

# INDIAN CHRONICLE

21 April, 2026 | Tuesday | Volume No:14 | Issue No: 64 | Pages: 12+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

₹ 3

## Lakshmi Nissan opens new showroom in ECIL Hyderabad

Hyderabad: Nissan Motor India Pvt Ltd (NMIPL) has further strengthened its footprint in Hyderabad with the inauguration of a new, state-of-the-art Lakshmi Nissan showroom in ECIL, Hyderabad.

The newly inaugurated facility features a modern 4,000 sq ft showroom with a display capacity of four vehicles, equipped with premium amenities and supported by a team of trained professionals, a press release said.

## Man kills brother and sister-in-law in Hyderabad over dispute

Hyderabad: A man allegedly murdered his younger brother and sister-in-law over a financial dispute at Sultanpura in the Mirchowk police station limits on Monday afternoon.

According to B Ramesh, In-charge DCP (South Zone), the police received information regarding a couple lying in a pool of blood at a house in Sultanpura. Police teams were immediately rushed to the spot.



New Delhi, April 20

The Supreme Court on Monday lamented that well-educated people are falling prey to digital arrests as it flagged a recent case of an elderly woman who lost her entire retirement benefits in such a case.

"It is shocking that well-educated people are getting duped like this," a Bench of Chief Justice of India and Justice Joymalya Bagchi said after Attorney General R Venkataramani mentioned the suo motu case concerning victims of digital arrest.

"An inter-departmental internal meeting has happened. The final meeting will happen soon. We are moving very fast," Attorney General R Venkataramani said, requesting the Bench to take up the suo motu case for hearing on May 12.

The CJI referred to the case of an elderly woman whom he knew in his official capacity. "Unfortunately, her entire retirement benefits have been duped," Justice Kant said.

Agreeing with Venkataramani's request, the Bench listed the matter for hearing on May 12.

Amicus Curiae and senior advocate NS Nappinai said victims often "freeze" when confronted with threatening calls from fraudsters posing as police and enforcement authorities, which made it difficult for them to respond rationally.

She suggested that the intermediaries should introduce a "kill-switch" to terminate such transactions. In such a situation, technological safeguards by intermediaries could help prevent irreversible financial losses, she added.

Digital arrest is a growing form of cybercrime in which scamsters pose as law probe/enforcement officers, court officials to intimidate victims through audio and video calls; hold the victims hostage and put pressure on them to transfer money.

On January 24, the Supreme Court had issued notices to the Centre, the CBI and others on a petition filed by a 78-year-old retired banker who was duped of Rs 23 crore after allegedly being put under "digital arrest" for nearly a month.

It had asked the Centre, the CBI, the RBI and others to respond to the petition filed by Naresh Malhotra seeking directions to the banks involved to deposit the defrauded amount of Rs 22.92 crore in his accounts.

Expressing serious concern over online fraud and digital arrests to dupe people by fabricating judicial orders, the Supreme Court had on October 17, 2025 asked the Centre and the CBI to spell out their respective stand on dealing with the menace.

A Bench led by Justice Surya Kant, which took suo motu cognisance of a shocking case of digital arrest of an elderly couple in Ambala, Haryana, on the basis of forged orders of the top court and probe agencies by fraudsters to extort more than Rs 1.05 crore, had also asked the Haryana government and Superintendent of Police, Cyber Crime, Ambala, to file their responses.

Describing the siphoning of more than Rs 54,000 crore by digital frauds as an absolute "robbery or dacoity", the top court had on February 9 asked the Centre to draft a standard operating procedure in consultation with the RBI, banks and the Department of Telecommunications

(DoT) to deal with such cases.

It had expressed grave concern over the "menace" of digital arrest scams and asked banks to play a proactive role in preventing cyber-enabled fraud.

The Supreme Court had asked the RBI, the DoT and others to jointly hold a meeting to come up with a framework for providing compensation in digital arrest cases. It said a pragmatic and liberal approach is needed to deal with the award of compensation to digital arrest victims.

The top court had directed the CBI to identify digital arrest cases and asked the Gujarat and Delhi governments to accord sanction to the federal probe agency to go ahead with the investigations in the identified digital arrest cases

On December 1 last year, the Supreme Court had ordered a CBI probe into digital arrest scam cases across India and asked the agency to also investigate the alleged role of bank officials in colluding with scamsters to dupe unsuspecting customers.

## CM Revanth Reddy inspects Medigadda barrage, flays KCR alleging irregularities

HYDERABAD, APRIL 20

Revanth Reddy has accused the previous government led by K. Chandrashekar Rao of corruption under the guise of redesigning the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project.

After inspecting the Medigadda Barrage on Monday, the Chief Minister held a review meeting at the Irrigation Camp Office with ministers, officials and ex-



perts from the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA). Among those present were ministers including N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy and Duddilla Sridhar Babu, as well as NDSA Chairman Anil Jain.

During the meeting, Mr Reddy said a clear path had emerged to address defects at Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages. He directed officials to begin works only after thoroughly understanding the problems and to proceed strictly based on sample

analysis and NDSA guidelines, with mandatory approval for every step.

He alleged that KCR had once described Kaleshwaram as a "wonder of the world", but claimed the project had effectively failed even before the 2023 elections. Citing reports, he said the project had fallen short "in every aspect".

Reddy questioned why the Centre had not initiated a Central Bureau of Investigation probe despite repeated requests. He said the State Assembly had passed a resolution seeking an inquiry and criticised the delay of over nine months.

