asserted that despite knowing the Congress party would suffer losses in Andhra Pradesh, Sonia Gandhi fulfilled the 60-year-long aspiration of Telangana people, calling it a historic decision by the Congress party. She demanded that Tejasvi Surya immediately withdraw his remarks and offer an unconditional apology to the people of Telangana. Errabelli Swarna advised that new women leadership should be encouraged from village to district level. She emphasized that the Mahila Congress would become stronger only if everyone works together instead of individually. She said this is not just a

party program but a movement to empower women. Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy expressed happiness that Errabelli Swarna was appointed as the State Mahila Congress President from this district. He said that in the Congress party everyone has the freedom to speak, unlike in other parties. He added that Telangana women know the difference between how women were treated in the previous government and the respect they receive under the present Revanth Reddy government. Wardhannapet MLA K.R. Nagaraju said that the Congress government launched six guarantee schemes in the name of women and urged that these schemes be taken to every doorstep. He stated that this is possible only through women and mentioned that Asara pensions and a ?2,500 per month scheme for women would be launched very soon. MLC Baswaraju Saraiah stated that the Congress party recognizes hardworking people and described it as a secular party. He said those who trust the Congress party will receive opportunities. He also mentioned that the Women's Bill had already been approved earlier in the Rajya Sabha by the Congress and criticized that the Modi government deliberately delayed the bill. Hanumakonda District Congress President and KUDA Chairman Inagala Venkatrama Reddy said that women should be made partners in every meeting and highlighted that 33% reservation provides ample opportunities for women. Warangal City Mayor Gundu Sudharani emphasized coordination between the party and the government and said women should be the pillars of progress. Leaders and women representatives from Hanumakonda, Warangal, Bhupalpally, Mahabubabad, Jangaon, and Mulugu districts of the erstwhile Warangal region participated in the program. As guests, Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy, Wardhannapet MLA K.R. Nagaraju, KUDA Chairman and Hanumakonda District Congress President Inagala Venkatrama Reddy, MLC Baswaraju Saraiah, Warangal District Congress President Mohammed Ayub, PCC Vice President Jhansi Reddy, and TPCC General Secretary Kuchana Ravali Reddy, along with others, participated in the program.

# Congress, BJP failed to protect Telangana's self-respect, says former BRS leader Nerdham Bhaskar Goud

---Warns people will teach both parties a lesson at the right time---UPPAL, APRIL 18 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Former BRS State Secretary and Telangana movement activist Nerdham Bhaskar Goud on Saturday alleged that both the Congress and the BJP had failed to uphold the self-respect and dignity of Telangana. Addressing the State Conference of Telangana Movement Activists, where he participated as the chief guest, Mr. Goud said the Congress government, despite being in power, had failed to honour the sacrifices made during the Telangana statehood movement. He stated that the families of martyrs and activists who stood in the frontlines under the leadership of K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) during the Telangana agitation had not received the assurances promised to them. He expressed concern that not a single major promise made to the families of martyrs and movement activists had been fulfilled. Mr. Goud further alleged that the Congress government had shown little concern towards the welfare of Telangana movement activists and the families that played a key role in the statehood struggle. He warned that if the promises made to them were not implemented, a large-scale agitation would be launched. Taking strong exception to the recent remarks reportedly made by BJP MP Tejasvi Surya, he said it was unacceptable for anyone to make derogatory comments about Telangana and the martyrs of the statehood movement. He questioned why Union Ministers from Telangana,



including G. Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay Kumar, as well as Congress MPs from the State, had failed to confront the MP in Parliament. He said the people of Telangana were closely watching these developments and warned that both the Congress and the BJP would be taught a fitting lesson by the electorate at the appropriate time for failing to protect the State's honour. The two parties have no moral right to seek votes from the people of Telangana, he said. Mr. Goud also called upon all Telangana movement activists to remain united and said safeguarding Telangana was a collective responsibility of both activists and the people of the State. A large number of movement activists from 29 districts across Telangana participated in the conference.

# INDIA'S First Big C - VIVO Premium Experience Zone



Hyderabad, AP & Telangana's No.1 mobile retail chain, Big C, has grandly launched India's first Vivo Premium Experience Zone at Ameerpet. This special store is designed to offer customers a unique and immersive experience with Vivo smartphones. Customers can explore Vivo's latest smartphones featuring cutting-edge design, powerful performance, and stunning camera capabilities. At this experience zone, customers can personally try out Vivo

devices, understand their features in detail, and make better purchase decisions. Along with this, Big C is offering exciting deals and special surprises for customers. The Vivo Premium Experience Zone at Big C Ameerpet is set to provide a completely new shopping experience. With cutting-edge innovation, stylish design, and strong performance, Vivo and Big C together promise an unforgettable celebration for customers. On this occasion, Big C has announced several attractive offers. Customers can get up to 10,000 instant cashback and assured gifts. Additionally, discounts of up to 25% on air conditioners are available. Easy EMI options starting from 1,999 are also offered. Big C invites everyone to visit the store and enjoy a cool and happy shopping experience. Big C representatives stated that they are happy to bring such a premium experience to customers and expressed gratitude to their partners and team. On this occasion, Big C Executive Director Mr. Y. Swapna Kumar, along with Vivo representatives Mr. Atish Bhargava (General Manager, Andhra Pradesh & Telangana), Mr. Aswani Bhaskar (Chief Sales Officer vivo India), and Mr. Rupesh Sharma (Chief Retail Officer vivo India) participated. Founder & CMD Mr. M. Balu Chowdary

# Census 2027: House Listing to Begin Next Month in District



Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, Asifabad, April 18: District Collector Haritha has directed officials to carry out the house enumeration programme in a systematic and error-free manner across the district. On Saturday, the Collector, along with District Chief Planning Officer Vasudeva Reddy, attended a three-day training programme for enumerators and supervisors of Asifabad mandal at the Social Welfare Gurukul School and College in the district headquarters. Speaking on the occasion, Collector Haritha stated that, as part of the Population Census - 2027, the first phase of house enumeration will commence in the district from the 11th of next month. She instructed enumerators and supervisors to conduct the process meticulously. She informed that during the enumeration, responses to 32 questions must be collected from the head



of each household, and the entire process will be conducted through a fully digital system. She stressed the need to avoid any errors during the exercise. The Collector advised participants to carefully listen to the trainers, take proper notes, and seek clarification whenever necessary. She further stated that a total of 994 enumerators and 174 supervisors have been deployed for the programme in the district. In addition, charge officers, additional charge officers, and computer operators will also perform duties. A total of 1,689 house listing blocks have been identified in the district for the enumeration process. The Collector reiterated that the programme must be conducted without any lapses. Tahsildar Riyaz Ali, Mandal Parishad Development Officer Srinivas, enumerators, supervisors, master trainers, and others participated in the programme. Issued by District Public Relations Officer.

# Helmet Awareness Push Gains Momentum at Kagaznagar



Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, April 18: Road Safety Awareness Drive Held at Rajiv Chowk As part of the 'Arrive Alive' campaign, a road safety awareness program was conducted today at Rajiv Chowk. The initiative focused on encouraging safe driving practices, particularly the use of helmets among two-wheeler riders. Officials appreciated com-



muters who adhered to safety norms by wearing helmets, highlighting the importance of responsible road behavior. The program witnessed the participation of Kagaznagar DSP, Town CI, Rural CI, police station staff, along with other officials, who collectively emphasized the need for public cooperation in ensuring road safety.

## NSR students shine in CBSE Class 10 results



— NSR School Chairman Nayineeni Sampath Rao (Indian Chronicle) Hanumakonda/Aarepalli, April 18 (Indian Chronicle) : Students of NSR International School, Aarepalli in Hanumakonda district, achieved excellent results in the Class 10 annual examinations announced by the CBSE Board. At a special felicitation ceremony held at the school on Saturday, the students who secured top results were honored by School Chairman Nayineeni Sampath Rao in the presence of their parents. "On this occasion, he said that with the encouragement given by parents, the school has been achieving 100% results every year. He expressed pride in shaping mostly rural-background students into outstanding performers and contributing them to the nation." School Correspondent Kalinga Rao stated that with a highly qualified teaching team and a commitment to un-



compromising quality education, NSR has been securing excellent results for the past three years. "School Director Dr. Nageswara Rao congratulated the students and advised them to move forward by embracing science and technology in tune with changing times." Principal Raj Kumar Joshi said that from the beginning of the academic year, students were prepared for the exams in a planned manner with the support of parents, which resulted in 88 students achieving 100% pass results. Among them, 60% of the students secured first class, while the rest secured second class. He emphasized that the school has been shaping rural students to compete on par with urban students, in a way different from other educational institutions. "Vice Principal Srinivas, Coordinator Madhulatha, teachers, students, and others participated in the program.

## Women's Empowerment Bill, political realities, anguish, introspection



“Bakkam Venugopal Reddy “Kollapur Constituency” “Wanaparthy correspondent Indian Chronicle” “The defeated Women’s Reservation Bill, which raised hopes among crores of women across the country, was a historic opportunity that could not be implemented. The way this bill was introduced and the political developments surrounding it clearly show that political calculations were more important than a genuine commitment to women’s empowerment. Although the concept of love and respect for women was displayed on the surface, opportunistic politics seemed to play a major role inside. This bill, which was supposed to provide equal rights, respect and political representation to women, has once again been left on the altar of politics. The public is aware that the bill has been defeated. But its intentions and strategies behind it are being revealed to the public as if they were “one thing on paper, another on the nose”. In this discussion that has come forward in the name

of women empowerment, the suspicion of what the real objective is has naturally arisen by bringing the issue of delimitation together. It is regrettable that at a time when clear guidance should be given for the advancement of women, an attempt is being made to weaken the opposition and gain the support of women for political gain and loss. This is not just the failure of a bill, it is a temporary denial of women’s hopes, their voice and their future. However, this development can also be seen as a political turning point. This occasion of raising questions about the ruling party is an opportunity for every party. But the ability, strategy and leadership are needed to make good use of that opportunity. Otherwise, the power to rewrite the same situation will again go into the hands of the opposing factions. What is most needed at this time is introspection, introspection and brainstorming, as was the case during the UPA era in the past. Experienced leadership and guidance from intellectuals are very crucial. During that period, the decisions taken by Sonia Gandhi, coordinating the intelligence of experienced people like Dr. Manmohan Singh, Pranab Mukherjee, A.K. Antony, P. Chidambaram, gave political results. Similarly, it is a clear fact that without comprehensive discussions and strategic thinking, it is not easy to face the current powerful leadership. In the coming days, political developments in states like Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala will affect the political direction of the country. The results in these states may be the foundation for future national political equations. In my opinion, the current developments seem like a warning to the ruling party. A “countdown” can be considered to have begun. But at the same time, if the opposition parties do not recognize their weaknesses and come up with the right strategy, this opportunity may slip away once again. If so, the ruling party will roll its political dice again successfully. There is a possibility of experimenting. Women’s empowerment is not a slogan, it is a cornerstone of the country’s development, equality, and democratic strength. Therefore, real commitment, transparency, and action are needed on this, rather than political interests. The future of women is linked to the future of the country. “Analyst” “Your well-wisher, Bakkem Venugopal Reddy

## Maize procurement center inaugurated in Vikarabad

Rs. 2,400 support price per quintal “ Farmers should sell their crop at government centers without approaching middlemen...” “Indian Chronicle Vikarabad (April 18) “As per the directions of Telangana Legislative Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, Market Committee Chairman Chapala Srinivas Mudiraj grandly inaugurated the maize procurement center set up under the aegis of Markfed and DCMS in the DCMS office premises in Vikarabad. “Speaking on the occasion, he said the government has fixed a minimum support price of Rs 2,400 per quintal for maize, and urged farmers to make use of this opportunity by selling their produce at government centers instead of approaching middlemen. “AMC Vice Chairman Mallesh, former Municipal Chairman Vishwanatham Satyanarayana, DCCB Director Kishan Naik, Mandal Congress President B. Rajashekar Reddy, Chigullapalli Ramesh, DCMS Manager Sudarshan Reddy, along with several AMC directors, councilors, and leaders participated in the program.



## District Collector Inspects ZPHS School in Shamirpet Mandal

“MEDCHAL- MALKAJGIRI, April 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Shamirpet, Medchal-Malkajgiri District Collector Manu Chowdhary conducted an inspection of the ZPHS school at Thumkunta in Shamirpet mandal on Saturday. During the visit, the Collector stated that since the campus houses both primary and high school sections, priority should be given to providing basic facilities for students. Responding to a request from the principal for additional classrooms and toilets, the Collector asked the school authorities to submit proposals and assured a positive response. The Collector inspected classrooms and the computer lab, reviewing the existing infrastructure. Highlighting the issue of severe water shortage, the principal informed that municipal water supply was insufficient and requested the sanction of a borewell. The Collector directed the concerned officials to take necessary steps for drilling a borewell. He also instructed that urgent repair works in the school should be taken up on a priority basis. District Edu-



cation Officer Vijay Kumari, Shamirpet Tahsildar Sucharita, school staff, and other officials were present during the inspection.

## Push for Infrastructure Upgrade in Government Schools: Parameshwar Reddy

“UPPAL, APRIL 18 (INDIAN CHRONICAL):“Uppal Assembly constituency Congress in-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy on Saturday said efforts would be made to provide better infrastructure facilities, including the construction of additional classrooms, in government schools. “Mr. Parameshwar Reddy visited the Zilla Parishad High School and the Government Primary School in Ramanthapur, where he interacted with teachers and parents of students to understand the issues being faced by the institutions. “During the visit, teachers and parents brought several problems to his notice, stating that the existing classrooms were insufficient to accommodate the growing number of students. They also pointed out the absence of essential facilities such as urinals and toilets, besides seeking the provision of other basic amenities. “Responding to their concerns, Mr. Parameshwar Reddy said that Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has been giving special attention to the development of government schools across the State. He assured that additional classrooms, toilets, urinals and other necessary infrastructure facilities would be provided to the government schools in Ramanthapur at the earliest. “Among those present were ZPHS Principal Latha, Mandal Primary School Headmistress Renuka, Don Bikshapathi, Erram Srinivas, Vijay Kumar, Siddagani Raju, Ravinder Rao, Kiran Ramesh, Ramanthapur Division Congress president Mohammed Rafiq, Tafeeq, working president Vallapu Srikanth Yadav, Lucas, Samuel, Jangaiah, Sandeep, Kandi Shraavan, Upender Reddy, Poosa Satteinna, Babu Rao, Sridhar, Bullet Ashok, Bhaskar, Sachin, Jilla, Naga Malliah, K. Shankar, Srinivas Goud, Lingam, Nayeem, Raju, Satish Goud, Narsimha, Mahesh, Ravi, Ambika and Shobha, among others.



## Telangana Activists’ Forum Re-Elects Dr. Cheema Srinivas as State President



“----Leaders demand recognition, pension, and welfare measures for activists; BJP MP’s remarks on Telangana strongly condemned at Hyderabad meeting” “MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, April 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A state-level extended meeting of the Telangana Activists’ Forum was held at Marri Krishna Reddy Function Hall in Tamaka, Hyderabad, under the leadership of Dr. Cheema Srinivas.

The gathering unanimously re-elected Dr. Cheema Srinivas as State President. MLC Prof. Kodandaram and Prof. Kasim attended as chief guests. Speaking at the meeting, they said the sacrifices of activists and the public who raised “Jai Telangana” slogans during the Telangana movement should never be forgotten. They strongly condemned recent remarks by a BJP MP comparing Telangana to Pakistan and demanded a public apology to the people of Telangana. They stated that people from all sections played a key role in the struggle for statehood. They expressed that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is considering justice for Telangana activists. The forum urged the state government to immediately constitute a committee to identify activists and implement promises made during elections. The forum demanded a monthly pension for activists, allocation of 250 square yards house sites, and financial support for families of martyrs who lost their lives during the movement. Leaders said the forum will work towards ensuring recognition and welfare of activists. Several leaders and representatives from all 33 districts of Telangana participated in the meeting.

## Road Safety Awareness Program Conducted in Kasimpur



“Helmets Distributed under “Arrive Alive” Initiative – Call to Follow Traffic Rules...” “Zaheerabad April 18 ( Indian Chronicle ): “A road safety awareness program was conducted in Kasimpur village of Sangareddy district on Saturday as part of the “Arrive Alive” initiative. The program witnessed the participation of the village Sarpanch, village elders, and a large number of local residents. “During the event, awareness was created among the villagers about

the importance of following road safety rules. The speakers emphasized that two-wheeler riders must wear helmets and should carry valid driving licenses and insurance documents while driving. They cautioned that failure to follow these rules could lead to serious accidents. “The officials also advised people not to overspeed, avoid drunk driving, and strictly follow traffic signals. They highlighted that many road accident fatalities occur due to not wearing helmets. “As part of the program, 30 helmets we

## INEIL sports will organise Taekwondo Premier League

match here on April 19, sunday at “The Park” in Hyderabad. The objective is to bring out talent and sportsmanship on one platform. Tournament participants would be boys from across India different states. “ Addressing media person here at the Park hotel, Minister Vivek Venkat Swamy assured that he would recommend sports minister & authorities to encourage Taekwondo in Telangana regular sports. On this occasion, Mr. Raunaq Yar Khan, the 9th

Nizam Asaf Jahi Dynasty expressed his concern with Telangana Govt to encourage youth in Taekwondo. “ Participating Team owners named - Delhi warriors - Shyam Patel, Maharashtra Avengers - Rahul Patel, Rajasthan Rebels - Vamshi Krishna, Sree Ganitha, Gujarat Thunders - Vijay Kumar Bhansali, Telangana Risers - Devika Bora, North East Heroes - Nirmal Jain Pratul Bora, Haryana Hunters - Shyam Patel.

## Man Arrested for Assaulting Municipal Official in Kagaznagar

“Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, April 18: A case has been registered against a man for allegedly obstructing and assaulting a government official on duty in Kagaznagar. “According to reports, Ade Anil Kumar, a Junior Assistant working at the Municipal Office in Kagaznagar, visited Tilak Nagar Colony on April 17, 2026, as per official instructions to inspect and monitor Indiramma housing

works. “During the inspection, a person identified as Buddi Vinod, son of Buddi Ram and a resident of Sriram Nagar Colony, allegedly obstructed the official in the discharge of his duties, verbally abused him, and physically assaulted him. “Following a complaint, police registered a case and launched an investigation. The accused was taken into custody today and produced before the court, where he was remanded to judicial custody.

## ED conducts raids at AAP MP Ashok Mittal's residence, Lovely Professional University



GNS News Agency, April 18

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday conducted raids at the Jalandhar residence of AAP Rajya Sabha MP and Lovely Professional University (LPU) founder-chancellor, Ashok Kumar Mittal, along with premises linked to the university. Mittal, a prominent educationist-turned-politician who recently replaced Raghav Chadha as AAP's Deputy Leader in Rajya Sabha, is at the centre of the probe. Details of the case have not been offi-

cially disclosed yet.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann strongly condemned the raids, calling them a "typical Modi-style" political vendetta ahead of the Punjab elections. "BJP has started preparations for Punjab elections... ED raids at AAP Rajya Sabha MP Ashok Mittal's house and university... typical Modi style..." he posted on X as he wrote a couplet by a poet, saying the AAP would not get cowed down. The development has triggered a major political row in Punjab, with AAP alleging misuse of central agencies against opposition leaders. Further updates are awaited as the raids continue. ED has often raised AAP leaders in Punjab. They include Sanjeev Arora, when he was an AAP Rajya Sabha MP from Punjab. ED raided his residence in Ludhiana and other linked premises in October 2024 in a money laundering case related to alleged land fraud. Kulwant Singh (AAP MLA from Mohali) was raided multiple times, including in October 2023 and April 2025, in connection with the massive PACL Ponzi scam. AAP MLA Jaswant Singh Gajjanmaira was also raided and later arrested in 2023 in a money laundering case linked to a bank fraud. He had faced earlier ED action in 2022 as well.

## Familiar men decamp with Rs 17 lakh while a Bengaluru resident was out for Yoga, 5 held

GNS News Agency, April 18

The Bengaluru police have arrested four men and apprehended a minor boy for allegedly stealing valuables worth Rs 17 lakh from a house in BEML Layout by exploiting their familiarity with the homeowner. The police have recovered 115 grams of gold ornaments and Rs 13,400 in cash. According to the police, the theft occurred on March 31, while the complainant was out for yoga practice. On returning, she found the lock of her house broken and gold ornaments and cash missing, following which a case was registered.

Acting on credible leads, the police apprehended two suspects near Dasarahalli on April 3 and first recovered Rs 8,100 in cash along with an autorickshaw allegedly used in the crime. Later the same day, another accused and a minor boy were secured near the Anmod village checkpoint on the Ramanagera-Goa road. The police said the accused were known to the victim and lived in the same locality. They had gained her trust by helping her with minor household chores. "This was not a random burglary. The accused were familiar with the victim's routine activities and had prior knowledge of the house and storage of valuables. They used this trust to plan and execute the theft," a police officer said. The arrested have been identified as Nandish,



Someshwara, Madhugowda, and Bhima, all aged in their early to mid-twenties. They were produced before a court on April 9 and remanded in judicial custody. During interrogation, the accused allegedly confessed to the crime. The minor boy was produced before the Juvenile Justice Board, while the others were taken into police custody. Further investigation revealed that part of the stolen gold had been kept at the accused's residence, while the gold was sold to known persons and at jewellery shops in Yadiyur and KP Aghara.

## Blacklisting, scrapping licences: Noida admin sets tough rules for contractors after workers' protest

GNS News Agency, April 18

The Noida administration Tuesday evening stated that in case of 'disruptive conduct' or 'violence' by workers, their outsourcing agencies and contractors will also be held accountable. "If any disruptive behavior is carried out by an outsourcing agency or its employees/workers, the agency will also be held responsible. Such agencies may be black-listed, and action may be taken to cancel their licences," said Noida District Magistrate Medha Roopam.

This comes in the backdrop of a protest by thousands of workers in Noida on Monday demanding better wages, which turned violent, with demonstrations continuing into Tuesday. A total of 7 FIRs were registered while 396 people, including four women, were arrested. A meeting of outsourcing agencies and contractors of various industrial units was held late Tuesday evening, where all contractors were told to ensure payment of prescribed wages as per government guidelines, and were also asked to train their workers in a manner that maintains discipline and peace. Roopam said that industries, workers, and employers are complementary to each other. "Smooth functioning of industries safeguards employment opportunities, while stability of employers ensures the future of workers. If industrial activities are disrupted, it adversely affects all stake-



holders as well as the overall development of the state," she said. The Uttar Pradesh government Tuesday had increased wages of workers across categories as an interim measure. For Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad, the interim monthly wages have been increased by 21%: Rs 13,690 for unskilled workers from the earlier Rs 11,313; Rs 15,059 for semi-skilled workers from 12,445; and from Rs 13,940 to Rs 16,868 for skilled workers. The meeting was attended by Additional District Magistrate (Finance & Revenue) Atul Kumar, DD Factory Brijesh, officials of departments concerned, and contractors from various industrial units.

## Chikkamagaluru police weigh suicide theory in Kerala teen's death at tourist spot



GNS News Agency, April 18

The police in Karnataka's Chikkamagaluru said Wednesday they are considering suicide as a possible cause in the death of a 14-year-old girl from Kerala, whose decomposed body was found near a popular tourist spot, even as they await post-mortem and forensic reports to determine the exact circumstances. The police have ruled out foul play for now. Sreenanda went missing on the evening of April 7 while visiting the area with nearly 40 relatives, triggering panic among her family. Her body was found in a deep gorge near Manikyadhara Falls on April 10 after a search operation. Initially, the family, who are from Kerala's Palakkad, suspected abduction or foul play due to her sudden disappearance. However, the police said there is no evidence so far to support these claims. The police said an accidental slip appears less likely, noting that the area was crowded at the time with 60 to 100 people present, yet no one reported hearing screams or witnessing any disturbance. Investigators also pointed out that the terrain—filled with rocks, trees, and bushes—would typically slow or break a fall, raising questions about how the body ended up at such a depth. They suggested this could be more consistent with a deliberate jump. "Prima facie, no foul play is suspected. We are awaiting the post-mortem report and foren-

sic analysis to corroborate the findings and determine the exact cause of death," a senior Chikkamagaluru police officer said. According to Chikkamagaluru police sources, the girl, who was with nearly 40 relatives, crossed the safety barricades installed at the location and went missing around 5 pm on April 7. The barricades, consisting of three parallel grills about 5 feet high, are meant to prevent visitors from entering hazardous areas. Her father had scolded her for crossing the barricade shortly before she disappeared. At the time, around 60 to 100 people were present at the spot. "There were no reports of any commotion, arguments or screams that would suggest foul play," a police officer said. Search efforts were launched soon after she was reported missing, and her body was recovered in a decomposed state nearly four days later. They also pointed out that no mobile phone was recovered. The girl had been using her mother's phone to take photographs before she went missing. The Chikkamagaluru police added that the site is a popular tourist destination that sees around 1,000 visitors daily, and no similar incident has been reported there before.

## SC, ST Commission chief alleges snub by Siddipet Collector

Siddipet: SC, ST Commission Chairman Bakki Venkataiah accused Siddipet Collector K Hymavathi of ignoring his name in inviting Dr BR Ambedkar birth anniversary celebrations in the district. He further accused the Collector of ignoring his name at the behest of some Congress leaders. Addressing the birth anniversary celebrations of Ambedkar at Mandapalli in Siddipet on Tuesday, Venkataiah said that he got invitations from Sangareddy collector and Medak collector and even from the State government to participate in the celebrations at Tank Bund.

## Surveillance at nakas, rising traffic hassles: Multiple barricades bring Chandigarh traffic to a near crawl



GNS News Agency, April 18

Chandigarh's heightened security crackdown marked by solar-powered cameras at naka points streaming live feeds to the Police Control and Command Centre — is tightening surveillance across the city, but the accompanying barricading within internal sectors is increasingly drawing criticism from residents over traffic congestion and daily inconvenience. The stepped-up checking follows recent incidents, including the daylight murder of Chamanpreet Singh, alias Chini, in Sector 9 and the grenade attack at the BJP office in Sector 37. Police have since expanded their naka network, setting up around 40 checkpoints in the morning and another 40 in the evening, with nearly 5,000 vehicles being checked on regular intervals.

Police officials said the naka locations and personnel deployment are being rotated regularly based on intelligence inputs to prevent predictable escape routes. The addition of solar-based cameras at these points has enabled real-time monitoring of vehicle checks and movement across the city. However, on the ground, the experience for commuters has been far from smooth. "I was crossing towards Mullanpur via the PGI-Khuda Lahora road when a major traffic snarl took place due to these nakas," Saurabh Sharma, a resident of Sector 39, said. "There was heavy congestion, and it didn't seem like traffic was being regulated alongside the checks," he added. Rajbir Kaur, another commuter, said the situation has become a daily ordeal. "The checking is intense, but there is no planning for traffic flow. During peak hours, vehicles pile up quickly, and people are left waiting for long stretches," she said. Concerns have been echoed by resident welfare bodies as well. Federa-

tion of Sector Welfare Associations Chandigarh (FOSWAC) president Baljinder Singh Bittu said the arrangement is leading to widespread inconvenience. "This barricading in the internal sectors of the city is leading to complete traffic chaos. After the recent crimes, while police have set up nakas in internal areas as well, vehicles have started piling up, especially during late evening hours when offices close and in the morning rush," Bittu said.

"After four to five cycles of the traffic light turning green, a commuter is able to move just one light point, and that is because of multiple barricading on the roads," he added. Bittu said he has personally witnessed long queues at several key junctions. "At Sector 21, the Sector 18-19 intersection, Sector 9, and many other places, people have been complaining. Even when children are heading to school, traffic in nearby areas gets piled up due to abrupt barricading. Is this the way crime prevention should be done? Commuters across the city are getting harassed," he said. Chandigarh Residents Association Welfare Federation (CRAWFED) chairman Hitesh Puri also questioned the approach. "With these multiple barricading points inside the city, unnecessary traffic is being blocked. Rather than deploying this level of heavy barricading, the police should increase beat policing and patrolling," Puri said. He added that strengthening existing surveillance infrastructure may yield better results. "The city police should focus on ensuring all CCTV cameras are functional. That will ultimately provide footage of criminals trying to escape," he said. Puri also cited the impact on daily routines. "One of my office staffers earlier used to leave Sector 47 at 9.30 am and reach Sector 22 by 9.50 am. Now he starts at 9.10 am and still reaches at 9.50 am because he gets stuck at five check points inside the city. There is no point in blocking roads with so many nakas," he said. Meanwhile, police officials maintain that the intensified measures are yielding results on the ground.

A senior UT police officer said increased barricading has led to the arrest of drug peddlers and other criminals who were moving around the city with weapons and allegedly planning offences. "The naka positions are changed based on intelligence inputs. This is helping in checking snatchers and other criminals effectively," the officer said, adding that the aim is to create a strong deterrent and plug gaps exposed in recent incidents where accused managed to escape.

## Land acquisition for Aerotropolis project: Farmers end hunger strike after assurances from govt on key demands

GNS News Agency, April 18

Suresh Pakale Lifetime Achievement Award Emphasising the government's stance, Mundian said, "development cannot come at the cost of people's sentiments. The government respects public concerns above all". The hunger strike by farmers and landowners to protest the land acquisition for the Aerotropolis project in Mohali ended on Tuesday after the Punjab government accepted their key demands and offered assurances. The protest, which had been ongoing for several days outside the GMADA office, was formally called off after farmer leaders were offered juice, marking its conclusion. The state Housing and Urban Development Minister Hardeep Singh Mundian, along with Mohali MLA Kulwant Singh, led the negotiations, while GMADA Chief Administrator Sakshi Sawhney and Land Acquisition Officer Rohit Jindal were also present.

"The Punjab government is fully committed to safeguarding the interests of farmers and landowners. No decision regarding farmers will be taken without their consent," Mundian said while addressing the gathering. He clarified that land acquisition for Aerotropolis blocks E, F, G, H, I and J would be undertaken only with farmers' approval. The minister acknowledged the role of MLA Kulwant Singh in bringing the concerns of affected farmers to the Chief Minister's attention, which led to swift intervention and resolution. Before concluding the protest, Mundian read out and handed over a written document outlining the accepted demands. As per the decisions, the validity of the Sahulyat Certificate has been extended from two to four years, while the timeline for applying for tubewell connections has also

been increased to four years, with installation to be ensured within two months on priority. All plots, including those in preferential locations, will now be included in the draw of lots to address concerns of fairness. In view of legal proceedings and High Court directions regarding valuation, pending compensation in certain pockets will be deposited in the reference court, while development work will be expedited and payments for unaffected properties released promptly. The government has also committed to completing all development works within three years from the date of land possession. Under enhanced land pooling benefits, there has been a marginal increase in both residential and commercial entitlements per acre, while all eligible farmers will be issued trustee certificates and allotted plots as per their landholding. Additionally, conveyance deed charges have been waived for original landowners. The government has assured that essential village infrastructure such as government schools, parks and dispensaries will remain outside the acquisition ambit, while sewerage, water supply and stormwater systems will be integrated with GMADA infrastructure. Necessary development works, including roads, will be undertaken, with GMADA extending financial support wherever required. Houses located along the village 'phirni' will be exempted from acquisition, while those falling within agricultural fields under the planning area will be relocated appropriately. Emphasising the government's stance, Mundian said, "development cannot come at the cost of people's sentiments. The government respects public concerns above all". MLA Kulwant Singh expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister and the Minister for accepting the farmers' demands and thanked farmers and landowners for their cooperation.

## Fully committed to uphold, advance Baba Saheb's ideals, Congress politically neglected him: Saini

GNS News Agency, April 18

Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini said on Tuesday that the Haryana government remains fully committed to upholding and advancing the ideals of Baba Saheb Dr B R Ambedkar and accused the Congress of showing "political neglect and disrespect" towards the architect of the Constitution of India. Addressing a programme organised to commemorate the 135th birth anniversary of Baba Saheb in Panchkula, the chief minister said Baba Saheb's life is an extraordinary saga of struggle, sacrifice, and determination. "Baba Saheb's thoughts, principles and struggle are a source of inspiration for all. He continuously fought against social discrimination and described education as the most effective medium for social upliftment. It is solely through education, awareness and unity that we can bring about positive change in society."

Emphasising his government's commitment to upholding and advancing Baba Saheb's ideals, Saini said the BJP government has launched numerous schemes for the welfare of every section of society, with the objective of ensuring that the benefits of development reach every section of society in keeping with the principle of 'Antyodaya'. Saini said the BJP government firmly believes that the holistic development of the state and the nation is impossible without empowering every section of society. "We are continuously formulating policies designed to uplift the weaker sections of society. The state government has implemented several welfare policies to ensure quality education, employment, social security and equality of opportunities," he said.

Criticising the Congress, Saini alleged, "In 1946, when the Constituent Assembly was being formed, the Congress tried its best to prevent him from entering it. But Baba Saheb reached there through his talent and struggle. Even then, he was never truly accepted by the Congress leadership. Baba Saheb had stated that he came from the opposition camp and was never considered part of the Congress." The chief minister alleged, "It was unfortunate that even as the law minister of the country, Dr Ambedkar was kept away from key decisions and committees. His role was limited in

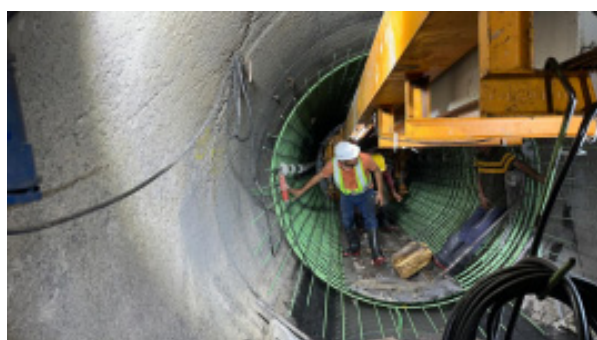


"Baba Saheb's thoughts, principles and struggle are a source of inspiration for all. He continuously fought against social discrimination and described education as the most effective medium for social upliftment. It is solely through education, awareness and unity that we can bring about positive change in society"

crucial matters like foreign policy, defence, and national security. His demand for setting up a commission for the rights of Scheduled Castes and Backwards Classes was also not taken seriously by the then Congress government."

"The biggest injustice was done when his most revolutionary social reform, the Hindu Code Bill, was deliberately delayed, diluted and eventually shelved by the Congress. Despite repeated assurances, it was not implemented, which was a major betrayal," Saini alleged. Saini said, "In 1951, Baba Saheb was compelled to resign from the Cabinet. He said that his resignation was not due to any desire for position, but because he refused to compromise on principles. This marked the failure of the Congress mindset, which continued to do politics in the name of social justice." "We must collectively strive to build an India where every individual receives equal opportunities, every citizen is treated with dignity, and no person is deprived of their rights," Saini said, adding that this was Baba Saheb's dream, and this constitutes the very soul of our Constitution.

## As Mumbai launches two giant Tunnel Boring Machines, one lies abandoned 60 metres below Powai, and no one is coming for it



GNS News Agency, April 18

Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) Nayak was launched last week for the Thane-Borivali tunnel, with a bullet train TBM assembly beginning simultaneously. Beneath the city, a network of tunnel boring machines (TBMs) has been steadily reshaping Mumbai, cutting through rock to build Metro lines, road tunnels and water networks. But one of them never made it back. Nearly 60 metres below Powai, a German-made TBM lies buried in volcanic ash and monsoon sludge, abandoned after a rare engineering failure. And no one is coming for it.