He also targeted Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy, noting that he had previously demanded a CBI investigation into the project. "Why is the CBI remaining silent?" he asked, accusing the Centre of inaction.

Highlighting expenditure, the Chief Minister said around ₹1 lakh crore had been spent on the project but alleged that it had failed to irrigate even one lakh acres. He added that the government could neither abandon the project nor continue unchecked spending, and was therefore proceeding cautiously with expert input.

The Chief Minister Reddy affirmed that his government would repair the Kaleshwaram project and ensure water supply. He described the Sripada Yellampalli Project as the "lifeline" of the system and credited it with supporting agricultural output in the state.

He warned that those responsible for irregularities would face action, while reiterating that the project itself would not be scrapped.

## KCR addresses Praja Ashirvada Sabha, appoints Jeevan Reddy as BRS General Secretary

HYDERABAD, APRIL 20

BRS Chief KCR praised Jeevan Reddy as an inspiring figure in politics, highlighting his dedication to Telangana's interests. Speaking at the "Praja Ashirvada Sabha" in Jagtial, KCR announced Jeevan Reddy's appointment as the party's General Secretary. He noted that despite working on different political platforms, the two have maintained a strong friendship spanning 40 to 45 years, with Jeevan Reddy once requesting a bridge during their meetings.

KCR emphasised that Jeevan Reddy's entry into the BRS would positively impact several constituencies. He described him as a genuine leader with extensive experience in public office and expressed a desire to work together like brothers.

Reflecting on Telangana's struggle, KCR recounted the dark days when the region faced severe oppression. He recalled how the word "Telangana" was banned in the Legislative Assembly, and how their livelihoods, language, and employment opportunities were under constant attack. He mentioned fighting against electricity tariff hikes, the Bashirbagh firing incident, and ridicule faced while campaigning for Telangana.

KCR concluded by asserting that through relentless efforts and mass agitation, Telangana's statehood was ultimately achieved, marking a significant victory for the region.



## Blaze at Rajasthan refinery puts Modi event on hold; probe ordered

Jaipur: A fire broke out on Monday at the Pachpadra refinery in Rajasthan's Balotra district a day before its scheduled inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, prompting authorities to order a probe.

The scheduled dedication of the refinery by the Prime Minister on April 21 (Tuesday) has been postponed, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said, adding the new date will be announced in due course.

There were no reports of any casualties in the incident. Fire tenders doused the blaze in around two hours, officials said.

The fire started in the vicinity of the Crude Distillation Unit (CDU) section of the refinery, leading to chaos as emergency response teams moved in to contain the flames.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma's scheduled visit to the refinery was also cancelled, the officials said, adding that an assessment of the dam-



age is underway.

"Due to an unfortunate fire incident in the vicinity of the Crude Distillation Unit at the HRRL refinery, the scheduled dedication of the refinery by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on April 21, 2026, has been postponed. The fire has been brought under control and there are no reports of any casualties. An investigation has been initiated," the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said on X.

A revised date for the inauguration will be announced in due course, it added.

The opposition Congress alleged that the incident showed "safety lapses".

"The Pachpadra refinery is a matter of pride for all Rajasthanis. The incident at such a time is extremely unfortunate. I pray for everyone's safety," former chief minister Ashok Gehlot said.

Leader of Opposition in State Assembly Tika Ram Jolly termed the incident "serious and concerning" and questioned the state government's preparedness ahead of the high-profile event.

He alleged that the incident pointed to lapses in safety and accused the government of rushing the arrangements for the event. He also said there were "delays" in the project's execution.

# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Penal provisions can act as a deterrent

THE push to criminalise trafficking and use of banned performance-enhancing substances marks an overdue shift in India's battle against doping. Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has highlighted a harsh truth: doping is no longer an individual lapse but an organised enterprise that exploits ambition, ignorance and weak enforcement. India's anti-doping framework has leaned heavily on testing and imposition of bans on athletes. While these measures have led to a decline in adverse findings, the country continues to top the global dope offenders' list of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). This dubious distinction has exposed the limitations of the current strategy. It's apparent that punishing athletes alone is of little help. The proposal to penalise suppliers, facilitators and complicit support staff aligns with the global perception that the real culprits are often coaches, trainers and shadowy networks that profit from doping.

Targeting these wrongdoers could disrupt supply chains and raise the risks associated with the use of unfair means. Yet, criminalisation is not a silver bullet. Similar provisions in the 2018 draft anti-doping Bill were ultimately dropped amid concerns about overreach and enforceability. There are legal grey areas as not all substances banned in sports are illegal for general use. Careless drafting of provisions could lead to harassment or other unintended consequences, particularly for lower-level support staff. The need to protect athletes, many of whom are victims rather than perpetrators, cannot be overemphasised. Coercion and misinformation often push them toward doping. Any legal framework must clearly distinguish between the exploiter and the exploited.

## Dr. Tummala Yugandhar Inaugurates J.K.M Solar Energy Office



"KHAMMAM APRIL 20 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):" "A new office of J.K.M Solar Energy was inaugurated on Sunday by Dr. Tummala Yugandhar, son of Minister Tummala

Nageswara Rao. The office is located in a building opposite the TVS showroom on Khammam bypass road. "Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Yugandhar said that solar energy is a great opportunity for the people of Khammam. He congratulated Mercy Angel J.K. Mahesh, founder of J.K.M Solar Energy, and explained that under this solar scheme, a subsidy of up to ₹78,000 is available. He added that people can reduce their electricity bills and even earn income by selling surplus power to government agencies. "J.K.M Solar Energy head Mercy Angel J.K. Mahesh said that the PM Surya Ghar scheme enables households to install 3 kW to 10 kW solar systems with subsidies up to ₹78,000. This helps reduce electricity expenses, minimize pollution, and generate additional income by supplying excess electricity to the grid. "He further explained the benefits of solar energy. "Capacity to generate 360-750 units of electricity per month. "Instead of paying electricity bills, users can pay easy EMIs for 5-10 years and then enjoy free electricity for 20-25 years. "Opportunity to earn income by selling surplus electricity. "25-year warranty on solar units and 5 years of free service. "He also stated that installations are offered with: "Zero down payment. "Zero service charges. "Zero site visit charges. "Zero application charges. "The company provides easy EMI options without collecting any upfront payment and ensures free service support. "He added that the first 100 registrations will receive an additional discount of up to ₹10,000. Solar solutions will also be provided for households, agriculture (including borewells and pump sets), solar fencing lights, and industrial needs. "AMC Chairman Yarlagadda Hanumantha Rao, Division Corporator Raparthi Sharath, Ashrif, Vignesh, Yugandhar, Badrulla, Narala Naresh, Murthy, Kiran, Bachi, Uday, Kranthi, Om Prakash, Suman, Sandeep, Dinakar, Ashok, Mujeeb, Swami Naik and others attended the event.

## Works Must Be Completed with Quality and Within Deadline: Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao



"KHAMMAM APRIL 20 INDIAN CHRONICLE:" "State Minister for Agriculture, Marketing, Handlooms & Textiles, Cooperation and related departments, Tummala Nageswara Rao, instructed that all urban development works must be completed with high quality and within the stipulated timeframe. "The Minister, along with Wyrva MLA Ramdas Naik, laid the foundation stone for the construction of a CC drain being taken up at a cost of ₹1.5 crore in the 44th Division under the Khammam Municipal Corporation. "Speaking on the occasion, the Minister emphasized that the development works undertaken in the 44th Division should be executed with quality to ensure long-term benefits for the public. He directed officials to ensure timely completion of the works and urged contractors to strictly adhere to deadlines. "He also suggested that local public representatives, leaders, and citizens should actively monitor the works to maintain quality standards. The Minister called for collective efforts to develop Khammam city into a clean and green urban center. "Khammam Municipal Corporation Mayor P. Neeraja, Commissioner Abhishek Agastya, State Warehousing Corporation Chairman Rayala Nageswara Rao, Assistant Commissioner Anil Kumar, RDO Srinivas, district officials of various departments, corporators, public representatives, citizens, and businesspersons participated in the program.

## Basaveshwara's Teachings Serve as a Guide for Social Equality – District Collector Ankit.



"Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Bhadradi Kothagudem Staff Reporter, April 20, Indian Chronicle: The birth anniversary celebrations of Sri Basaveshwara were grandly organized on Monday at the IDOC office conference hall. District Collector Ankit attended as the chief guest at this event, which was conducted under the aegis of the District Backward Classes Development Department. On this occasion, District Collector Ankit, accompanied by Additional District Collector Venugopal, garlanded the portrait of Basaveshwara and lit the ceremonial lamp to formally inaugurate the program. Speaking at the event, the collector remarked that Basaveshwara's life serves as an exemplary model for fu-

ture generations. He highlighted the exceptional nature of Basaveshwara's efforts toward eradicating caste discrimination within society and fostering the upliftment of Dalit and Bahujan communities. He noted that Basaveshwara propagated values such as equality, justice, and respect for labor. The Collector further stated that Basaveshwara, at a very young age, gained a deep understanding of Shaivite traditions while simultaneously raising doubts regarding ritualistic practices. He recounted how Basaveshwara opposed his parents' decision to perform his Upanayanam (sacred thread ceremony), instead leaving for Kudalasangama to worship Lord Sangameshwara with profound devotion. He added that the "Anubhava Mantapa" (Hall of Spiritual Experience) established by Basaveshwara served as a platform where people from all sections of society could freely express their concerns and issues. He stated that Basaveshwara's messages—such as "All human beings are one" "The body is a temple." "There is no distinction between men and women" and "There is no beauty greater than labor" serve as guiding principles for contemporary society. He urged the youth to put these values into practice. Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Vidyachandana, Backward Classes Development Officer Vijayalakshmi, AD (Mines) G. Dinesh, SC Corporation Executive Director Upendar, Youth Services Department official Parandhama Reddy, Gumulapuram Satyanarayana, Mudurukolla Kishore, and other officials and staff members participated in this program.