The machine had been deployed by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation for a water conveyance tunnel from Veravali to Ghatkopar. In 2019, it got trapped in loose volcanic ash beneath the SCI establishment in Powai. For a civic body that has executed close to 100 km of water tunnels, this was an unprecedented setback. The project has since seen delays, a cost escalation of Rs 419 crore, and the deployment of a new machine to complete the remaining stretch, leaving the original one entombed beneath the city. Such incidents are rare not just in India but globally. In 2013, Bertha, then the world's largest TBM, stalled during a highway tunnelling project under Seattle and was eventually freed after four years. In Mumbai, repeated attempts to retrieve the machine failed. After heavy monsoon flooding in 2020, extraction became virtually impossible. As Mumbai launches two giant Tunnel Boring Machines, one lies abandoned 60 metres below Powai, and no one is coming for it. Since soil conditions along the stuck TBM were difficult to work with using TBM technology, the BMC deployed the NATM (New Austrian Tunneling Method) to bore nearly 420 metres of stretch. NATM involves manual excavation by provide continuous support through rock bolting, installation of steel liners etc. to stabilize the earth around the tunnels portion. About 50 metres away from the stuck TBM, the BMC has deployed the NATM method for 420 metres to avoid similar mishap. (

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation awarded work orders for the Veravali-Powai-Ghatkopar water supply tunnel project in January 2012. Estimated at Rs 263 crore, the project comprised two stretches: a 2.2-km tunnel from Veravali to Powai and a 4.4-km stretch from Powai to Ghatkopar. The aim was to improve water distribution in the eastern suburbs, particularly in L and N wards, covering Kurla, Ghatkopar and Vikhroli, by augmenting supply to Veravali and Ghatkopar's high level and low level reservoirs. For the tunnelling work, the BMC, through its contractor, procured a German-made tunnel boring machine from Herrenknecht. The machine had a diameter of 2.8 metres, length of 50 metres and a total weight of approximately 80 tonnes. In 2012, the TBM machine was procured at the cost of Rs 32 crore. As Mumbai launches two giant Tunnel Boring Machines, one lies abandoned 60 metres below Powai, and no one is coming for it. Floating a new tender, the BMC has procured a new TBM machinery to bore through the remaining stretch of 2.7 km.

A TBM operates through a rotating cutter head fitted with teeth, spokes and sharp protrusions that cut through soil and rock as the machine advances. During excavation of the 4.4-km stretch from the Powai shaft towards Ghatkopar, the machine faced repeated halts due to weak ground conditions. In August 2019, after boring about 1.2 km, it came to a complete stop after getting stuck in pyroclastic volcanic ash that is highly loose and unstable. The machine remains lodged about 60 metres below ground beneath the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) establishment in Powai, still over 3 kilometres short of its destination. "What a TBM demands is a hard, rocky surface to provide external stability to the structure as it manoeuvres through the ground. If the soil is loose, it doesn't get the stability. At the SCI point, the soil condition was extremely bad. In fact, the soil was slushy, almost liquid-like. That made it impossible for the TBM to move and it got stuck," a BMC official, involved in the project during the period, told Officials said the soil conditions were confined to a small stretch that was not identified during the preliminary surveys conducted after every 800-metre stretch around the site of work. "Mumbai

lies in the Deccan area and as such, enjoys the advantage of rocky soil conditions that aids in tunnel boring. However, geological conditions at the Powai point were complex with slushy strata observed within a very small stretch. Typically, soil strata are not found anywhere in Mumbai, which predominantly has basalt rock strata," an official added. Another BMC official, privy to developments, said, "We have bored and executed over 100 kilometres of water tunnels across Mumbai. But this is the first time that we encountered such a problem."

Once the tunnel boring machine got stuck in volcanic ash, retrieving it became a major challenge for the BMC. "Our challenge was not only to extract the expensive machinery but also to do it safely, without causing any injuries or fatalities to the manpower operating it," a civic official said. A big hurdle, officials said, was posed in the restricted working space owing to the machine size. "The machinery had a diameter of 2.8 metres, along with lots of ancillary machinery and cables. At the bottom of the machine lay rails and grippers. The machine is huge, which left us with hardly any space to work manually. It was not even possible for workers to move towards the machinery as the entire portion was slushy," said the BMC officer.

As Mumbai launches two giant Tunnel Boring Machines, one lies abandoned 60 metres below Powai, and no one is coming for it. The machinery was so badly buried within slush that instead of moving horizontally, it started slipping into the ground. The situation worsened after a heavy monsoon spell in June 2020, which left the machinery completely Between 2019 and 2020, the civic body approached several tunnelling experts across the country to find a solution. It also set up an expert committee led by an IIT Bombay professor and sought advice from agencies such as Tata Consulting Engineers. Tunnelling experts from National Institute of Rock Mechanics (NIRM) were also approached to assist with solutions. However, officials said India has limited expertise in handling such machines, which are largely designed and operated with foreign support, especially from Europe and China. The BMC also reached out to international experts, including in Germany, but could not arrive at a solution.

The situation worsened during the heavy monsoon of June 2020 when continuous rain led to slush filling up the tunnel. The front portion of the TBM was buried in loose ash and the surrounding ground became unstable, making any attempt to pull it out nearly impossible. "Nearly 80 per cent of the machinery was buried and it became nearly impossible to prevent the seepage of water and access the machinery. The net result of every attempt by us was zero," said an official. With recovery efforts failing and costs of extraction mounting, the BMC in 2021 decided to scrap the earlier contract. After consultations with its engineers and experts from IIT Bombay, the civic body opted to deploy a new TBM and dig a fresh tunnel instead.

As Mumbai launches two giant Tunnel Boring Machines, one lies abandoned 60 metres below Powai, and no one is coming for it. Floating a new tender, the BMC has procured a new TBM machinery to bore through the remaining stretch of 2.7 km. Akin to the previous TBM, the new one has an external diameter of 2.8 metres and an internal diameter of 2.2 metres. In August 2025, the new TBM achieved breakthrough. With the original tunnel abandoned, the BMC floated a fresh tender to complete the remaining stretch from the SCI complex in Powai to Ghatkopar's high level and low level reservoirs. This time, stricter conditions were built into the tender while inviting bids. In December 2022, the contract was awarded to Patel Engineering at a cost of Rs 419 crore. A new tunnel boring machine was procured again from German manufacturer Herrenknecht, with a diameter of 2.8 metres. However, given the loose soil conditions where the earlier machine got stuck, the BMC adopted a different approach for part of the stretch. Instead of using a TBM, it deployed the New Austrian Tunneling Method for nearly 420 metres. This method is typically used in weak soil conditions and involves gradual excavation with continuous support to stabilise the ground. About 50 metres away from the stuck machine, contractors used this technique to reconnect with the earlier tunnel alignment over the 420-metre stretch. Beyond this, tunnelling resumed using the new TBM for a further 2.7 km. The work continued to face difficult ground conditions, including hard rock, fractured formations, cavities and water seepage. Despite these challenges, the new TBM achieved its breakthrough in August 2025, more than a decade after the project began. Speaking to The Indian Express, Abhijit Bangar, additional municipal commissioner projects, said the work is now nearing completion. "Boring by the Tunnel Boring Machine as well as NATM has been completed. The work on lining is progressing and work is expected to be completed by March 2027," Bangar said.

## BJP washing CM's residence with Gangajal after I vacated it similar to Ambedkar's insult: Akhilesh Yadav



GNS News Agency, April 18

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday said that BJP's move of washing chief minister residence with Gangajal in Lucknow after he vacated the house in March 2017, was similar to BR Ambedkar's insult in Maharashtra's Chavdar lake where the Dalit icon was assaulted by feudal forces for drinking water from a waterbody. In an appeal to people belonging to PDA (Pichhde, dalits and minorities) issued on Ambedkar's birth anniversary, Yadav said the entire nation knows about the incident that happened at Chavdar lake in Maharashtra. "Feudal people (samantvadi) had beaten Baba Saheb and his people with canes for drinking water from a talab (waterbody) where generally cattle of the elite section used to drink water," Yadav said.

He added, "That incident of Baba Saheb's insult in Maharashtra had happened on March 20, 1927. After 90 years of that incident, a similar insulting incident happened to me on March 20, 2017. When I vacated the chief minister's residence on March 20, 2017, BJP people get the CM residence washed with Gangajal because a person of PDA

community had been living there," former chief minister said in the appeal and added that mindset of feudal people has not changed even after so many year of insult of Baba Saheb.

## India's first quantum computing testing facility launched

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday formally launched India's first indigenous quantum computing testing facility at SRM University in Amaravati. With this, the CM said, the Amaravati Quantum Valley will emerge as an international quantum computing hub. Naidu witnessed a live quantum system initiation with the cooling process of the processor on the Amaravati 1Q system being triggered virtually, as the system is housed at Medha Towers in Gannavaram. At the same time, the Amaravati 1S system functioned as an open-access setup fully visible to all attendees during the demonstration. With the setting up of the Amaravati Quantum Reference Facility, India now has open sovereign quantum infrastructure, officials said. The Andhra Pradesh government's flagship quantum technology hub under India's National Quantum Mission, the Amaravati Quantum Valley, will be hosting an IBM 133-qubit quantum computer and has engaged in 80-plus industry and academic partnerships, positioning it to be among the top five global quantum hubs. The launch of AQRF on World Quantum Day adds an indigenous hardware dimension to Amaravati Quantum Valley's portfolio, complementing its existing quantum cloud, skilling and innovation infrastructure, officials said.

## 3 bodies in 20 days, 4th on way: Another Haryana man dies fighting Russia's war



GNS News Agency, April 18

For Rakesh Kumar, a bus driver with Chandigarh Transport Undertaking, the wait is never ending. It has already been 10 days since he was told that his son Anshu is dead. The 25-year-old, hailing from Kathowas village in Rewari, went to Russia in April 2025 on a study visa, but was allegedly inducted into the Russian Army and sent to the front.

"On April 4, a former soldier who had served in the Russian army informed us that Anshu is dead. He told us the body would first be brought from Ukraine to Moscow and then to India within 10-15 days. Since then, we have

been waiting," said a distraught father. On March 26, the body of 22-year-old Anuj Sharma from Cijhora village in Karnal was brought to India. He had travelled to Russia in May 2025 on study visa, but was persuaded to join the army. His brother, Arjun Sharma, said, "He couldn't land a job there. Later, a few Russian soldiers persuaded him to get enlisted, assuring that he would only be required to dig bunkers. He enlisted on August 28, 2025... On October 20 he suffered bullet injuries. His body remained buried under snow for months before finally being brought back to India on March 26 this year."

Two more cases came to fore early April. On April 2, Ankit, 30, from Kurar Ibrahimpur village in Sonapat district, returned in a coffin. He had initially been working at a hotel in Moscow before being recruited into the Army. His last contact with his family was on October 12, 2025. On April 4, Ankit Jangra, 23, from from Kumharia village in Fatehabad was cremated after his body arrived from Russia. He had gone to Moscow on a study visa in February 2025 and was allegedly lured into getting enlisted. His friend Vijay Poonia, who had travelled with him, remains missing. Families across Haryana continue to wait for news of their sons. Aman, 24, from Madanheri village in Hisar, has been missing since September 2025. "Someone in Russia lured him with the promise of a Rs 2.5 lakh monthly salary and an advance of Rs 10 lakh," said his brother Aashish.

## 'Police intimidation of party candidates at BJP's behest': Congress files complaint with EC



GNS News Agency, April 18

Congress candidates from Vasna and Sarkhej wards may not contest the April 26 election to the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. Congress candidate Bharat Bharwad, who received the party's mandate for Sarkhej ward, withdrew his form on Monday. The last date for withdrawal of nominations is April 15. On the other hand, Congress candidate Falguniben Rawal did not reach the election office to submit her nomination despite the party's mandate to her for Vasna ward, an OBC reserved seat.

On Tuesday, Congress leaders led by Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee president Amit Chavda submitted a memorandum to the State Election Commissioner S Murali Krishna alleging police intimidation of its candidates and supporters at the behest of the ruling BJP. "The withdrawal of the Congress candidate from Sarkhej ward of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation is a serious issue. Two other candidates of the Congress have also been taken away by policemen. Such information is being received and they have been kept in unknown places. The Congress candidates should be released immediately. The husband of Kinjalben Shambhubhai Jadav, a candidate from Ward No. 4 of Tarapur Municipality in Anand district, is being taken to the police station and threatened by police to withdraw her nomination papers," Congress complaint alleged. The Congress has demanded that an impartial inquiry committee be appointed to probe the allegation of police intimidating Congress candidates across the state. "All those police officers who are working under political pressure should be immediately transferred and relieved from election duty, an FIR

should be immediately filed under election offenses and the CDR of their mobile phones should be collected so that the illegal activities done by them can be known," the party said in its memorandum to the SEC.

The Congress also accused BJP leaders of threatening Congress candidates to withdraw their forms and alleged that they are even using the government machinery for this illegal action. "A senior BJP leader is using social pressure along with other pressure tactics to disqualify Ramilaben's nomination. Till late last evening, she was being pressurised," Congress spokesperson Manish Doshi told. Ahmedabad City Congress committee president Sonal Patel said, "The BJP is also trying to get our candidates to withdraw in the western areas wards like Jodhpur, Thaltej, Chandlodiya, Bodakdev, which are BJP strongholds."

In the complaint to the SEC, the Congress demanded "adequate protection" to all its candidates so that they can contest the elections without any fear. They also urged the poll panel to instruct all election officials not to misuse the power and position they have been given. Citing some cases in its complaint, the Congress has listed instances from Kalol, Ahmedabad and Surat, Tarapur Municipality in Anand district among others, even naming police officials of LCB and SOG of these areas. "Despite this matter being brought to your attention, the police harassment has not reduced but has increased in the entire state. We have also come to know that the police are going to the party offices in Ahmedabad and Surat and District Congress Committees asking for information about the candidates and then pressuring them to withdraw their nominations. In one place, if the name is not in the electoral roll, the form is rejected, while in Veraval Municipality, the form is accepted even though the name of the BJP candidate is not in the roll. How can different decisions be made under the same rule?" the party sought to know in the complaint. "It has also been found that despite the names of BJP candidates appearing in two different places in the electoral roll, their forms have been approved despite our objections," the Congress said in its complaint to the poll panel. "Elections in a democracy is a sacred right of the people. If the police system itself intimidates the opposition candidates at the behest of the ruling party, then the State Election Commission's oath of holding elections in a 'free, fair and fear-free' environment will prove futile," Chavda said after submitting the complaint to the SEC office in Gandhinagar.

## Clashes erupt in UP's Kasganj on Ambedkar Jayanti, cop injured in stone-pelting

GNS News Agency, April 18

Clashes erupt in Kasganj on Ambedkar Jayanti, Ambedkar Jayanti, Ambedkar Jayanti Clashes erupt in Kasganj, Clashes erupt in Kasganj, Indian express news, current affairs Flames billow from a vehicle set on fire after a clash broke out over the installation of BR Ambedkar statue on a disputed land, in Lakhimpur Kheri, Uttar Pradesh, Tension prevailed in parts of Kasganj, Lakhimpur Kheri and Agra districts after incidents of clashes and vandalism took place on the occasion of BR Ambedkar's birth anniversary on Tuesday.

While a dispute occurred in Kasganj between groups of Dalit and Yadav communities over taking out a procession through a locality, two Dalit groups clashed in Lakhimpur Kheri over installing a statue, resulting in stone-pelting and burning of a police vehicle. In Kasganj, the dispute occurred at Chahak Gunar village after people purportedly belonging to the Yadav community tried to stop an Ambedkar procession, police said. The group blocked the road with tractor-trolleys and other vehicles, in an attempt to send the procession back. Ambedkar's followers insisted on taking the same route, saying they used it traditionally for the purpose, they added.

Officials rushed to the spot with police force and tried to convince people to clear the route. However, the villagers clashed with the police and threw stones at them. Kasganj Superintendent of Police (SP) Om Prakash Singh said they used a mild force to disperse the group and cleared the way for the procession. A police constable got injured in the stone pelting, he said. Police detained 23 people for creating the disturbance, it was learnt.

A case will be registered in this connection, said Additional Superintendent of Police Sushil Kumar Ganga Prasad.

The SP said the motive behind obstructing the procession by members of a community was yet to be ascertained and will become clear in the investigation. Video footage of the incident has been procured and further action will be taken accordingly, he added. In the Maigalganj area of Lakhimpur Kheri, two groups of the Dalit community clashed over putting up a statue of Ambedkar on a parcel of land and holding an event to garland it. Lucknow Range Inspector General (IG) Kiran S told The Indian Express that a group of youths reached the vacant plot belonging to the gram sabha (village panchayat) in the evening with an Ambedkar statue. When they were putting up the statue, a woman from

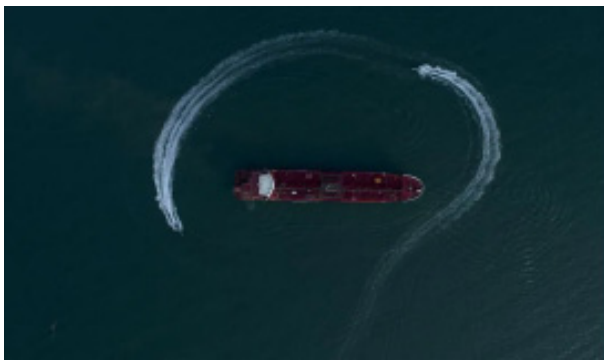


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the same community living nearby objected, alleging the youths would later try to grab the land, he added. The argument between the two sides escalated and turned into a clash.

Police rushed to the spot and were also targeted by the warring groups by pelting stones, it was alleged. Some youths even set on fire a police vehicle, a Mahindra Bolero, parked nearby, the IG said. The miscreants, however, were dispersed using mild force, he added. Peace was restored in the area amid police deployment and efforts are being made to identify these miscreants, officials said. According to PTI, in Agra, a group of youths carrying blue flags climbed a platform where the structure of Lord Parshuram's weapon is built and put up the flags there. A video circulated on social media and a large group of people gathered at the spot objecting to putting up the flags.