## Special Focus on Sanitation and Quality Meals in Schools – District Collector Ankit.



"Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Bhadradi Kothagudem Staff Reporter, April 20, Indian Chronicle: On Monday—the first day of the "Welfare Week" celebrations, organized as part of the 99-day action plan under the "Praja Palana Pragathi Plan" (Public Administration Progress Plan)—District Collector Ankit paid a surprise visit to the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Telangana Backward Classes Welfare Residential Boys' School in Tekulapalli Mandal to conduct inspections. During this visit, the collector comprehensively reviewed the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme at the school. He inspected the kitchen conditions and the food preparation process, issuing directives to ensure that the meals served to students are both hygienic and palatable. He further instructed the staff to pay special attention to the quality of ingredients used for cooking, ensuring they strictly adhere to prescribed standards. Inspecting the sanitary conditions within the school premises, the collector emphasized the need to maintain constant cleanliness to provide a healthy and hygienic environment for the students. While at the school, the collector also examined the installed RO (Reverse Osmosis) water purification plant. He questioned the concerned officials regarding when the plant was originally installed and why it had remained non-functional for the past two years. In response, the officials explained that they were unable to utilize the plant due to issues with the school's three-phase power supply. Reacting to this, the collector issued immediate orders to resolve the three-phase power supply issue and bring the RO plant back into operation without delay. Subsequently, the district collector conducted another surprise inspection at the Ekalavya School located in Nandya Thanda, Tekulapalli Mandal. Speaking with the students on this occasion, the collector inquired about the amenities available to them and ascertained whether meals were being provided in accordance with the prescribed menu. He inspected the school's restrooms and gathered details regarding their daily cleaning and maintenance. Emphasizing that a hygienic environment is paramount for safeguarding the students' health, he directed that sanitation within the school be further improved and ordered the concerned staff to carry out clean-



ing duties regularly. Subsequently, the collector inspected the dining hall; after verifying whether meals were being served to students as per the schedule, he instructed that the designated menu be strictly adhered to. He also examined the food items being prepared for the students and explicitly stated that quality standards must be strictly maintained. Upon inspecting the vegetables stored in the storeroom, the collector expressed dissatisfaction and issued orders that only fresh vegetables be utilized. He questioned the warden regarding the practice of keeping vegetables directly on the floor and instructed that racks be installed immediately to ensure they are stored in a clean and hygienic manner. District Collector Ankit issued directives to the concerned officials to take measures to ensure that students are consistently provided with high-quality, hygienic food and that the school premises are kept clean at all times. Furthermore, he advised the officials and teachers to work in close coordination to foster a conducive educational environment for the students. Accompanying the collector during this inspection were Mandal Special Officer Sriram, Tahsildar Veerabhadram, Principal Ravindra, officials from relevant departments, and others.

## Manohar becomes special attraction in Jagtial meeting

GNS News Agency, April 20

Jagtial: Manohar became a special attraction at the BRS' "Praja Ashwivada Sabha" public meeting held in Jagtial on Monday, on the occasion of senior Congress leader T Jeevan Reddy joining the party. A native of Cherial in Siddipet district, Manohar attended the meeting wearing a special flexi dress carrying pictures of BRS president K Chandrashekar Rao and working president KT Rama Rao, as well as welfare schemes implemented by the previous government.

## Minister Tummala Reviews Development Works with District Officials



"KHAMMAM APRIL 20 INDIAN CHRONICLE:" "State Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao held a review meeting with senior district officials to assess the progress of ongoing development works in Khammam district and the city. "The meeting was conducted at the minister's camp office in Khammam, where he discussed various infrastructure projects in detail. He reviewed the construction of the cable bridge with Roads & Buildings (R&B) officials and enquired about its progress. "The minister also examined the status of side drain construction works across the city and discussed each development activity individually with the officials. During a review with irrigation department officials, he sought updates on the Munneru retaining wall construction and instructed them to complete the works at the earliest, ensuring that the public faces no inconvenience. "Tummala directed the officials to complete all development works within the stipulated timelines and make them available for public use without delay. "He also held discussions with education department officials regarding issues related to schools and emphasized the need for speedy completion of ongoing works.

## 31 RGs to Prajavani



"Sangareddy, April 20 :- indian chronicle" "Additional Collector Pandu said that the respective officials should focus on resolving the RGs received in Prajavani as soon as possible. "Additional Collector Pandu along with Sub Collector Uma Aarti received the complaints from the petitioners who came to the Prajavani program organized at the Collectorate Grievance Hall on Monday.

"He directed that the applications received in Prajavani should be examined and handed over to the respective officials and efforts should be made to resolve them in a timely manner. He directed the officials of the respective departments to respond to the public issues and take appropriate action. He said that a total of 31 complaints were received in Prajavani. "District officials, Revenue Divisional officers, Municipal Commissioners and "the public participated in the program.

## Mahatma Basaveshwara is a great social reformer....."State Medical and Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha



"Sanga Reddy, April 20:- Indian Chronicle" "On the occasion of the 893rd birth anniversary of Vishwaguru, Mahatma Basaveshwara, "State Medical and Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha" paid tribute to his statue at Jogipet Chaurasta on Monday by garlanding it. "Speaking on the occasion, he said that Basaveshwara was a great social reformer, philosopher, poet and statesman and stood as an example for everyone. His teachings and ideals are practical. He said that he taught that "work is the living God". He said that he had emphasized that every person should live with his hard work and respect his work.

# AP Protests Over Farmers' Issues in Khammam District



“KHAMMAM APRIL 20 INDIAN CHRONICLE:”“The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has intensified its fight in support of farmers in Khammam district, alleging that authorities and ministers are neglecting their problems.”Speaking in a statement, AAP Khammam district president Swarna Subbarao said that despite raising farmers' issues with the District Collector last week, no action has been taken so far. Once again, farmers along with AAP leaders met the Collector this week, but they were left without any assur-

ance. He warned that if the situation continues, it could lead to a large-scale agitation. “Farmers, extending their support to AAP's struggle, voiced their grievances during the public grievance meeting held today. They highlighted severe difficulties faced by tenant farmers at procurement centers set up by Marked in the district. “The farmers alleged that impractical government rules are creating hardships. Although the Agriculture Department already has crop registration data, officials are insisting on obtaining signatures from landowners and OTP verification, which is causing delays. Many landowners are not available locally, making it difficult for tenant farmers to secure these requirements. “Farmers demanded that authorities immediately issue verification certificates to tenant farmers based on existing crop data and accept simple documentation such as landowners' passbook copies, without insisting on OTP or signatures. “They also complained about the shortage of gunny bags at procurement centers and insufficient availability of transport vehicles. With the Meteorological Department warning of possible unseasonal rains, farmers urged the government to speed up procurement processes to prevent crop losses. “AAP leaders appealed to the authorities to intervene immediately, resolve these issues, and ensure justice for tenant farmers.” — Swarna Subbarao, AAP Khammam District President, in a statement.