## telanganatoday.com Two ships transit Hormuz for Iranian ports despite US blockade: Report



GNS News Agency, April 18

London: At least two vessels transited through the Strait of Hormuz en route to Iranian ports after altering their Automatic Identification System (AIS) destination data, following a US blockade on ships entering and leaving Iran, British shipping media reported. The report by British shipping media Lloyd's List said that following the enforcement of the blockade, some vessels with intended calls at Iranian ports were observed adjusting their AIS destination signals while passing through the Strait of Hormuz, reports Xinhua news agency.

According to the report, shortly after the blockade took effect, at least two Iran-flagged container ships previously indicating sailing to the southern Iranian port of Bandar Abbas changed their AIS messages to the more general designation of "PG Ports," meaning "Persian Gulf ports." After successfully passing through the Strait, they continued their journey toward Bandar Abbas on Tuesday, said the report.

Citing analysts, the report said such actions could complicate the intelligence collection phase of the US blockade and require additional resources to track and identify vessels involved in maritime traffic to Iranian ports. The US Central Command said Tuesday that more than 10,000 troops are executing the mission to blockade ships entering and departing Iranian ports, targeting vessels of all nationalities without discrimination. Six merchant vessels have complied with the direction from US forces to turn around to re-enter an Iranian port on the Gulf of Oman, the command said on X. "During the first 24 hours, no ships made it past the US blockade," it said, noting that over 10,000 sailors, marines and airmen, along with over a dozen warships and dozens of aircraft, are executing the blockade.

The blockade covers Iranian ports and coastal areas, including all Iranian ports on the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, it said. At least nine commercial vessels have crossed the strait since Monday, according to the maritime data firm Kpler. On Monday, CNN reported that there were at least 15 US ships in the region that could participate in the blockade, though it was unclear where specifically the ships were. US President Donald Trump threatened on Monday that the US military will "eliminate" any ship of Iran if it comes close to the US blockade in the Strait of Hormuz. "Warning: If any of these ships come anywhere close to our BLOCKADE, they will be immediately ELIMINATED, using the same system of kill that we use against the drug dealers on boats at Sea," Trump wrote on Truth Social. Daily traffic in the strait has fallen to below 10 per cent of pre-conflict levels, from more than 100 vessels before the United States and Israel launched joint military strikes against Iran on February 28.

## Boat carrying 250 people, including Rohingya and Bangladeshis, sinks in Andaman Sea

GNS News Agency, April 18

Dhaka: At least 250 people, including Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi nationals, were missing after a boat capsized in the Andaman Sea recently on the way to Malaysia, according to the United Nations' refugee and migration agencies. When the boat sank and the status of any search Wednesday were unclear. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organisation for Migration in a joint statement said Tuesday that the trawler departed from Teknaf in the southern Bangladeshi district of Cox's Bazar carrying a large number of passengers to Malaysia. Overcrowding, strong winds and rough seas caused the vessel to lose control and sink, the agencies said.

UNHCR and IOM said the disappearance reflected the protracted displacement of Rohingya people and the absence of durable solutions. They said ongoing violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state has made the Rohingyas' safe return to Myanmar uncertain, and limited humanitarian assistance, restricted access to education and employment



in refugee camps, continue to push vulnerable Rohingya refugees to choose risky sea journeys, often based on false promises of higher wages and better opportunities abroad. UNHCR and IOM urged the international community to strengthen funding and solidarity to ensure lifesaving assistance for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, which has sheltered more than 1 million Rohingya from Myanmar.

## Harvey Weinstein faces retrial in New York rape case



GNS News Agency, April 18

New York: After years of #MeToo infamy, legal peril and prison, Harvey Weinstein is again going on trial on a rape charge in New York City. Jury selection started Tuesday in the onetime movie mogul's latest retrial, where jurors will weigh — for the third time — whether he raped hairstylist and actor Jessica Mann in a Manhattan hotel in 2013. It's a more streamlined proceeding than the array of allegations that were aired at Weinstein's previous trials in New York and Los Angeles. The Oscar-winning producer denies all the accusations and declared in court this winter that he had "acted wrongly, but I never assaulted anyone." Still, the retrial is expected to last up to six weeks. Questioned about the length of the proceeding and whether they could be fair and impartial about the much-publicized case, more than 80 prospective jurors asked to be excused during initial screening Tuesday morning. About 60 others remained for further questioning in the afternoon.

A surprise move from prosecutors While Mann's accusation may be familiar, specifics of the case may differ. In a surprise move before jury selection began Tuesday, prosecutors suggested they might seek to introduce a new piece of evidence — a remark that Weinstein allegedly made to a court officer six years ago. According to Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Candace White, the officer told prosecutors last week that he was on hand for Weinstein's February 2020 sexual assault conviction — which was later overturned — and heard Weinstein say: "If you had seen these girls, you would have done the exact same thing." Weinstein's lawyers urged Judge Curtis Farber to keep any mention of the supposed remark out of his upcoming retrial.

"This sounds far-fetched," defense attorney Marc Agnifilo said, adding that "it's just too late" to introduce it. A subject that was explored in prior trials — a claims fund for women who said Weinstein sexually mistreated them — likely won't come up again. The defence team doesn't intend to raise the subject, Farber said. Agnifilo and his partners took on the case in February, when longtime Weinstein lawyer Arthur Aidala stepped aside from the retrial to focus on the former studio boss' appeals and civil matters. Both Aidala and Agnifilo are well-known New York defense attorneys, but their litigation styles differ. Aidala is folksy, while Agnifilo is more buttoned-up. Weinstein wielded significant clout in the entertainment industry, having built his reputation on such critical and popular hits as "Shakespeare in Love," "Pulp Fiction" and "Chocolat." He also became a prominent Democratic donor. Then a series of sexual harassment and sex assault allegations against Weinstein began to emerge in news media in 2017, propelling the #MeToo movement.

He was criminally charged in New York in 2018 and in Los Angeles two years later. Weinstein went to trial and was convicted of some — but not all — counts in both cases. His initial New York convictions were overturned, spurring a retrial last year. The retrial verdict was mixed: Weinstein was convicted of forcing oral sex on production assistant and producer Miriam Haley in 2006, but he was acquitted of forcibly performing oral sex on model-turned-psychotherapist Kaja Sokola. The jury didn't decide on the rape charge involving Mann because the foreperson refused to keep deliberating. Mann has testified that she had a consensual, on-and-off relationship with the then-married Weinstein. But when he cornered her in a Manhattan hotel room where she was staying on a weekend getaway, she protested, "I don't want to do this," she told jurors. She said he kept making advances and demands until she "just gave up." Weinstein hasn't testified at any of his trials, but his lawyers have contended that he never had non-consensual sex. The defense claimed that his accusers willingly entertained his sexual overtures because they wanted his help in show business. The women said Weinstein dangled his Hollywood influence to draw them into his orbit and then victimize them. He's appealing the Los Angeles verdict and is expected to appeal the New York conviction involving Haley. It carries the potential for up to 25 years in prison; no sentencing date has been set. In this case, the rape charge is a lower-level felony punishable by up to four years behind bars. Weinstein, 73, already has served longer than that. Weinstein has various health problems and uses a wheelchair. He told the judge in January that his "mental state is collapsing" in New York's notorious Rikers Island jail. The Associated Press generally does not identify people without their permission if they say they have been sexually assaulted. Haley, Mann and Sokola agreed to be named.

## Lebanon-Israel talks begin amid rising regional tensions

GNS News Agency, April 18

Washington: Lebanon and Israel were holding their first direct talks in decades as fighting between Israel and Hezbollah militants rocks southern Lebanon. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio joined the Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors for Tuesday's discussions in Washington. Hezbollah says it will not abide by any agreement, a high-ranking member of the group's political council told the AP.

The US military claimed Tuesday that it has successfully begun to enforce a blockade of Iranian ports, as the standoff between the US and Iran deepens. Tehran threatened to strike targets across the region, a day after Trump warned on social media that any Iranian warships nearing the blockade would be destroyed in a "quick and brutal" strike.

With Pakistan racing to bring the sides together for more talks, US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that a second round "could be happening over the next two days." The first round ended without an agreement on Iran's nuclear ambitions, which the White House says is a sticking point.

Neither side has indicated what will happen after the ceasefire expires on April 22.

## UN nuclear chief urges strict Iran checks in any deal to end war



N's nuclear watchdog said that "very detailed" measures to verify Iran's nuclear activities must be included in a potential US-Iran agreement to end their war in the Middle East. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi stressed the need for the thorough verification regime for Iran's nuclear programme, as US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that a second round of talks with Iran could happen over the next two days. The Trump administration has said that preventing Iran from gaining a nuclear weapon is a key war aim. Iran has previously said it isn't developing such weapons but rejected limits on its nuclear programme. Last weekend in Pakistan,

an initial round of talks between the two countries failed to produce an agreement. The White House said Iran's nuclear ambitions were a central sticking point. But an Iranian diplomatic official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the closed-door talks, denied that negotiations had failed over Iran's nuclear ambitions.

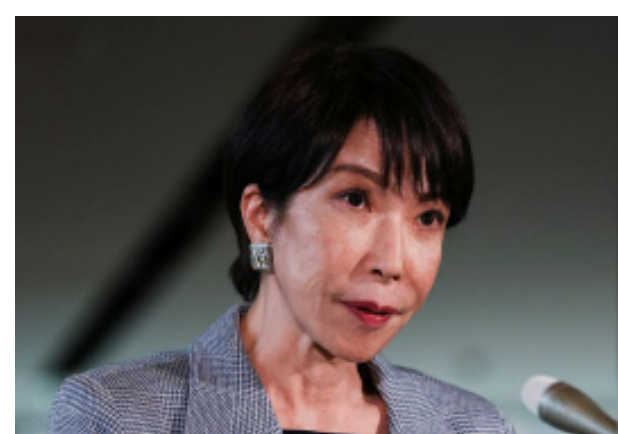
"Iran has a very ambitious, wide nuclear programme so all of that will require the presence of IAEA inspectors," Grossi told reporters in Seoul. "Otherwise, you will not have an agreement. You will have an illusion of an agreement." He said that any agreement on nuclear technology "requires very detailed verification mechanisms." Iran has not allowed the IAEA access to its nuclear facilities bombed by Israel and the United States during a 12-day war in June, according to a confidential IAEA report circulated to member states and seen by The Associated Press in February. The report stressed that it "cannot verify whether Iran has suspended all enrichment-related activities," or the "size of Iran's uranium stockpile at the affected nuclear facilities." Iran has long insisted its programme is peaceful, but the IAEA and Western nations say Tehran had an organised nuclear weapons programme up until 2003. The IAEA has maintained Iran has a stockpile of 440.9 kilograms of uranium enriched up to 60 per cent purity, a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90 per cent. That stockpile could allow Iran to build as many as 10 nuclear bombs, should it decide to weaponise its programme, Grossi said earlier.

## West Asia tensions: Japan joins diplomatic push as backchannel efforts sustain truce

As tensions in West Asia remain dangerously elevated, a parallel and increasingly coordinated diplomatic push is underway to prevent a wider conflict, with multiple global actors working to sustain the fragile US-Iran ceasefire, and revive stalled negotiations between Washington and Tehran. At the centre of these efforts is Pakistan, which has positioned itself as a crucial intermediary following its hosting of high-stakes US-Iran talks in Islamabad.

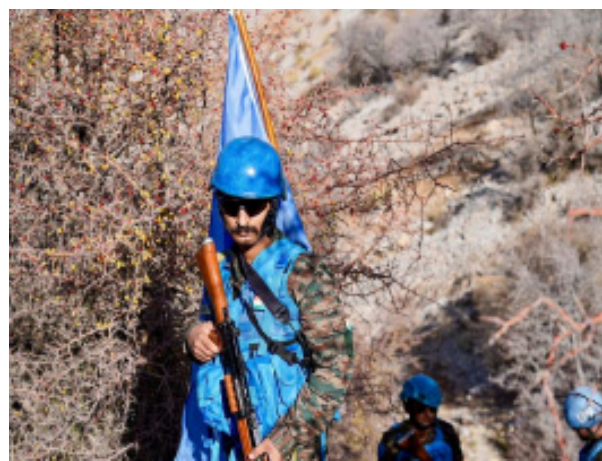
A special meeting of the federal cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday unanimously adopted a resolution praising its political and military leadership's role in bringing the two adversaries to the negotiating table. Sharif asserted that the ceasefire between the United States and Iran "still stands", even as substantive issues remained unresolved. "As I am speaking, full efforts are underway to resolve the outstanding matters," he said, while alluding to sensitive backchannel negotiations. The Pakistani leader also revealed that the situation had, at times, come close to collapsing, before being stabilised through intensive behind-the-scenes engagement led by his military leadership, including Army chief Asim Munir.

The diplomatic momentum has found resonance beyond the immediate region. Japan has emerged as a key stakeholder, stepping up high-level engagement with both sides while aligning closely with Pakistan's mediation efforts. In a call with Sharif, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi confirmed that Tokyo had been in active communication with both Washington and Tehran at the highest levels, signalling Japan's intent to play a constructive diplomatic role in defusing the crisis.



She also highlighted the urgent need to stabilise the Strait of Hormuz, describing it as a critical artery of global trade and an "international public good", while stressing that safe navigation must be restored at the earliest for all vessels, including those from Asia's energy-dependent economies. Calls for restraint and renewed negotiations also came from Europe. Germany's Foreign Minister Johanna Wadepuhl urged both sides to utilise the current ceasefire window to resume talks, warning that the opportunity for diplomacy must not be squandered. "The ceasefire is holding, and I can only urgently appeal to both sides to make use of this time," he said, stressing that continued engagement was in the interest of both the region and the international community.

## 10 countries issue statement condemning killing of aid workers in Lebanon, call for end to hostilities



Ottawa [Canada]: Ten countries, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Sierra Leone, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, expressed deep concern over the worsening humanitarian and displacement crisis in Lebanon and called for the protection of humanitarian workers in conflict zones. In a joint statement issued on Tuesday (local time), the countries remained "deeply concerned by the worsening humanitarian situation and displacement crisis in Lebanon" and urged an immediate end to hostilities in the region.

"We welcome the ceasefire agreed between the United States, Israel and Iran. We call for an urgent end to hostilities in Lebanon," the statement added. The signatories stressed that civilians and civilian infrastructure must be protected at all times amid ongoing conflict, and emphasised the need to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel working on the ground. "Humanitarian personnel, who dedicate themselves to protecting and assisting the most vulnerable, must be respected and protected," the statement added. The countries strongly condemned attacks that endanger aid workers and reiterated that international humanitarian law must be upheld by all parties under all circumstances. "Attacks that threaten the safety and security of humanitarian personnel must stop. International humanitarian law must be upheld by all parties to the conflict in all circumstances," they said. The statement further underlined that adherence to international humanitarian law is essential to protecting human dignity, reducing civilian harm, and ensuring continued humanitarian access. The countries also condemned the killing of UN peacekeepers and warned that the risks faced by humanitarian workers in southern Lebanon have increased significantly.

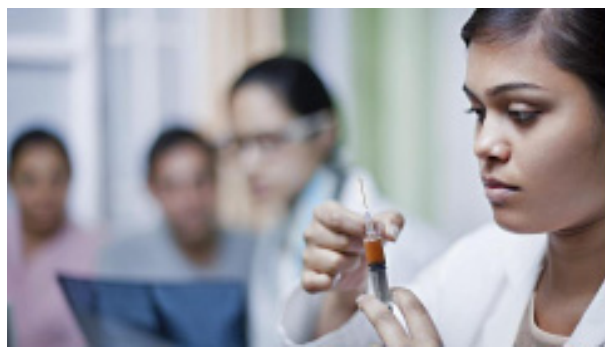
"We condemn in the strongest terms actions that have killed UN peacekeepers and significantly increased the risks faced by humanitarian personnel in southern Lebanon," the statement noted. They further stressed the need for accountability for violations of international law affecting humanitarian personnel or obstructing their operations. The signatories also referred to a declaration launched in September 2025 by over 100 countries aimed at strengthening the protection of humanitarian workers in conflict zones. "We will continue working together to ensure that those who work to save the lives of others do not have to sacrifice their own," the statement concluded. This comes after reports of the

personnel from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) getting killed due to the cross-border clashes between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Earlier on April 7, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) briefly detained a UNIFIL peacekeeper after stopping a logistics convoy. Following swift and direct intervention by UNIFIL's Head of Mission and Force Commander, along with its Liaison Branch, the peacekeeper was released within an hour. Any detention of a United Nations peacekeeper constitutes a clear breach of international law. Similarly, any obstruction of peacekeepers' duties amounts to a violation of Resolution 170 (This content is sourced from a syndicated feed and is published as received. The Tribune assumes no responsibility or liability for its accuracy, completeness, or content.)

## US, Israel and Lebanon hold rare talks as Iran tensions escalate

Washington: Lebanon and Israel were holding their first direct talks in decades as fighting between Israel and Hezbollah militants rocks southern Lebanon. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio joined the Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors for Tuesday's discussions in Washington. Hezbollah says it will not abide by any agreement, a high-ranking member of the group's political council told AP. The US military claimed Tuesday that it has successfully begun to enforce a blockade of Iranian ports, as the standoff between the US and Iran deepens. Tehran threatened to strike targets across the region, a day after Trump warned on social media that any Iranian warships nearing the blockade would be destroyed in a "quick and brutal" strike. With Pakistan racing to bring the sides together for more talks, US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that a second round "could be happening over the next two days". The first round ended without an agreement on Iran's nuclear ambitions, which the White House says is a sticking point. The formal injury count, provided by Capt Tim Hawkins, spokesman for US Central Command, says three service members have been seriously wounded. Central Command said two weeks ago in a previous update that 348 troops were wounded, six of them seriously. However, the military command does not provide any further details about the wounded, so it is unclear whether anyone's status has improved or worsened. Hawkins said that of the total wounded to date, 354 service members have returned to duty. Since the Iran war began, 13 US service members have been killed in combat. Guterres said this was the indication he had after a meeting Tuesday with Pakistan's deputy prime minister, who is also the country's foreign minister. The UN secretary-general expressed "enormous admiration" for Pakistan's initiative to bring peace to the Middle East. "I consider it essential that these negotiations go on," Guterres told UN reporters, explaining that it would be "unrealistic" for long-lasting and complex problems between the US and Iran to be resolved in a first negotiating session.