# Public Grievances Must Be Resolved Promptly

Additional Collectors\*Additional Collectors Receive Petitions in Prajavani\*



“KHAMMAM APRIL 20 INDIAN CHRONICLE:”“Additional Collectors Dr. P. Srija and P. Srinivasa Reddy have directed district officials to ensure that public grievances are resolved without delay. “During the Praja Vani program held on Monday at the Collectorate meeting hall, the Additional Collectors received petitions from the public. “Rayala Govinda Rao from Lachagudem village in Chinthakani mandal submitted a complaint stating that due to the unavailability of EDP training under the PM Employment Generation Scheme, his loan process was getting delayed on the online portal.

The Additional Collector instructed the KVIB official to take necessary action. “G. Prasad Rao from Chinna Gopathi village in Konijerla mandal submitted a petition stating that he owns 39 guntas of land in Survey No. 131, but has a pattadar passbook for only 19.5 guntas. He requested issuance of a passbook for the remaining 19.5 guntas. The Additional Collector directed the Tahsildar to take appropriate action. “SK Hussain from Allipuram village in Khammam Urban mandal stated that he has been suffering from paralysis for the past four years and requested sanction of a disability pension. The Additional Collector instructed the DRDO official concerned to take necessary steps. “District Revenue Officer Padmashri, district officials, Collectorate AO Srinivas, and others participated in the Praja Vani program.”

# Parameshwar Reddy inaugurates summer water kiosk at Habsiguda Street No. 8

---Cooling facility set up under Indra Arcade Apartments Association for pedestrians---



“UPPAL, APRIL 20 (INDIAN CHRONICAL):”“Congress party in-charge for the Uppal constituency, Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, on Sunday inaugurated a chalivendram (summer water kiosk) set up by the Indra Arcade Apartments Association at Street No. 8, Habsiguda. “Participating as the chief guest, Mr.

Reddy appreciated the initiative taken by the apartment association to provide drinking water to passersby during the peak summer season. He said the arrangement would help quench the thirst of pedestrians and local residents facing the intense heat. “Describing the installation of the water kiosk at Street No. 8 as a commendable effort, he urged the public to make proper use of the facility. He also underlined the importance of setting up such water kiosks during summer to serve the needs of the people. “Mr. Reddy further called upon party leaders and local associations to come forward and establish similar facilities in areas where they are required. “Among those present at the event were Indra Arcade Apartments Association president Vasavi, secretary Mamatha, treasurer Shilpa, and committee members Padmaja, Franklin, Sandeep, Sumathi, M. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Jayashree, Vani, Harihara Varma, Anjaneyulu, Seema, Mallareddy, and Damodar Reddy. “Congress leaders including DCC vice-president Sudhakar Reddy, former floor leader Kandi Aagi Reddy, former Medchal-Malkajgiri District Youth Congress president Kandi Shravan Reddy, district ST Cell chairman Ganesh Naik, along with Murali Mudiraj, Raju Naik, Gundu Raju, and Kishan Naik, also attended the programme.



: Kamareddy “Complaint Filed Four Times for Land Survey”Gangani Chinna Narsimlu, a farmer from Bhavanipeta village, expressed his distress over the lack of action regarding his request to survey his land. He stated that despite filing complaints four times at the District Prajavani (Public Grievance Redressal Forum), the survey for his 2 acres and 37 guntas of land located in Survey No. 841/23 has not yet been conducted. “The land is situated on the outskirts of Bhavanipeta village in the Palvancha Mandal of Kamareddy District. The farmer mentioned that he had even paid the required survey fees twice at the Palvancha MeeSeva centers. However, the Palvancha Surveyor has failed to carry out the survey to date. “Following his persistent appeals, the Additional Collector (Revenue), Mr. Victor, responded positively today. He summoned the District Surveyor and instructed that the survey be completed within two days. The farmer requested the District Collector to ensure the survey is conducted promptly and to provide him with justice.



# Congress leaders urge Water Board GM to raise manhole levels on ADRM Hospital-Bodrai Road



“UPPAL, APRIL 20 (INDIAN CHRONICAL):”“Congress leaders on Sunday submitted a representation to the General Manager of the Water Board, Mr Santosh Kumar, seeking an immediate increase in the height of manholes on the stretch between ADRM Hospital and Bodrai in Old Ramanthapur. “The road in Ramanthapur division had remained in a severely damaged condition for a long time. Following the initiative of Uppal constituency Congress in-charge Mr Parameshwar Reddy, funds were recently secured from the government and the construction of a new road was completed. “However, during the road-laying works, the drainage manholes located along the stretch were not raised to match the new road level. As a result, the points around the manholes have now turned into depressions and pothole-like patches, causing incon-



venience to motorists and posing a risk of accidents. “In view of the growing safety concerns, Congress leaders led by Ramanthapur Division Congress Working President Mr Vallapu Srikanth Yadav met the Water Board General Manager and explained the issue in detail before submitting a memorandum. “They urged the officials to immediately raise the manhole levels and complete the corrective works at the earliest. Responding positively, the General Manager assured the delegation that the work would be taken up and completed as soon as possible. “Among those who participated in the programme were DCC General Secretary Mr Jaleel Pasha, Mr Muthyala Jangaiah, Mr Samuel, Mr Sandeep, Mr Shaga Sridhar, Mr Bhaskar, Mr Bullet Ashok, Mr Satish Goud, Ms Shobha, Mr K. Shankar, Mr Rajkumar and Mr Rama Krishna, among others.