## Indian women's ovaries age faster compared to Caucasian women: why?



(PCOS), which alters follicular dynamics and AMH measures, is highly prevalent and complicates the interpretation of "reserve" versus "function." Insulin resistance and chronic inflammation may blunt ovarian responsiveness and accelerate clinically apparent decline. Recent Indian studies link reproductive and metabolic markers to AMH trends.

The third component is societal change. Women in India are progressively postponing childbirth for education and careers; as a result, there has been an increase in women who come to fertility clinics at older ages or after years of subfertility; thereby, clinics are becoming more aware of cases of diminished reserves. Besides that, the differential limitations in access to nutrition, healthcare, and early detection lead to the manifestation of ovarian ageing being mostly at the stage when fertility is already compromised. International commentary in 2024 on AMH testing in India emphasises that there is a necessity for population-specific reference ranges and that the public should be more aware, so that over-diagnosis as well as under-diagnosis can be avoided. Nevertheless, a warning should be placed at the forefront: AMH is a worthwhile clinical tool - in particular, for the purpose of assisted reproduction - however, it is not a miraculous predictor of a woman's capability of conceiving naturally or the time of menopause. Women need to stay wary of the heavy interpretation of AMH as a consumer "fertility test" without counselling; the hormone refers to the number of small follicles, not necessarily the quality of eggs or other aspects of fertility. Healthcare providers recommend that the AMH level be accompanied with other criteria such as: age, ultrasound, menstrual history, and metabolic screening. Together, in order to provide a comprehensive picture of fertility.

What can be done?

At a public-health level, researchers recommend establishing robust, region-specific AMH/AFC nomograms so that clinicians and women have realistic, population-appropriate expectations; tackling environmental exposures, reducing air and water pollution, and monitoring heavy metals should be made a priority; addressing metabolic health early through lifestyle and primary care is crucial; and improving access to fertility counselling and timely testing for women who plan pregnancy will also help. On an individual level, awareness matters: earlier fertility planning, metabolic health optimisation, and early discussion with a reproductive specialist can preserve options. In short, the observation that ovarian reserve declines earlier in many Indian women is supported by studies and expert consensus, but it is not reducible to one cause or a single number. It is a multifactorial reality at the intersection of biology, environment, and social change, and it demands both better population-specific research and practical public health responses so women can make informed reproductive choices.

It's a striking claim that's been repeated in clinics and headlines: ovaries in some Indian women appear to show signs of "ageing" earlier than in many Western peers. Put simply, markers that clinicians use to estimate ovarian reserve — most commonly serum anti-Müllerian hormone (AMH) and antral follicle count (AFC) — tend to decline earlier in many Indian cohorts. Recent studies from 2024 and 2025 do not claim that there is a single simple cause; rather, they point to a complex mix of genetics, environment, metabolic health, and social change that together may explain why a sizable subset of Indian women show lower ovarian reserves at younger ages.

Where did the "six-year" figure that is being touted about come from? Older comparative work and clinic-based observations popularised the idea that the ovarian age in Indian women can appear roughly several years "older" than age-matched Caucasian women. More recent Indian population studies don't aim to pin a single universal number on that gap; instead, they show consistent patterns of earlier AMH decline in multiple regional cohorts, supporting clinical observations, while calling for population-specific age nomograms and careful interpretation of AMH across ethnicities.

What could be behind this phenomenon? To start with, genetics and developmental factors are probably major contributors. Variability in the number of follicles one is born with as well as genes that regulate DNA repair in oocytes can determine the amount of ovarian reserve left at birth - these biological origins can be different for different populations. Next, a lot of evidence is gradually coming in that points to lifestyle and environmental stresses as major factors - increased exposure to endocrine-disrupting pollutants, heavy metals, and oxidative stressors can not only expedite follicular depletion, but can also cause damage. Several recent articles on premature ovarian insufficiency and ovarian ageing focus on the main cause of the environmental insults, together with genetics. Metabolic health and reproductive disorders also matter. Rising rates of metabolic syndrome, obesity, and insulin resistance — paradoxically coexisting with undernutrition in parts of India — influence ovarian function. Polycystic ovary syndrome

## India tops global doping list for the third consecutive year



260 positive cases in 2024, as many as 76 came from athletics, followed by weightlifting (43) and wrestling (29). Boxing and powerlifting recorded 17 cases each, while kabaddi accounted for 10 cases. These figures reflect a pattern that has held over several years, with endurance and strength-based sports dominating the list of violations. In July, under-23 wrestling champion and Paris Olympics quarter-finalist Reetika Hooda tested positive for banned substances and was provisionally suspended, drawing attention to doping risks even among elite athletes. At the grass-roots level, enforcement itself appears to be a deterrent. During India's University Games earlier this month, there were reports of several athletes skipping track and field events after anti-doping officials arrived at venues, in some cases leaving only a single competitor to participate.

India's National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) has defended its record, arguing that higher numbers reflect improved detection rather than rising drug use. In a statement issued on Wednesday, the agency said India had "significantly strengthened" its anti-doping framework in recent years. However, global comparisons suggest that India's problem is not merely one of testing volume. Several countries with comparable or higher testing numbers continue to report far lower positivity rates.

The WADA report comes months after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) expressed concern over the widespread use of performance-enhancing drugs in India and urged authorities to "set their house in order". In response, the Indian Olympic Association constituted a new anti-doping panel in August. The government has also moved to tighten the legal framework. Parliament recently passed the National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill, 2025, incorporating changes sought by WADA to bring India's anti-doping regime in line with global standards. The Bill prohibits doping in sports, and provides a framework for testing, enforcement, and adjudication of violations. Note: Adverse Analytical Findings (AAF) is a laboratory report identifying the presence of a Prohibited Substance or its metabolites or markers (including elevated quantities of endogenous substances) or evidence of the use of a Prohibited Method, in line with WADA standards.

India has recorded the highest number of doping offenders globally for the third consecutive year, according to the latest World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) report. According to the WADA's 2024 report, India recorded 260 positive doping cases from 7,113 samples — a 3.6% positivity rate as shown in below charts. This figure is more than double of any other nation's numbers, as no other country exceeded a 1.75% positivity rate in 2024.

Norway documented the second-highest proportion of positive cases at 1.75%, followed by the U.S. at 1.15%. In terms of absolute figures, France registered the next highest volume of violations in 2024 with 91 cases, followed closely by Italy with 85. Russia and the U.S. reported 76 cases each, while Germany and China recorded 54 and 43 cases, respectively. Crucially, these nations recorded fewer positive results in both absolute and percentage terms than India, despite maintaining much more rigorous testing regimes. China, for example, conducted over 24,000 tests in 2024, more than triple India's volume, yet reported fewer than one-fifth of the violations. The findings have come at a time when India is positioning itself as a credible global sporting host. The country is preparing to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games, seen as a stepping stone towards its larger ambition of hosting the 2036 Olympics.

Sport-wise data from India shows that athletics recorded the most positive results in absolute terms. Of the

## Bombay HC tells Vijay Mallya to return to India before challenging Fugitive Offenders law

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday (December 23, 2025) declined to hear absconding businessman Vijay Mallya's petition questioning the constitutional validity of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act (FEO Act) unless he first returns to India and submits to its jurisdiction. Mr. Mallya has moved two petitions before the High Court — one challenging the special court's 2019 order declaring him a fugitive economic offender, and another questioning the constitutional validity of the FEO Act. A Division Bench of Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar and Justice Gautam Ankhad observed that he cannot pursue both pleas simultaneously while remaining abroad. "First submit to court's jurisdiction. You will have to make a statement as to when you will return to India; only then we will hear the petition challenging the vices of the FEO Act," the Bench said, directing him to file an affidavit indicating his timeline. "Come back to India, we are here to provide you with a solution," the judges added. The Court clarified that while his appeal against the special court's declaration can proceed even if he stays overseas, the constitutional challenge requires his presence. "How does one wipe out criminal liability without submitting to the jurisdiction of the Court?" the Bench re-

marked. Senior advocate Amit Desai, appearing for Mr. Mallya, argued that the law does not mandate physical presence for such challenges. "The statute permits a person to question the validity of the Act without being in India. My client has cooperated and his assets worth ₹14,000 crore have been attached against an alleged liability of ₹6,000 crore," Mr. Desai submitted. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Enforcement Directorate (ED), opposed the plea, citing Section 14 of the Act, which bars fugitives from contesting proceedings while evading Indian courts. He also noted that extradition proceedings in the United Kingdom are at an advanced stage and should not be stalled by these petitions. Mr. Mallya left India in March 2016 amid investigations into alleged loan defaults by Kingfisher Airlines. He was declared a fugitive economic offender by a Mumbai special court in January 2019 under the FEO Act. Enacted in 2018, the law empowers authorities to confiscate the properties of individuals accused of economic offences involving ₹100 crore or more if they refuse to return and face trial. The matter has been adjourned to February 12 for Mr. Mallya's response on whether he will withdraw one petition or indicate a date for his return.

## A bittersweet Test for Australia's Lyon-hearted spinner



Nathan Lyon knew immediately. As soon as he dived at full stretch to his right at fine-leg to prevent Jamie Smith's pull from reaching the boundary in the 77th over of England's second innings at the Adelaide Oval on Sunday, a slight grimace betrayed the sense that he wasn't quite right. He threw the ball back to wicketkeeper Alex Carey whilst still on his knees and instantly clutched his right hamstring. When he did get back up on his feet, he couldn't do much more than limp a couple of steps before signalling towards the dressing room for help and hobbling outside the field of play. As Marnus Labuschagne, who went up to the 38-year-old to check on him, disclosed to the host broadcaster later, Lyon knew then and there that he would play no further part in the game. "I think I have done my hammy," Lyon told Labuschagne grimly.

By the time Australia took the final wicket of Josh Tongue later in the afternoon to retain the Ashes in just 11 days, Lyon was on crutches. Having made a quick visit to the hospital for a scan, he returned to the venue in time to witness the winning moment and willed himself back onto the park to congratulate his euphoric teammates. As chuffed as he would have been about Australia getting over the line, it was cruel for the Test to end the way it did for Lyon personally. Having very much helped set up the win with his exploits on the penultimate evening — this is his fourth consecutive Ashes series victory at home — he would have dearly loved to be on the outfield to soak in the moments leading up to victory. Moreover, this was the Test that saw him surpass Glenn McGrath's tally of 563 wickets to go up to No. 2 in the list of Australia's highest wicket-takers. To have accomplished the feat at the Adelaide Oval, a venue that he tended to as a groundsman before his Test debut, ought to have been a highlight not marred by his injury. In the final session of the fourth day, Lyon had been the wrecker-in-chief, removing Harry Brook, Ben Stokes and Zak Crawley in the space of six overs to essentially ensure that the hosts had one hand on the urn. Until Lyon's dismissal of Brook, England had done reasonably well to get to 176 for three in 47 overs in pursuit of a record target of 435. Brook and Crawley had negotiated Lyon effectively, sweeping and reverse-sweeping routinely to throw the off-spinner off his lines and lengths. His figures in the fourth innings were unflattering before his opening breakthrough: 10-1-49-0.

But there is a reason why Lyon has been snaring Test wickets for a living for 14 years. Off the second ball of a new spell to Brook, he altered his line a tad wider of off-stump and had the 26-year-old reaching out for one reverse sweep too many. Adding to his catalogue of ungainly dismissals in this series, England's impetuous No. 5 lost his balance and looked back in disbelief once the ball hit his leg stump.

Just four overs later, it was the turn of Stokes to look on in disbelief. As is often his reaction when the stumps are dislodged, the England skipper couldn't quite believe his eyes when Lyon produced a ball that spun past his defence and clattered off-pole. It was a ripper alright, but truth be told, Stokes was neither forward nor back, a fallibility in his footwork versus spin that has now brought about 10 dismissals against the Australian in 23 encounters. If at all he was disputing Lyon's propensity to produce such deliveries, all he had to do was to hark back to the first innings of this Test when the wily tweaker dismissed his namesake, Ben Duckett, in similar fashion. The ball to the England opener will likely be etched in Lyon's memory for a long

time, for it was the breakthrough that took him past McGrath. With Crawley's stumping late on day four being the last of his five wickets across the two innings, Lyon has moved along to 567 wickets in 141 Tests. Second to Warne

Remarkably now, only the late Shane Warne, whose 708 scalps came in 145 Tests at an average of 25.41, stands above Lyon in the pantheon of Australia's most prolific wicket-takers. It is worth remembering that in the period between Warne's exit in 2007 and Lyon's entry in 2011, Australia went through spinners with the frequency of a chameleon changing colour, yearning desperately to find a worthy successor to the irreverent genius from Victoria. While Lyon isn't Warne — no one can fill those proverbial big shoes — he has optimised his attributes to carve a career that will be just as hard to emulate for the men to follow. Looking back, Lyon's first two years were riddled with bumps, and when he was dropped for the opening Ashes Test of the 2013 series in England, he seemed set to go down the path of his immediate predecessors. But Australia was shrewd enough to realise its folly and bring Lyon back for the third Test of that series against Alastair Cook and Co. The turning point for the spinner came in the reverse Ashes just a few months later, where he proved to be an able foil to the Mitchell Johnson-led pace battery and claimed 19 wickets in a 5-0 whitewash at home. Starting from the middle of the English summer in 2013, Lyon has evolved into a near-permanent presence in Australia's playing XI, with the Lord's Test in 2023 marking his 100th successive appearance in whites. Not dissimilar to the mishap in Adelaide, it was only a calf injury while fielding during England's first innings at Lord's that curtailed his incredible streak and prompted a premature end to his series two years ago. Lyon's success over a long Test career is proof that there is still a place for an off-spinner in the classical mould in the modern game. While he is one of three off-spinners with more than 500 wickets in Test history, he doesn't possess Muttiah Muralitharan's big-spinning off-break or deadly doosra. Neither does he have the repertoire to experiment as R. Ashwin did. But what he does have is a stock ball, armed with overspin and drift, that he backs himself to deliver at a desired spot at any given juncture. It has held him in good stead in a land usually unforgiving to his tribe: his record of 273 wickets in 74 Tests at 31.08 in Australia is in marked contrast to a host of visiting off-spinners of repute who have travelled to those shores. Unusually, though, he has been dropped from a couple of Tests in recent months. Having claimed a match haul of six for 117 in the second Test against West Indies at Grenada in July, Lyon was benched for the third Test in Jamaica as the Aussies opted for an all-pace attack with the pink ball. Australia's selector on tour, Tony Dodemaide, described Lyon's omission as a "one-off". But when the team had to be picked for the second Ashes Test in Brisbane two weeks ago — another day-night affair — Lyon was again left out. To say Lyon wasn't pleased with the call would be an understatement. "Absolutely filthy," he told broadcaster Channel 7 of his reaction to the omission. Long road to recovery

It will be all the more infuriating, then, that just as he had begun getting back into his groove in Adelaide, the injury has thrown another curve ball. On Tuesday, Lyon underwent surgery as Cricket Australia confirmed that he will be sidelined for an "extended period". In Lyon's place, the bespectacled Todd Murphy, who has played seven Tests so far, has been drafted into the squad for the next two games in Melbourne and Sydney. Coach Andrew McDonald weighed in on Lyon's road to recovery. "The surgeon will give us a report and a rough length of time. It is going to take a lot of hard work with that type of injury. It is going to be a hard period for him to get back to where he was," he told the Australian media on Tuesday. At the same time, McDonald knows that Lyon's will to keep going hasn't dimmed in the slightest. A five-Test tour of India, where Lyon has never won a series, in early 2027 is a target that the offie had long identified. "Lyon still wants to do it. That's the main thing. India is on the horizon. He will be a key part of that," McDonald added. "In Adelaide, it was probably the best I had seen him bowl for a little while in terms of the shape and energy he had on the ball. He will get through this rehab and then look forward to what it looks like."

## How Indian States are following a pro-incumbency trend



The recently concluded Bihar Assembly election highlights an interesting point: that Nitish Kumar, who has taken oath as Chief Minister for the 10th time, has been able to retain the government even after almost two decades of ruling the State. This shows us a contrast between global and Indian State-level patterns of (anti) incumbency. In many major democracies across the world, voters displayed a strong sense of anti-incumbency. The defeat of the U.S. democrats, the U.K. conservatives, Japan's Liberal Democratic Party and South Africa's African National Congress reflect that people in these countries were willing to use their elections as an instrument to address perceived non-performance of the government and demand an alternative in power. Senegal's election similarly captured youth anger and a generational push against elites.

A pro-incumbency trend

Indian State assembly elections held over the last few years indicate a trend in the opposite direction. Many governments during this period got re-elected, indicating a strong pro-incumbency sentiment. The incumbent Bharatiya Janata Party government got re-elected in Bihar, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, despite spirited opposition campaigns. These governments were re-elected, beating anti-incumbency, because the ruling party anchored its election campaign pushing narratives of stability, "double engine ki sarkaar" (the idea that the Centre and the State is ruled by the same party) for faster development, welfare delivery and strong leadership, which triumphed the narrative propagated by opposition parties. In Gujarat, the BJP extended its record to a seventh straight term, while Naveen Patnaik's Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Odisha converted personal credibility and targeted schemes into multi-term mandates. West Bengal's 2021 mandate for Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress, against a highly contested BJP challenge, highlights pro-incumbency in a polarised contest. These examples may look like isolated cases of States being voted back to power, with the recent Bihar Assembly election being one of them, but Indian elections since 1952 had witnessed periods of pro and anti-incumbency.