# Qutbullapur constituency BRS leader Shambhipur Krishna stood by the activist's family



“Qutbullapur constituency BRS leader Shambhipur Krishna today stood by his office in Dundigal circle, Shambhipur, for the eye surgery of Akula Bharat Kumar, a BRS party worker from Dundigal village, at his office in Shambhipur. Bharat Kumar is widely respected for his active participation and commitment in the party's field activities. He recently lost his life in a road accident, and his family is going through difficult times. As his son needed an emergency eye surgery, the family was under financial strain. Understanding the situation, he provided financial as-

sistance to the family for medical expenses in his office. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the party will always stand by its committed workers and their families. He said that this is a token of respect for his dedicated service to the party. The program was attended by the latest former councilors Amaram Gopal Reddy, Jakkula Srinivas Yadav, Anand Kumar, Shankar Nayak, Mahender Yadav, Bharat Kumar, PAX Vice Chairman Nalturi Krishna, BRS Party senior leaders Narsing Goud, Mahesh Dara, Vishnu Yadav, Veeresh, Srisailem Yadav, Srikanth Yadav, Abhi, and family members Akula Bhaskar, leaders and others.

# Congress rejects BJP claims on Women's Reservation Bill, alleges 'deliberate delay'



“Hyderabad, April 20: Hyderabad District Congress Committee (DCC) President Syed Khalid Saifullah on Monday accused the BJP of spreading “false propaganda” against the Congress on the Women's Reservation Bill, asserting that the party has always supported and played a key role in advancing women's empowerment. “He was addressing a press conference at Gandhi Bhavan along with Assembly constituency in-charges Rajesh Kumar Pulipati (Bahadurpura), B. Nagesh (Chandrayangutta), Mohammed Mujeebullah Shareef (Charminar), Shaik Akbar (Malakpet) and K. Ravi Raj (Yakutpura). He said the Women's Reservation Bill was passed in September 2023 with the support of the Congress and its allies, and alleged that the BJP deliberately delayed its implementation by linking it to Census and delimitation conditions. “Khalid Saifullah said that if the Centre had genuine intent, the 33 per cent reservation would have been implemented before the 2024 general elections. He claimed that the BJP is now attempting to project a delimitation exercise as a women's reservation measure, which he described as misleading. “The Hyderabad DCC chief also raised concerns over delimitation, stating that it could reduce the political representation of southern states. Citing population disparities, he said states like Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala would lose influence, while northern states would gain a disproportionate advantage. “Reiterating the party's stand, Saifullah said the Congress always supported 33 per cent reservation for women. He said women's reservation is not just a policy issue but a matter of equality, justice and empowerment. “Highlighting the Congress party's track record, he said India's first woman Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, first woman President Pratibha Patil, and several women Chief Ministers, Governors and mayors have come from the Congress. He also pointed out that leaders such as Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu and Nellie Sengupta had served as Congress presidents, questioning the BJP to name a single woman who held a similar position in the

party. “The Congress leaders further noted that the party had introduced key reforms for women, including 33 per cent reservation in local bodies through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, as well as laws related to maternity benefits, domestic violence and workplace safety. “Criticising the BJP's record, they alleged that the party has failed to ensure justice in several cases involving crimes against women and urged its leaders to focus on delivering justice rather than blaming the Congress. “The Congress leaders maintained that the party remains committed to women's empowerment and demanded immediate implementation of the Women's Reservation Bill without linking it to delimitation. They said the party would continue to oppose any move that undermines fair political representation, particularly of southern states. “Saifullah said the Congress would continue to stand for women's rights and called upon the Centre to act with sincerity instead of “creating confusion” over the issue.

# Basaveshwara is the guide to an equal society: MLA Chinta Prabhakar

“Sangareddy April 20. indian chronicle”“Sangareddy MLA Chinta prabhakar said that Sri Basaveswara is a great man who worked towards the establishment of an equal society with noble principles such as equality, social justice and providing a place of honor to women. He praised Basaveswara as a great man who eradicated caste discrimination and fought for equal rights. “

On the occasion of Basava Jayanti, the MLA garlanded the statue of Basaveswara at the bypass in the Sangareddy district center and paid tributes. Later, he also garlanded the statue of Basaveswara in front of the District Electricity Office and paid tributes. “Vijender Reddy, Ramappa, District Officer Jagadish, Narsimlu, Nagaraj Goud, Councilors Naveen, Ponna Rajender Reddy, Jalender, Dasharath Reddy, former Councilor Vishnu, Mallikarjun and others participated in this program.