The first few years (1952-1966) were a period of pro-incumbency. Out of the 39 assembly elections held during this period, almost 85% governments got re-elected. But the periods of 1967-79 and 1980-1988 witnessed both pro

and anti-incumbency trends. During 1967-79, out of 82 assembly elections, 54% of governments got re-elected, while 46% of them got voted out. Similarly, during the 1980-88 period, of 53 assembly elections, 51% governments got re-elected while 49% governments got voted out. However, the periods of 1989-98 and 1999-03 witnessed a very strong trend of anti-incumbency. During 1989-98, of 63 assembly elections, 71% of incumbent governments were voted out. The trend continued during the 1999-03 period, where of the 31 assembly elections, 61% of incumbent governments were voted out. The trend changed again during the 2004-15 period, which witnessed a mix of anti and pro-incumbency. In this period, nearly 55% incumbent governments got re-elected, while 45% governments were defeated. The 2016-2018 period has seen a strong anti-incumbency trend where nearly 75% of incumbent governments got defeated. This is understandable, for when the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government came to power at the Centre in 2014, many Congress-ruled States lost in subsequent State elections.

We are again witnessing a strong pro-incumbency trend. Many BJP ruled States have witnessed governments being re-elected. It is true that many of these governments were re-elected riding on the popularity of the welfare schemes, but it also has to do with general infrastructural improvement which the State and its people have started benefiting from. While politics of welfare has helped the ruling party mobilise the votes of the poor and the lower middle classes, infrastructural developments have especially helped in mobilising the votes of the upper middle-class voters.

## Stock markets fall nearly 2% after last week's positive run as US-Iran peace talks collapse



nations in Islamabad, Pakistan. US President Donald Trump announced a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz after peace talks fell through, potentially disrupting global trade. "Effective immediately, the United States Navy, the Finest in the World, will begin the process of BLOCKADING any and all Ships trying to enter, or leave, the Strait of Hormuz. Any Iranian who fires at us, or at peaceful vessels, will be BLOWN TO HELL!" Trump wrote on Truth Social.

Crude oil prices rose 7% after the announcement to around \$102 a barrel, putting pressure across global markets. Most Asian markets are lower on Monday. While both parties have kept the possibility of future talks open, market participants across the world will remain cautious due to the volatile nature of the conflict. "The energy crisis triggered by the conflict in West Asia, the potential impact of the crisis on Indian economy and sustained depreciation of the rupee kept the FPIs on sell mode. Other markets like South Korea and Taiwan are considered more attractive from the FPI perspective since these markets are expected to deliver much superior earnings growth when compared to the modest earnings growth expected in India in FY27," according to VK Vijaykumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services. While foreign investors (FIIs) have continued to pull out money from the Indian markets, the pace has slowed as the month of April has gone on. On Friday, data from the National Securities Depositories Ltd. showed FIIs pulled out \$223 million. They had pulled out \$144 million and \$743 million in the two sessions before that. In comparison, these players had pulled out \$2.2 billion and \$1 billion, respectively, in the first couple of sessions of the month. In India, all sectoral indices are deep in the red in early trade. The India VIX, which had fallen 8% on Friday, has risen 14% on Monday as investor sentiment has turned volatile again due to geopolitical uncertainty. All broader market indices also declined, showing a broad-based fall in the market. Looking ahead, market direction will remain sensitive to geopolitical developments and their implications for India's macro environment. Corporate earnings will also be in focus as market participants assess the impact faced by India Inc due to the uncertain geopolitical conditions. Any positive surprises on that front may again help turn the mood regarding Indian equities.

Earnings at risk, India Inc profits may taper, Indian economy, Indian economic growth, west asia war, iran war, israel-US-iran war, iran conflict, west asia conflict, iran and israel war, iran and israel, us israel war, war in iran, iran us, us israel, iran us israel, us iran war, iran us war, us war, israel news, israel iran war news, war news, israel iran news, israel war news, iran war news, war on iran, iran israel war today, war in iran and israel, iran attack israel, israel iran, israel us attack iran, attack on iran, iran attack on us, us and iran, us attack in iran, did iran attack us, us to attack iran, us and israel, us and israel attack iran, us attack iran today, us iran news, iran us news, us news, iran attack news, iran attack today, Khamenei news Airlines, oil refiners, paints, fertilisers and restaurants are the sectors that are expected to be the worst hit. (Reuters)

Benchmark stock indices lost steam after last week's rally and were down nearly 2% in early trade on Monday as peace talks between Iran and the US collapsed, heightening the risk of renewed conflict in West Asia. The NSE's Nifty 50 index was down 1.8% at 23,625.95 points at around 09:50 AM. The BSE's Sensex index was also down 1.8% at 76,171.40 points. The fall comes after last week's 6% rise, with the indices rallying 4% following the interim ceasefire announcement between the two countries on Wednesday. That led the benchmark indices to break a six-week decline last week.

However, market direction has again turned volatile following the collapse of peace talks held between the two

## Mutual fund SIP stoppages exceed registrations despite inflows hitting record high in March

Systematic investment plans (SIPs) in mutual funds were discontinued in March, more than they were registered by investors. The trend comes as the West Asia crisis has rattled the markets, making retail participants nervous. However, despite the sell-off, SIP inflows scaled a record high, reflecting some resilience in mutual fund participation even as volatility weighed on the sentiment.

This divergence suggests that weaker-handed investors exited their SIP commitments, while more conviction-driven participants stepped up contributions, seeing the market correction amid war-related fears as an opportunity to invest, fund managers said. In March, around 52.82 lakh new SIPs were registered, while about 53.38 lakh SIPs discontinued, according to data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India. This pushed the SIP stoppage ratio, calculated as discontinued SIPs divided by those that were added, to 101. While the number of SIPs discontinued was broadly within the range seen over the past three months, new SIPs registered lagged the three-month average of around 66.76 lakh, reflecting the nervousness among retail investors. "The market sell-off has sharply eroded the value of investors' holdings in schemes, triggering panic and prompting many retail investors to discontinue their SIPs. My sense is that the bulk of SIP contributions through SIPs in March likely came from high-net-worth individuals and family offices," said an analyst with a research firm. Since the conflict began, the benchmark indices fell 11% from their pre-war levels due to high crude oil prices and persistent selling by foreign investors. However, Venkat Chalasani, Chief Executive of AMFI, said a higher stoppage ratio is not a major concern, as it may reflect investors reallocating across schemes or exiting upon achieving their financial goals.

"When it comes to SIPs, our focus is on the number of contributing accounts and the monthly inflows, as these provide a clear view of retail investor behaviour," he said in an interaction with The Indian Express. The more important indicators are the growth in overall contributions and the expanding base of contributing investors, he said. SIP stoppage Despite the higher SIP stoppage ratio, contributions through SIPs rose to a record of Rs 32,087 crore in March, up 7.5% month-on-month. (Another argument is that a surge in discontinued SIPs often does not reflect declining sentiment in retail investors, as the data includes people who have shifted to other products or people who have missed three straight instalments, or it could also be caused



by a cleanup in the system to get rid of inactive accounts. Thus, the number of contributing SIP accounts may be a better benchmark in such cases, said an expert.

Despite the higher SIP stoppage ratio, contributions through SIPs rose to a record of Rs 32,087 crore in March, up 7.5% month-on-month. While SIP assets fell by 9.2% to Rs 15.11 lakh crore during the month due to the underperformance of the equity market, it constituted 20.5% of the total industry's AUM, compared to 20.3% in February. The count of contributing (active) SIP accounts rose by 3% to 9.72 crore in March, AMFI said in its monthly note. The higher stoppage ratio in March may have been due to new investors being cautious about starting SIPs during volatile market conditions, while existing investors possibly saw the correction since the war started as an opportunity to make returns. "My sense is since the market is volatile, some people who are well seasoned or are informed in terms of how the market behaves would have increased their contribution. To initiate new SIPs in such an environment could be difficult, since there is always a bearing of trailing returns on new investors," said George Thomas, equity fund manager at Quantum Asset Management Company. While the stoppage ratio crossing 100 on a single occasion is not particularly concerning, retail investors may turn cautious if the markets remains range-bound for an extended time, leading to lower returns, Thomas said. Markets have been broadly range-bound since the bull run seen back in August 2024, with the Nifty 50 roughly cycling between 22,000-26,000 points during that period. Equity mutual funds saw good participation in March, with net inflows into such funds rising 56% month-on-month to Rs 40,450 crore, the highest level since July 2025. This was led by segments such as flexi-cap, mid-cap, and small-cap. Equity funds are, by far, the biggest category in the industry, constituting 43% of the total AUM of the industry.

## 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. 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 in-

flationary 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.

## 'How can you check if you have a heart blockage. My blood pressure is always good, but aren't there blood tests that can give us clues?'



Does a normal blood pressure mean all is well? This is a common and dangerous misconception: the belief that a healthy blood pressure reading is a clean bill of health for the entire cardiovascular system. While blood pressure is a vital metric, it is only one piece of a complex puzzle. To get an insight into a similar Quora query — "How can you check if you have a heart blockage? My blood pressure is always good, but aren't there blood tests that can give us clues?" — we consulted an expert. Dr Saumya Sekhar Jenasamant, a consultant cardiothoracic and vascular surgeon at KIMS Hospitals, Thane, said that while normal blood pressure is reassuring, "it doesn't rule out blockages in the heart arteries." "Many people with coronary artery disease have normal blood pressure readings. Blockages develop due to plaque buildup, which includes cholesterol, fat, and calcium. This process can remain silent until it becomes significant. That's why relying on just blood pressure can be misleading," said Dr Jenasamant. Any early warning signs to watch for? Yes, but they're not always obvious,

mentioned Dr Jenasamant. "Subtle symptoms often get ignored, such as chest heaviness during physical activity, breathlessness when climbing stairs, unusual fatigue, or discomfort in the jaw, neck, or left arm. Some people, especially those with diabetes, may have silent symptoms or no symptoms at all. If something feels new, lasts a while, or is related to activity, it's worth getting checked out."

What tests can help detect heart blockage early? There isn't a one-size-fits-all test, but a step-by-step approach works best, according to Dr Jenasamant.

— CT Coronary Angiography: A non-invasive scan that can visualize blockages in coronary arteries.

— Coronary Calcium Score: Helps identify early plaque buildup, even before any symptoms start.

— Coronary Angiography: This is the gold standard for diagnosing blockages in coronary arteries. In this procedure, a contrast dye is injected directly into the arteries to precisely identify any narrowing or obstruction.

doctor Here's how you should take care of your heart health (Photo: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

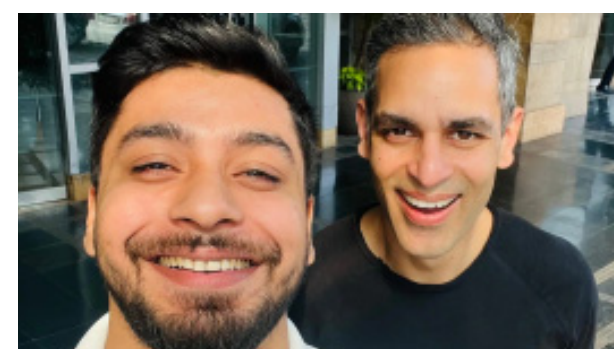
Who should consider getting these tests done? Dr Jenasamant said that anyone with risk factors, such as diabetes, high cholesterol, smoking, obesity, a sedentary lifestyle, or a family history of heart disease, should think about screening, even if they feel fine. "Age also matters, especially for men over 40 and women after menopause," said Dr Jenasamant. Heart blockages often build up quietly. "Waiting for a major symptom can be risky. If you have risk factors or unexplained symptoms, don't ignore them. Early screening, timely diagnosis, and lifestyle changes can significantly help prevent serious heart issues."

## Ankur Warikoo's fitness coach, Sagar Ahuja, on his transformation: 'He maintains a six-pack without anyone's help'

Entrepreneur Ankur Warikoo has been training extremely hard to keep fit. And the man behind his current transformation is coach Sagar Ahuja, who believes that maintaining a six-pack all year round is actually possible with the right guidance and mindset. "He is now leaner and stronger, he lifts more weight than most 20-year-olds going to the gym. Bodyweight went from 82 kgs to 69 kgs, waist went from 36 to 29.5 inches, chubby fat to chiselled six-pack abs at 43. More importantly, better energy, improved posture, and higher consistency in daily routine," he told indianexpress.com in an exclusive interview.

When someone like Warikoo shares his transformation publicly, it sets a standard. An excited Ahuja, who started working with Warikoo in 2023, expressed, "It feels great, but more than validation, it's a responsibility. People don't just see results — they see what's possible. We started working together in 2023 when he wanted to specifically target belly fat and overall conditioning, without compromising his lifestyle. I connected with him via email first, and then we had a Zoom call. My main goal was not only to help him achieve his best physique but also to improve his eating habits so that he stays in shape year-round."

Ahuja, who has coached more than 4,000 men, including founders of companies like Urban Company, Zomato, MakeMyTrip, and Eazydiner, apart from CEOs and creators, talks about his mission to help men become sharper physically and mentally, not just lose weight—the main reason why he started Alphamen, a wellness company focused on men's health. "Early on, I realised most fitness advice fails because it doesn't fit real lives. Busy professionals don't need perfect plans; they need sustainable systems. Over the last few years, I've coached many, helping them lose fat, improve energy, and build discipline that carries into every area of life," Ahuja said. The duo went on to achieve "shredded physique in 10 months". "Through his improved eating habits and awareness, now he maintains a six-pack year-round without anyone's help. Once in a couple of months, I check on him regarding things, that's it," Ahuja shared. The goal was kept "simple": "Lose fat till he achieves six pack abs, improves strength, and makes it sustainable."



And the approach? "No crash dieting; no overtraining; flexible workouts as he travels a lot; focus on habits, systems, not motivation; and build a routine that fits his calendar. While initially, it was about fat loss, now it's about maintenance, longevity, and performance—staying fit despite a demanding schedule. "He trains typically 4-5 days a week, and his focus areas are strength training (hitting two muscle groups a day); daily one hour tennis, and light cardio," mentioned Ahuja, who also coached Warikoo's parents, who are over 70. Notably, Warikoo's current wellness routine is a mix of warm-up and mobility, strength training (major lifts), and core work and lasts 45-60 minutes, he apprised. What's his diet like? "I did design his diet, but not a restrictive one. The principles we followed were high protein intake, balanced carbs and fats, and a no-ban list of foods—he even ate chole bhature occasionally. Flexibility for travel and work," shared Ahuja. What's special about Warikoo? "Fitness is not about abs—it's about becoming a more disciplined version of yourself. Once that changes, everything else follows—business, relationships, mindset. Honestly, motivation isn't the focus. We build systems so he doesn't need motivation, and he is himself a system-driven person. He treats workouts like meetings—non-negotiable. That's the biggest differentiator," said Ahuja. "Don't chase perfection—chase sustainability." "Consistency wins every time. An average plan followed for 6 months beats a perfect plan followed for 10 days," reflected Ahuja.

## Nakuul Mehta says wife Jankee is the ultimate advocate for a second child: 'Jin couples ko lagta hai nahi karna...'

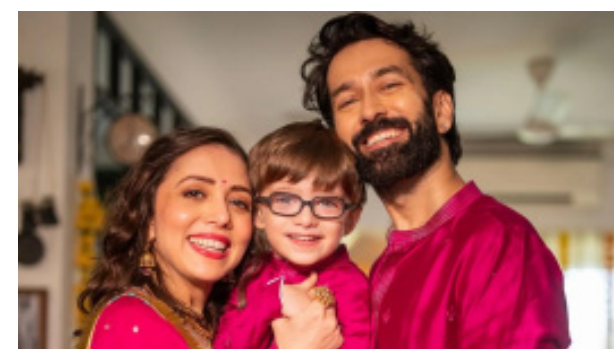
On a podcast, 'What not to do as a parent,' actor Nakuul Mehta shared that his wife, Jankee Mehta, can convince anyone to have a second child. Elaborating further, Jankee explained, "Jo couples hote hein, jinko lagta hai second baby nahi karna hai, kyun ki first baby bahut hectic tha, unko waapis wahi stress hoga. I just want to tell you all that the second time is much calmer, much easier. The thing is that challenges will happen, your child will get fever, your child will have choleric... or health issues, but it will all pass. Aur woh pass wali feeling jo hai, woh first child ke baad hi aati hai, kyunki pata chal jaata hai ki woh hone wala hai pass, you know fever aayega, woh 3-2 din ka cycle hai..."

While the sentiment resonates with many parents, is the second child actually easier? According to Dr Vikas Kumar, the answer lies more in the parental mindset than in the child itself.

Is the second child really easier? "The second child is not necessarily easier in terms of actual care," says Dr Kumar. "What changes is the parent's emotional preparedness." He explains that first-time parenting comes with a steep learning curve. "Everything—from feeding to sleep patterns—feels new and stressful. By the time the second child arrives, parents have built confidence and practical skills," he says. Experience vs actual parenting demands

"A large part of the reduced stress comes from experience rather than a decrease in parenting demands," explains Dr Kumar. "In fact, managing two children can increase responsibilities, especially in terms of time and attention." What shifts is perspective. "Experienced parents are better at prioritising, setting routines, and letting go of perfection," he says. "They are less likely to panic over minor issues."

Does confidence increase, or does emotional load double?



Parenting a second child can bring both confidence and complexity. "Having a second child often improves a parent's ability to handle uncertainty because they've already faced many unpredictable situations," says Dr Kumar. "This familiarity builds emotional resilience and problem-solving skills." However, there's another side. "It can also increase the emotional load, as parents now have to balance the needs of two children," he adds. So while anxiety may decrease, responsibility certainly doesn't.

What should couples consider before planning a second child?