## Christian Leaders Urge Resolution of Burial Ground Issue in Future City



residents. The representatives demanded that the land in Gangaram, Maheshwaram mandal, which has already been marked, should be levelled and formally handed over to the burial ground committee selected by the government. They also pointed out that no budget had been allocated for land identification, boundary demarcation and levelling works in Chowlapally, Farooqnagar and Kodicherla Kothur mandal. They criticised the alleged failure of minority welfare, revenue and municipal authorities, stating that the Christian community has been neglected in this regard. The leaders noted that the existing Balapur Covid burial ground, which is currently being used by all sections, has become fully occupied, leaving no space for further burials and causing serious difficulties to local Christians. They said that while Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is striving to establish Telangana as a model state in governance, the absence of adequate burial ground facilities for Christians and Dalit Christians in the prestigious Future City region remains a matter of grave concern. They warned that with the arrival of corporate and international business establishments in the area, Christian employees and businesspersons may face even greater difficulties. "The delegation urged the district administration to immediately allocate funds, constitute a committee, and make available the 13-acre site along with the Mankhal burial ground land for public use." They also warned that if the issue is not resolved within a week, protest programmes would be staged in front of the Collector's office. "Among those who participated were United Christian Church Association president Rev. J. Joseph Immanuel, Rev. P. Jaya Raju, Rev. D. Joshua, Rev. B. Lazar Naik, J. Bala Singh Naik, Rev. B. Elisha, Bro. M. Prabhakar, Ibrahimpatnam Burial Ground Committee chairman Cherukuri Raju, Victor Sannut, Karunakar, Krishnapal, Sundar, Samuel, Roshan and Baptist Church's Matthayya, among others.

"Representation submitted to Ranga Reddy District Collector by Christian leaders and Pastor Fellowship representatives" Hyderabad, April 20 (Indian Chronicle): "Christian leaders and representatives of the Pastor Fellowship on Monday submitted a representation to Ranga Reddy District Collector Narayana Reddy during the Prajavani programme, urging immediate resolution of the long-pending burial ground issue in the Future City region. The delegation appealed to the district administration to constitute a committee and allocate necessary funds for the development and utilisation of burial grounds earmarked for the Christian community. They alleged that despite land having been allocated by the previous government, nearly 13 acres in Ranga Reddy district have not been brought into use due to administrative delays. "Speaking on the occasion, the leaders said that although former collectors Ajay and Narayana Reddy had shown a positive approach, negligence on the part of RDOs and tahsildars had resulted in severe hardship for Dalit Christians in Balapur, Ibrahimpatnam and Maheshwaram mandals. They further alleged that out of the five acres identified in Khalsa village under Ibrahimpatnam limits, nearly three acres had been encroached upon, leaving only two acres. Even access to the remaining land is reportedly unavailable, causing major inconvenience to local

## Ganesh Modhugu appointed District Executive Member of Head World Human Rights Council



UPPAL, APRIL 20 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "Ganesh Modhugu has been appointed as the District Executive Member for Medchal-Malkajgiri of the Head World Human Rights Council, an organisation actively working across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The appointment was made by the organisation's chairman, Madhav. Expressing gratitude over his appointment, Ganesh Modhugu thanked Chairman Madhav and National General Secretary Satish Devarakonda, who played a key role in his nomination. Speaking on the occasion, Ganesh said that he would work to the best of his ability for the protection of human rights. He assured that he would stand by victims and strive continuously to ensure justice is delivered. He further stated that he would extend his full support and co-operation towards the development of the organisation. "Whenever human rights are violated, I will respond strongly on behalf of the Head World Human Rights Council and work towards securing justice for the victims," he said. Ganesh noted that the new appointment has brought greater responsibility upon him and pledged to discharge his duties with commitment. On the occasion, trust members, local dignitaries and social activists felicitated the newly appointed Medchal-Malkajgiri District Executive Member and conveyed their best wishes.

## No Disruption in Drinking Water: Collector Issues Strict Directions

"Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, Asifabad, April 20: District Collector Haritha has directed officials to take immediate steps to ensure that there are no difficulties in the supply of drinking water to people, especially in remote villages, during the summer season. "On Monday, the Collector conducted a surprise inspection of the Mission Bhagiratha district office and the Panchayat Raj Engineering office at the district headquarters. She examined the attendance register and instructed officials and staff to maintain punctuality and deliver efficient services to the public. "Speaking on the occasion, the Collector emphasized that drinking water under the Mission Bhagiratha scheme must be supplied to all remote villages without interruption. She directed engineering officials to respond immediately to any disruption in water supply, carry out necessary repairs, and restore services without delay. "In areas where water supply is not available, officials were instructed to make alternative arrangements. The Collector also stressed the need for co-



ordinated efforts among engineering departments to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply. "Mission Bhagiratha EE Siddiq, Panchayat Raj officials, and others were present during the inspection.

## Uppal Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta Inspects Ongoing Development Works in Chilkanagar and Beerappa Gadda Divisions



sued clear instructions to the concerned engineering officials to ensure that all works are completed on time while maintaining high quality standards. "With the upcoming monsoon season in view, the Commissioner specifically directed officials to complete all stormwater drain works well in advance to prevent water stagnation and possible flooding issues. She also stressed the need to expedite the works without causing inconvenience to the public and to strictly follow all necessary safety measures at the work sites. "Ms. Gupta further stated that public cooperation is equally important for the successful completion of the development works. Officials from the Uppal Zone engineering department, including Vennel Goud and Raj Kumar, were present during the inspection.