Before taking the plunge, experts recommend a reality check. "Couples should think about their emotional readiness, physical energy, financial stability, and support systems," advises Dr Kumar. He highlights practical concerns: "It's important to consider how you'll divide time between two children, maintain your relationship, and handle increased responsibilities." External factors matter too. "Career demands, family support, and mental health all play a key role," he notes. Most importantly, he cautions against relying solely on reassurance. "Rather than just believing that tough phases will pass, couples should assess whether they truly have the bandwidth for another child."

## How CSK's Noor Ahmad out-bowled KKR spinners



GNS News Agency, April 18

**SYNOPSIS:** In the battle of spinners, Noor Ahmad and Akeal Hosein outshine Sunil Narine and Varun Chakaravathy as Chennai defeat Kolkata. The Chepauk pitches have long moved on from the time when spinners licked their lips at the prospect of playing here. The low bounce has made way for good carry. There are hardly any dry patches for spinners to get the ball to grip and turn like a spitting cobra. However, on Tuesday, the Chepauk of old resurfaced much to the liking of the hosts, who had to overcome the choke slam applied by Sunil Narine and Varun Charavathy, both of whom did a splendid job in the middle overs. Defending 192, Chennai Super Kings spinners Noor Ahmad and Akeal Hosein delivered a masterclass of their own to fashion a 32-run win and keep Kolkata Knight Riders winless. A chase that never started

Having witnessed their own spinners dictate the game, Kolkata were proactive in their thinking. With runs against the new ball crucial to stay in the chase, and CSK bringing on Hosein as their Impact Player, the visitors tried to spice it up with what they thought was a favourable match-up. They promoted Narine to open alongside Finn Allen in the hope of finding some quick runs, which would allow them to play risk-free cricket against spinners. Instead, Anshul Kamboj and Khaleel Ahmed removed both of them before they could inflict any sufficient damage, setting up the ideal entry for the spinners. If Narine and Varun had excelled in pulling CSK's run rate down with well-executed defensive lines, Akeal and Noor had the scoreboard pressure to operate with. With KKR in no position to play them out safely and the pitch providing enough assistance despite the onset of dew, the two left-armers — one orthodox and the other a wrist-spinner — closed out the game in their eight overs. Varying pace and trajectory to good effect, they denied both room and air needed for batsmen to get underneath the ball as they conceded just two boundaries between them, con-

ceding only 47 runs. They bowled as many as 15 dot balls. In a four-over period when they bowled in tandem, they gave away 12 runs and took three wickets, killing the chase. Choke by spin

Even when Sanju Samson and Ayush Mhatre were scoring effortlessly in the Powerplay, there were signs of what this pitch could turn into shortly. Considering that aspect and how well Narine and Varun operated in the middle overs, KKR skipper Ajinkya Rahane erred in not introducing them early as CSK racked up 72 runs in the first six overs, losing two wickets. That made a huge impact on the outcome. When brought on eventually, the two mystery spinners dictated the tempo of the innings. With conditions to their liking, Narine and Varun, who had struggled off late, operated in contrasting ways. The wily Caribbean mixed up his variations while bowling to defensive fields — at one point bowled around the stumps to Samson to cramp him for room, with the leg-side boundary heavily manned.

Varun appeared a bit restless to start with. But unlike his previous outings, he did something different here. Like Narine, he attacked the stumps, denying room to batsmen and more importantly, hitting his favourite 6m length. Unlike his senior teammate, he bowled a lot quicker, with his fastest delivery being 110kmph. It was one reason he didn't manage as much purchase as the others, but for a bowler searching for rhythm, Tuesday's spell was a relief. CSK batsmen — Samson, Dewald Brevis, Sarfaraz Khan — tried hard to break the shackles, but seldom succeeded. Between 7-11 overs, CSK managed only 33 runs which resulted in Samson giving away his wicket to Kartik Tyagi, who perfectly complemented the spinners with his slow deliveries and wide-of-off-stump defensive channel. Runs dried up, but KKR didn't get the wickets they would have wanted. However, they still managed to keep the hosts below 200. In the 10 middle overs, CSK managed only 90 for the loss of one wicket. Twenty of those came in Vaibhav Arora's 16th over.

Beyond their two ace spinners, left-arm tweaker Anukul Roy too played his part as the trio had combined figures of 10-0-68-2. And more importantly, they bowled 26 dot balls amongst them that choked CSK. That sort of job meant that, even at the death, the home team struggled to inject momentum, and managed just three boundaries and 30 runs in the last four overs. Brief scores: Chennai Super Kings 192/5 in 20 overs (Samson 48, Brevis 41, Mhatre 38; Kartik Tyagi 2/35, Narine 1/21) beat Kolkata Knight Riders 160/7 in 20 overs (Ramandeep Singh 35, Noor Ahmad 3/21) by 32 runs

## 'My body is telling me to stop': Why 2-time Olympic gold medalist Viktor Axelsen has been forced into sudden retirement at 32

GNS News Agency, April 18

Two-time Olympic champion and two-time world champion Viktor Axelsen has announced his retirement from badminton due to a persistent back injury. The 32-year-old Axelsen said that he did not want to retire but was being forced to make the decision after nerve pain in his back prevented him from doing even basic training on court. In an emotional post on his Instagram account, Axelsen wrote: "Today is not an easy day for me. Due to my recurrent back issues, I am no longer able to compete and train at the highest level. Accepting this situation has been incredibly difficult. Since the day I picked up a racket, I knew my dream was to become the best in the world. I have given everything to this sport. It has never been just a career to me. It has been my life and I have left no stone unturned... I have accomplished everything I once dreamed of, and more," Axelsen added. Over the span of a rampaging career, Axelsen claimed Olympic gold medals at Tokyo 2020 and then Paris 2024. He also has a bronze from Rio 2016 besides two World Championships titles (2017 and 2022). His dominance of men's singles is marked by him staying world No. 1 for 100 consecutive weeks. On the Instagram post, Axelsen noted that after he had undergone endoscopic surgery he had tried taking multiple injections and new training methods and treatments in order to be able to play.

"After basically trying everything to become pain-free for a long time now, I have been advised to focus on my long-term health," Axelsen wrote. "To be honest it's not me making the decision. It's my body making the decision for me. That's the hard part," Axelsen said on The Average Not Average Podcast where he announced his retirement. "It's not that I want to retire, it's simply because I'm not able to do the training required. But it is very tough for me not to



be able to say stop or have one last dance. But that's just how my story is, I guess." Axelsen also spoke at length with Badminton Europe, where he detailed his injury and rehab timeline. "As most people know, I have been struggling with my back for quite some time. After I had surgery in April last year and went through a long rehabilitation process, I unfortunately had a setback in October. Since those tournaments, I have not been able to play or train at the level required. I have not been able to play or train due to pain, and that is why I am unfortunately forced to make this extremely difficult decision."

Axelsen told Badminton Europe. "The decision has been made in consultation with the surgeon who operated on me last year, as well as the doctors I have been working with. They say that with the pain I am experiencing now, it could potentially require another surgery, and if that does not go well, even a more serious procedure might be necessary. In any case, it would mean I would not be able to compete at the level required. So, it is simply my body telling me to stop, and I have to follow the advice of my doctors," Axelsen said.

## Will Royal Challengers Bengaluru stick to same side against Lucknow Super Giants?

GNS News Agency, April 18

IPL 2026, Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) vs Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) Playing 11, Full Squad: Rajat Patidar's Royal Challengers Bengaluru will take on Rishabh Pant's Lucknow Super Giants in match 23 of the ongoing Indian Premier League 2026. While the hosts are coming into the game after thrashing the Mumbai Indians in the previous encounter, the visitors have lost to Shubman Gill's Gujarat Titans at home in their last game. Bengaluru looks well-rounded in both their bowling and batting departments. Their top-order and power-hitters down the order are firing on all cylinders, with the bowling to be sorted. If anything, the Indian seamer has been a bit of a concern. Rasikh Salam Dhar replaced Abhinandan Singh in the previous game, although he bowled, but suffered an injury.

As per Lucknow, they are yet to deliver a complete performance this season. Both their wins against Sunrisers Hyderabad and Kolkata Knight Riders have been close encounters. Their opening pair, Mitchell Marsh and Aiden Markram, who did an exceptional job last year, are yet to get going, and Chinnaswamy will be a perfect start to get into form.

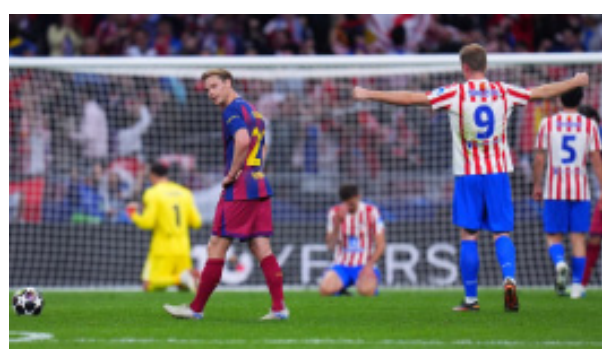
Predicted XI's Lucknow Probable XI: Aiden Markram, Mitchell Marsh, Rishabh Pant, Ayush Badoni, Nicholas Pooran, Abdul Samad, Mukul Choudhary, George Linde/Anrich Nortje, Mohammed Shami, Avesh Khan/Mohsin Khan, Digvesh Singh Rathie, Prince Yadav/Mayank Yadav/Bengaluru Probable XI: Phil Salt, Virat Kohli, Devdutt Padikkal, Rajat Patidar, Tim David, Jitesh Sharma, Romario Shepherd, Krunal Pandya, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Rasikh Salam, Jacob Duffy/Josh Hazlewood, Suyash



Sharma/Royal Challengers Bengaluru Squad: Philip Salt, Virat Kohli, Devdutt Padikkal, Rajat Patidar(c), Jitesh Sharma(w), Tim David, Romario Shepherd, Krunal Pandya, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jacob Duffy, Suyash Sharma, Rasikh Salam Dar, Venkatesh Iyer, Jacob Bethell, Swapnil Singh, Mangesh Yadav, Josh Hazlewood, Jordan Cox, Nuwan Thushara, Vicky Ostwal, Vihaan Malhotra, Abhinandan Singh, Kanishk Chouhan, Satvik Deswal

Lucknow Super Giants Squad: Aiden Markram, Mitchell Marsh, Rishabh Pant(w/c), Ayush Badoni, Nicholas Pooran, Abdul Samad, Mukul Choudhary, George Linde, Mohammed Shami, Avesh Khan, Digvesh Singh Rathie, Prince Yadav, Manimaran Siddharth, Shahbaz Ahmed, Mayank Yadav, Matthew Breetzke, Anrich Nortje, Josh Inglis, Himmat Singh, Mohsin Khan, Arjun Tendulkar, Akash Maharaj Singh, Akshat Raghuvanshi, Arshin Kulkarni, Naman Tiwari

## 'This was a robbery': Raphinha lashes out at referees as Barcelona's Champions League dream ends in red card chaos



GNS News Agency, April 18

Barcelona's Frenkie de Jong, center, reacts at the end of the Champions League quarterfinal second leg soccer match between Atletico Madrid and Barcelona in Madrid. (AP Photo) Barcelona's Frenkie de Jong, center, reacts at the end of the Champions League quarterfinal second leg soccer match between Atletico Madrid and Barcelona in Madrid. Barcelona's Champions League dreams went up in smoke after the Catalan giants lost their second leg of the quarter-final by 2-1 against Atletico Madrid on Tuesday night. Giving voice to the resentment in the iconic club's dressing room, Barcelona forward Raphinha accused the referees of "robbing" them after both games between the two clubs saw a Barca player red carded. Raphinha's ire was aimed at referee Clement Turpin, who officiated the second game, and Istvan Kovacs, who was in charge of the first clash.

"As far as I'm concerned, it was a robbery, not just this match but the other one (the first leg) as well," Raphinha,

who missed both games due to injury, told reporters. "I think the refereeing is going really badly; the decisions he (Turpin) makes are unbelievable... ?! ?really want to understand why they're so afraid ?that Barcelona will come and win." According to a report on Reuters, Raphinha was seen making repeated 'grabbing motion with his hands' after the game had ended, which is commonly interpreted as a gesture to indicate "stealing". "It was tough, especially when you realise you have to work three times as hard to win the match," Raphinha added. "I think this tie was quite misleading, in my view. I think everyone can make mistakes; everyone is human. But when the mistakes keep repeating themselves in exactly the same way, I think that's something we need to pay attention to."

Why was Raphinha angry? In the first leg of the Barcelona vs Atletico Madrid quarters, Kovacs had sent off Pau ?Cubarsi in the ?42nd minute after a VAR review for hauling down Giuliano ?Simeone as he raced clear on goal, upgrading ?an initial yellow card. What made matters worse for the Catalan giants was that Atletico Madrid then scored a goal from the resulting free kick with Julian Alvarez slotting the ball past Joan Garcia. In the second leg too, Barcelona would have felt a strong sense of deja vu after Turpin sent off ?defender Garcia after a VAR review for holding Alexander Sorloth from behind while he ran through on ?goal. Media reports said that Barcelona had made their anger known by lodging a formal complaint over an incident early in the second half of the first leg. Barcelona's complaint was based on an incident where Atletico keeper Juan Musso appeared to put ?the ball ?back in play from a goal kick before Marc Pubill handled inside the six-yard box to retake it. Kovacs waved ?play on and VAR did not intervene, prompting angry reactions from the Barcelona bench. The complaint was rejected by ?UEFA.

## How MS Dhoni's advice helped Noor Ahmad deliver a Player of the Match performance against KKR

GNS News Agency, April 18

Prior to Tuesday's IPL 2026 outing against Kolkata Knight Riders, Noor Ahmad had endured a tough few months. Since January, he had just one wicket to his name, which came in the previous home match against Delhi Capitals. But on Tuesday, he bounced back to form, picking up 3/21 in four overs in Chennai Super Kings' 32-run win over Kolkata and walked away with the Player of the Match award for his spell.

On a pitch that assisted the spinners, Noor didn't try anything extraordinary. And more importantly, didn't overuse his googly and relied on the one that comes back into the right-hander. As he roared back to form, CSK's bowling coach Sridharan Sriram credited MS Dhoni for having a crucial chat with Noor, where the former captain emphasised not to overuse the googly.

"I think it was good, the wicket helped today. There was a little bit of help for him. The other wickets were quite flat. Today, I think he was a little bit slower through the air; there was more side spin on the ball, and there was more drop. So that's something he's been working on. Even MS (Dhoni) had a long chat with him in one of the practise sessions, getting his leg break to go. So I think it was very helpful for him and the results were there to show," Sriram said in the post-match press conference.

On the eve of the match, when Noor had a long net session, head coach Stephen Fleming and Dhoni watched him from close range. While the New Zealander was stationed behind Noor, Dhoni kept a close tab from behind the nets. And towards the end of the session, the two had a long chat with the Afghanistan spinner, who had an outstanding IPL 2025, where he took 24 wickets. However,



coming into this season, Noor had been battling for form, which meant he didn't even start in any of Afghanistan's matches in the T20 World Cup. In a combination where Noor is expected to play a critical role in the middle-overs for CSK, he had been guilty of erring in his line and lengths. Often operating at a quicker speed, he had been bowling with a flat trajectory and giving room for batsmen to swing in the arc. But on Tuesday, there was a significant change in his speed, and Sriram said Noor has to find ways to get deviations to be aggressive to stay effective rather than be defensive. "I think to be able to get some deviation off the surface is very important. I think that is what he's been working on. Everybody accepts there are going to be days when the wickets are going to be very flat. But still looking to be aggressive, putting revs on the ball and getting the ball to spin will definitely help him a lot. And that's where you can induce mistakes. Because once you start to get defensive, then the batters are going to get on top of you," he said.

## The rebel who was also a winner; a stomping attacker on court who surprised unsuspecting Chinese by speaking to them in their tongue

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Lin Dan and Lee Chong Wei were a tough act to follow. But Viktor Axelsen built a bridge to Asia by learning Mandarin, picking brains of Asian contemporaries and coaches. He worked incredibly hard on tall agility to form a seamless succession — where the twice Olympic champion from 2021 Tokyo and 2024 Paris, became one of the greatest men's singles shuttlers to play the sport. It was quite poetic that his announcement to retire came in the week following the emergence of similarly 6'4" Ayush Shetty of India, making finals of the Badminton Asia Championships. Wracked by injuries to the ankle and prominently the back that made even training normally impossible, let alone reaching former heights, Axelsen would tell the Average Not Average podcast that he had always been Viktor, a badminton player, but now that part of him was eating into rest of him. Carolina Marin had announced her own retirement speaking of similar struggles to return to court while battling pain, a fortnight ago. Besides his two Olympic gold medals, Axelsen dubbed the 'alien' for his extraordinary dominance in his prime, also took bronze at Rio Olympics where Super Dan and Chong Wei were fading out, i.e. still making semis but not claiming titles. The Super Dane would pick up the mantle, and pick two World titles in 2017 and 2022. He could've had a third, but India's HS Prannoy masterfully took him apart in 2023 in a tactical masterclass showing up the fading features of his power. Bitter losses like those compounded his physical struggles.

Still, Axelsen loomed large at the net and soared high into the backcourt horizon unleashing attacks that were steep, almost curt in their impact and capable of cutting bustling opponents to shreds as power combined with canny court craft. It's not like he was unbeatable, Lakshya Sen had defeated him at German Open once. But Axelsen was better than most of his contemporaries at acing the big moments, raising his levels to go from a struggling 0 to 100 in two rallies, like Sen learnt at the Olympics. File image of Denmark's Viktor Axelsen celebrating after winning the Yonex India Open Superseries badminton tournament back in 2017 in New Delhi. File image of Denmark's Viktor Axelsen celebrating after winning the Yonex India Open Superseries badminton tournament back in 2017 in New

Delhi. (He was singularly responsible for keeping the Chinese at bay for nearly a decade, though nobody knows how the badminton scene would've panned out had Kento Momota not suffered the accident. But Axelsen stepped into the niche gloriously, remaining respectful towards his Asian peers.

Not only would he learn Mandarin sincerely, in part to figure what Chinese coaches spoke, but also out of a genuine interest in Chinese culture. There was that funny episode of two Chinese fans giggling about his height in a lift, while he kept a poker face, and then responding with something witty in Chinese as they all stepped out. But Indonesian fans were no less charmed, as they would leave him plushies and teddies for his daughters, at the hotel, to express their admiration.

His selfies with a small espresso cup ahead of his matches wherever he travelled, became a social media post to look forward to. On the court, he was less cute. He could snarl, argue, scream at opposing coaches, fight and then calmly go about controlling the shuttle and sending down his attack. He trained with most upcoming talents, inviting them to Dubai, sharing tips and collecting cues alike, supporting independent players like Lee Zii Jia who did not wish to align with national federations. At his home in Odense, his father would speak about the need to grow the sport in America and take it into the next orbit commercially. Viktor never quite endeared himself to the badminton suits, and though he won the Thomas Cup with Denmark in 2016, he was keen to move out and build his set-up in Dubai. His run-ins with the Badminton World Federation were legendary, and quite staggering given the Federation was headed by another Dane, and Barcelona Olympics champion, Poul Erik-Hoyer Larsen. Axelsen's greatest legacy might well be fighting for players' rights. To ease up the schedule, demanding breaks between matches, spacing out tournaments even as they kept fining him for withdrawals and he kept sharing medical reports and X Rays in snipey back-and-forths. He was also livid about changing badminton to a 15-point scoring system from 21, going against the tide of European preference and opinions. Ultimately, when the BWF did weave in almost all his suggestions, his back was too shot to resume playing again at 32. "It took up a lot of my time and mental energy."

## 'Dhurandhar a perfect film after Sholay': Sooraj Barjatya says 'hats off' to Aditya Dhar after advocating family-oriented content



Singh. He explains why: "As a filmmaker, whatever's good is good. I think Dhurandhar is a perfect picture after Sholay. Every character is so well done. Hats off to Aditya." In an earlier edition of Screen Spotlight, actor Rakesh Bedi had also hailed Dhurandhar as a "perfect ensemble" after Ramesh Sippy's 1975 seminal blockbuster Sholay.

Besides Dhurandhar, another film that really impressed Barjatya was Mohit Suri's Saiyaara last year. Like Maine Pyar Kiya launched Salman and Bhagyashree, Saiyaara was also a romantic drama that launched newcomers Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda. "When Saiyaara released, I was so happy for Adi and Mohit," reveals Barjatya. Aditya Chopra, like Barjatya and his own protégé Karan Johar, is a second-generation filmmaker who's now headlining a studio founded by his father/ancestor. All three of them made their debut within the same decade, and achieved overnight success with films that somewhere bridged the gap between family-oriented films and young romance.

Barjatya is all praise for both Chopra and Johar, both his juniors. "As a filmmaker, Adi is one of the best, if not the best. We keep pressurising him to direct one more. According to me, his Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi is so beautiful. If you go with the dialogues, I don't think anyone writes better than Adi," says Barjatya. Chopra's last successful directorial was the 2008 romantic comedy Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi, starring Shah Rukh Khan and Anushka Sharma. He hasn't directed a film after his 2016 setback, Befikre, starring Ranveer Singh and Vaani Kapoor. "I remember Karan came to me with the script of Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham (2001)... I was floored with his narration, his honesty, and the way he extracts work from everyone and yet provide every ras," adds Barjatya. He claims that he continues to learn from younger filmmakers even today, another example being Amit R Sharma, who helmed the 2018 family drama Badhaai Ho. "When I watch Badhaai Ho even today, I learn so much. It's an ongoing process," says Barjatya.

Sooraj Barjatya has always advocated for family-oriented films. He's made a career out of that genre, right from his 1989 directorial debut Maine Pyar Kiya, starring Salman Khan and Bhagyashree, to his upcoming release, Yeh Prem Mol Liya, starring Ayushmann Khurrana and Sharvari Wagh. In fact, he reveals that he makes a phone call to any filmmaker who comes up with a family-oriented subject in the otherwise violent cinema landscape of today. "All subjects should get made but this type of content is very important," says Barjatya on SCREEN Spotlight, adding, "So that we can tell the younger generation to trust, hope, and support each other otherwise we're all getting divided. Why should there be any loneliness?" He himself has served as a showrunner to a family-oriented show Sangamarmar on JioHotstar.

He confessed that despite it not being a family-oriented film, he also loved watching Aditya Dhar's "superb" blockbuster spy thriller Dhurandhar, starring Ranveer

## Growing up with Asha Bhosle: A 90s kid remembers the singer who added melody to loving, living, longing

In the mid 90s, when "Tanha Tanha" and "Rangeela Re" hit the airwaves, as kids we mimicked Urmila Matondkar's moves, but it was Asha Bhosle's voice that gave the song its sass. Who can forget the high-octane energy of "Le Gayi Le Gayi" from Dil To Pagal Hai? It was the quintessential dance-off song at every colony party. These were the kind of songs that made the 90s feel bright, glamorous. We didn't know Asha Bhosle, we didn't care about legacy, we understood energy. For us the voice meant fun. It meant colour. It meant life, it had rhythm. Asha Bhosle, then in her 60s, sounded younger and more vibrant than the actresses on screen.

That is the thing about Asha Bhosle. She enters childhood not like a chapter from the past, but like the coolest person in the room.

And then there was MTV, our window into what felt like a cooler, bigger world. Indipop was arriving, music videos were redefining what glamour looked like. And right there too was Asha Bhosle, with "Raat Shabnami Bheegi Chandni". We had our teenage crushes on Milind Soman but weeks later, it was her voice that kept coming back, humming itself into your head on the school bus, in the middle of other thoughts. She proved that Indipop isn't just for the youth, but a space she could inhabit just as effortlessly and completely make her own. Collaborative gems like "Kabhi To Nazar Milao" and "Kahin Kahin Se Har Chehra" became the literal background score for our first real crushes, playing somewhere between stolen glances and unspoken feelings. Discovering RD Burman-Asha And then we grew up a little and started digging through our parents' cassettes, discovering that the woman who sang "Rangeela" was the same one who defined an era with R.D Burman. That phase of growing up is full of half-understood feelings. You don't yet know much about love, but you are already drawn to songs that seem to know more than you do. This wasn't a shy emotion anymore—this was romance in full colour. "Chura Liya Hai Tumne", "O Mere Sona Re", "Kitne bhi Tu Kar Le Sitam", songs that were more confident, more expressive, almost teaching you what love was supposed to look and feel like, even before you fully understood it. Then comes youth, the years of intense relationships. This is when her songs change again. Or perhaps they don't change — you do. Songs like, "Pyar Ke Mod Pe", "Jahaan Mein Aisa Kaun Hai" felt as if they had been written inside your chest. "Roz Roz Aankhon Tale" has that same ache of intimacy which was quietly consuming. These are not songs of infatuation. They are songs of emotional weather. They are songs for the age when you realise that love is not only about finding someone, but also about waiting, hoping, and fearing.

Life happens and comes heartbreak, or something

## Love is a quiet strength, says Regina Cassandra in reflective Instagram post

Chennai: Pointing out that people often mistake letting things be for being powerless, actress Regina Cassandra, who has made a place for herself in several film industries across the country with her fine acting, has now stressed on the point that love is a quiet strength. Taking to her Instagram page to pen her thoughts on the subject, she wrote, "New day, same me, surrendering to love. People often mistake letting things be for being powerless—but love is a quiet strength. Every day is a good day to stand up for yourself with a smile and to remember you deserve to be loved. Don't take it for granted."

She further went on to add, "The joy of loving and being loved exists because we know the pain of losing it—and each gives the other its depth."

The actress, who is known to share her thoughts on issues and life, had only recently penned a note on the power

of gratitude. Taking to her Instagram page a couple of weeks ago, she had said, "Many have said gratitude makes all the difference and they are right. Viewing the world after you put on the gratitude lens feels different. Here's a bunch of memories from last week (month, but who's counting hehe) views through my gratitude lense! (sic)."

Regina, who completed 20 years in the film industry recently, had penned a note to her fans and followers. She said, "Sometimes it feels like yesterday when I walked on to a set for the first time. That nervous feeling on the first day, not knowing what waited ahead. I've lived so many lives through my characters... so many shades, so many stories but every role taught me something about myself." She had further added, "There were moments of doubt, of magic, of madness and through it all, YOU stayed. Every message, every cheer, every bit of love... it became my strength."



even more complex than heartbreak. The kind of loss adulthood brings, where not everything ends cleanly, and not everything that remains can be named. That's when "Mera Kuch Saamaan" from Ijaazat begins to make sense, not as a song, but as a feeling. It does not cry, it does not plead, it remembers. It gathers little pieces of love left behind — objects, moments. Because growing older teaches you that relationships do not always end in dramatic scenes. Sometimes they remain in drawers, in old messages, in weather, in habits, in places you can no longer return to as the same person. Asha sings that kind of loss with impossible tenderness.

And then there is "Katra Katra" which feels like the slow recognition of how love is lived and lost — in fragments. Finding solace in the quiet with time when life has humbled you, there comes a quieter, deeper understanding of it — not just love and loss, but distance, acceptance. At this stage, you find yourself returning most to the songs that make you look inward, pause, soak in the atmosphere. Songs like "Phir Se Aaiyo Badra Bidesi" become your solace. "Justuju Jiski Thi" or "Choti si kahaani Sey" become the companions for lonely commutes and rainy evenings when life felt a bit too heavy. These songs are about memory, solitude, waiting, and the strange way life keeps circling back to earlier versions of ourselves. You hear them and remember not just the person you loved, but the person you were when you first heard them. The version of you that didn't know yet how things would turn out. At some point, the timeline collapses: The school kid dancing to "Le Gayi Le Gayi"; the teenager discovering RD—Asha; the young adult finding solace in "Pyar Ke Mod Pe"; the older you, sitting quietly with "Phir Sey Aaiyo". They're all versions of the same life. Every time we hit play, we aren't just listening to a song. We are visiting an older version of ourselves. Held together, all this time, by one voice.

## 'After Ramayana': Namit Malhotra confirms Brahmastra 2 timeline and a production shift for Ranbir Kapoor's Astraverse



Ramayana producer and DNEG CEO Namit Malhotra is currently in Las Vegas for the ongoing CinemaCon, and his latest update has reignited excitement among fans. During a brief interaction, Malhotra confirmed that Brahmastra 2 is very much on track and will go on floors after Ramayana, with Ranbir Kapoor set to return for the next chapter. A franchise that started with big ambitions for the unversed, Malhotra was one of the producers of Brahmastra Part One: Shiva (2022), alongside Karan Johar's Dharma Productions, director Ayan Mukerji, Ranbir Kapoor, and others. The film introduced audiences to a unique mythological-fantasy universe, generating significant buzz for its concept and visual effects. However, while the film's scale and VFX were widely appreciated, the love story between Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt drew criticism. Alia's character Isha, in particular, became the subject of memes, with her repeated references to "Shiva" going viral for unintended reasons. Brahmastra was a passion project for Ayan Mukerji, nearly a decade in the making. Pre-production began in 2014, with filming kicking off in 2018. Interestingly, this timeline also coincided with Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt's real-life relationship, which later became a key part of the film's promotions. Ahead of its 2022 release, the makers leaned into this narrative, launching the song Kesariya around the time of the couple's wed-

ding. Alia even participated in promotions while pregnant with their daughter, Raha, adding to the film's media buzz. The trilogy plan and star-studded cast conceived as a trilogy, the franchise includes Brahmastra Part One: Shiva, the upcoming Brahmastra Part Two: Dev, and a third yet-to-be-titled installment. The first film also featured an ensemble cast including Amitabh Bachchan, Nagarjuna, Shah Rukh Khan, and Dimple Kapadia, with Deepika Padukone making a brief but crucial cameo. The climax teased the next chapter, hinting at the mysterious character Dev and a larger storyline involving Deepika's role, sparking widespread speculation about casting—ranging from Ranveer Singh to Vijay Deverakonda. Mounted on a massive budget of Rs 350–400 crore, Brahmastra Part One: Shiva collected around Rs 431 crore worldwide gross, with an India net of approximately Rs 267.20 crore, according to Sacnilk. While the numbers were substantial, questions around profitability led to uncertainty about the sequel's future. In the meantime, Ayan Mukerji moved on to other projects like War 2, while Ranbir Kapoor remained busy with films such as Animal, Tu Jhoothi Main Makkar, Ramayana, and Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Love & War. Social media reacts with Malhotra's fresh confirmation, Brahmastra 2 is once again trending across social media platforms like Reddit, drawing mixed reactions. Some users questioned the viability of the sequel, pointing to the first film's mixed reception and profitability concerns. Others criticised the screenplay, calling it confusing despite strong visuals. A section of fans, however, expressed cautious optimism, urging the makers to focus on stronger writing and direction for the sequel. "Get better writer and director", wrote a fan. "Wasn't Brahmastra a flop?", asked another. The renewed buzz has also revived casting rumours. Reports suggest that Ranbir Kapoor himself may step into the role of Dev, with Deepika Padukone as his leading lady. Meanwhile, many fans are rooting for a high-voltage face-off between Ranbir Kapoor and Ranveer Singh, especially after their recent intense performances in films like Animal and Dhurandhar. Ranbir Kapoor had already dropped a hint interestingly, Ranbir Kapoor had earlier hinted at the sequel's progress. During a fan interaction on February 14, he confirmed, "Brahmastra 2 is in the works. We shall start shooting the movie sooner than you expect."

## Man gatecrashed Anushka Sharma-Virat Kohli's Italy wedding dressed as a maharaja, says security head: 'He came in a BMW'

Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli's 2017 wedding was one of the best kept secrets of recent memory in the movie business. They tied the knot in Tuscany, Italy with only 40 guests in attendance, including their family members and close friends. However, there was a gatecrasher who managed to make his way into the wedding, thanks to what Aamir Khan's character in 3 Idiots (2009) would describe as a "costume". A gatecrasher, dressed exactly like a maharaja, arrived in a BMW, accompanied by two bouncers in a Safari, revealed Yaseen Khan, founder of the security firm that provided its services to the high-profile wedding. "I wasn't present at the gate. I was at the main floor where the wedding was taking place. My team was there. We know the gatecrashers by face. My supervisor had a doubt so he flagged it to the event management team," added Khan.

However, the event management team, full of young trainees fresh out of college, assumed the gatecrasher is a guest, given the BMW. So, they let him in. "When I got my eyes on him, he would stay only in the corner. His security guards would click his picture with a celebrity, after which he'd retreat into the corner. If you're a guest, you'd mingle with others at the wedding," said Khan.

When Khan enquired his background, the gatecrasher claimed he's the nephew of a high-profile guest who couldn't make it to the wedding in Italy. "So, I went to Virat's manager and asked him if that guest is invited. He told me no, he's invited only for the Delhi wedding reception. So, I went back to the gatecrasher and told him only invited guests are allowed. He threw some attitude before making his way out," recalled Khan. Khan recalled another high-profile celebrity wedding that got difficult to manage — Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh. After tying the knot at Lake Como, Italy, they hosted a wedding reception in Mumbai. Since there were around 400-500 media members and fans



outside the venue, Khan's agency devised a mechanism for them to operate smoothly.

Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone at their wedding reception in Mumbai. Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone at their wedding reception in Mumbai. But owing to miscommunication with the event management team, the media and fans were made to exit from the wrong gate. "It became very tough. There were just 20 security guards. Because the pressure of public gets too overwhelming. They shoved me so hard that my hand turned numb. I later found out my shoulder had gotten dislocated," recalled Khan. Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra at their Jodhpur wedding. Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra at their Jodhpur wedding. Another challenge for Khan and his team has been to stop people from clicking pictures and videos. He recalled how a vendor leaked the pictures of the floral décor at the 2023 Jaisalmer wedding of actors Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra, prompting the agency to be even more cautious going forward.

## John Abraham returns as ACP Yashvardhan Singh, Harshvardhan Rane joins him

The much-awaited action thriller Force 3 has officially gone on the floors, with its first shooting schedule currently underway. Starring John Abraham, Harshvardhan Rane, and Tanya Maniktala, the third instalment of the popular Force franchise promises to deliver high-octane action and gripping storytelling. Directed by Bhav Dhulia—known for his work on Khaakee: The Bihar Chapter and The Freelancer—the film is being produced by John Abraham's JA Entertainment along with Sheel Kumar's Karolina Corporation. The project marks an exciting addition to the franchise, with Harshvardhan Rane making his debut in the Force universe, while John Abraham reprises his iconic role as ACP Yashvardhan Singh. Details about Rane's character remain under wraps. Tanya Maniktala, best known for her role as Lata in Mira Nair's A Suitable Boy, joins the film as the female lead, bringing a fresh dynamic to the narrative. Speaking about the film, John Abraham shared his deep connection with the franchise, stating that Force has always held a special place for him due to its grit and strong identity. He added that Force 3 aims to take the legacy forward on a much larger scale and expressed excitement about introducing Harshvardhan Rane as an action hero, praising his energy and screen presence. Producer Sheel Kumar echoed similar sentiments, highlighting his longstanding association with John Abraham and calling Force 3 a project rooted in trust, familiarity, and a shared belief in the story. Harshvardhan Rane described his inclusion in the franchise as an honour, noting that the film offers him an opportunity to explore an intense action space. He also praised John Abraham's journey in the industry and expressed enthusiasm about working under Bhav



Dhulia's vision. Tanya Maniktala shared her excitement about being part of a major franchise, calling it a significant milestone in her career. She added that she looks forward to sharing screen space with her co-stars and delivering her best performance. Director Bhav Dhulia reflected on his emotional connection to the project, having previously assisted the late Nishikant Kamat on Force. He described Force 3 as a homecoming and expressed his eagerness to bring the story to life with the cast. The film is produced by Sheel Kumar, Shahbaz Alam, John Abraham, Sandeep Leyzell, and Minnakshi Das. Written by Simaab Hashmi, Force 3 will feature music by Ravi Basur, with lyrics penned by Irshad Kamil.