## Rupee falls 25 paise to settle at 93.16 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee pared its initial gains and settled with a loss of 25 paise at 93.16 against the US dollar on Monday, after fresh tension in West Asia led to an increased demand for the American currency and kept crude prices steady. Forex traders said the local currency remained under pressure due to a fresh standoff between the US and Iran that led to a closure of the Strait of Hormuz, disrupting global supply.

## Untimely rains caused rice and mango pods..Medak district



"Untimely rains have ruined the crops and the farmers are suffering tears" "Untimely rains in Medak district on Sunday flooded rice fields. "In the evening, due to heavy rain with gusty winds and hailstorm, most of the farmers in Medak Papannapet Kolcharam Kaudipalli Veldurthi Mandal are cultivating dry season paddy for their livelihood. "Farmers of many villages have suffered a lot. "Fallen paddy in Shanshreddypalli Tanda "The paddy crop ready for harvesting has completely fallen to the ground in Shanshreddypalli Tanda of the mandal. "For three months, the crops cultivated by the Reyambavals with hard work and debt were damaged by the hailstorm. "The farmers are crying because all the seeds are falling and the husks are falling in the field and they are not getting any investment. "The affected farmers expressed their grief saying that how are we tenant farmers to repay the debts and how to feed the children. "Heavy damage to mango orchard in Cherlapally "On the other hand, in the mango orchard of Nazim, a farmer from Cherlapalli village under the mandal, all the harvested fruits fell to the ground due to strong winds. "Sunday night rain

## Sri Basaveshwara Jayanti celebrations held grandly at Tandur Municipal Office



Indian Chronicle Tandur (April 20) "On Monday, Sri Basaveshwara Maharaj Jayanti celebrations were officially and grandly organized at the Tandur Municipal Office in Vikarabad district, chaired by Municipal Chairperson Patolla Neeraja Bal Reddy, with councilors, officials, and staff. "Municipal Chairman, along with Commissioner Madhusudan Reddy and councilors, performed puja to the portrait of Sri Basaveshwara. Speaking on the occasion, several leaders and officials praised Basaveshwara Maharaj as a humanitarian, social reformer, and visionary who worked tirelessly to eradicate the caste, religion, and varna system. They said it was a matter of joy that the 893rd birth anniversary program of our Basaveshwara Maharaj, a progres-



sive thinker who completely opposed the caste system and gender discrimination entrenched in society 800 years ago, was being officially organized at the municipal office for the first time. "Councilors requested that the birth anniversary programs of great personalities like Constitution architect Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and social reformers Babu Jagjivan Ram, Jyotiba Phule, and Savitribai Phule should also be officially organized. On this occasion, greetings were extended to the people of Tandur town, officials, and councilors. "Municipal Chairperson Neeraja Bal Reddy, Vice Chairman Abdul Razak, Commissioner Madhusudan Reddy, ward councilors, and municipal officials participated in the program.

## AP Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's Birthday Celebrated Grandly in Uppal



Distribution of Buttermilk Packets "Under the Leadership of Telugu Yuvatha President Bazaru Hemanth Kumar Goud" UPPAL, APRIL 20 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "The birthday celebrations of Telugu Desam Party National President and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu were held grandly on Monday at Uppal Crossroads under the leadership of Uppal constituency Telugu Yuvatha President Bazaru Hemanth Kumar Goud. "On this occasion, a cake was cut at Uppal Crossroads and the celebrations



were conducted with enthusiasm. Later, around 2,000 buttermilk packets were distributed at Uppal Crossroads and in the surrounding areas. "The event was attended by TDP National Official Spokesperson Professor Jyothsa Tirunagari as the chief guest. Senior TDP leaders TGK Murthy, Pabbathi Shekhar Reddy, Anthagalla Ashok, Krishna Reddy, Dr. Rambabu, Obaiiah, Sai Nagarjuna, Shiva KP, Intiaz, Vishnu Goud, Ankamma Rao, Mukesh, Srinivas, and others also participated in the program.

## Collector Inspects Welfare School, Stresses Hygiene and Student Welfare



Wanaparthi correspondent, April 20, (Indian Chronicle): "District Collector Adarsh Surabhi emphasized the need to provide "clean food and improved facilities" for students in government welfare residential schools. He instructed officials to maintain proper hygiene and conduct a "special sanitation drive in school kitchens. As part of the "Praja Palana Pragathi Programme, the Collector visited the Telangana Social Welfare Residential School at Buddharam village in Gopalpet mandal on Monday. During his visit, he inspected the kitchen and mess facilities and directed staff to ensure cleanliness in all areas. He examined food stock registers and checked whether mess committee students were signing them regularly. The Collector also instructed that food must be "tasted by the supervisor before serving to students" to ensure quality. Later, he dined with the students and interacted with them to understand the facilities provided, hostel conditions, and any issues they were facing. "Free Spectacles Distributed to Students "The Collector stated that the government is giving special priority to student health. Under the 99-day action plan, "eye screening camps" were conducted across the district. Out of 6,950 students examined, 570 were identified with vision problems. In the Buddharam school, 69 out of 400 students were found to have eyesight issues. These students were provided free spectacles with the support of voluntary organizations such as OP Tibre Wala Foundation and Hyderabad Titans Round Table Charitable Trust. The Collector appreciated the efforts of the organizations and advised students to use the spectacles properly and focus on achieving good academic results. District Medical and Health Officer Sainath Reddy, DYSO Sudheer Reddy, school staff, and others participated in the programme.



# Demand for Comprehensive Probe into Idol Theft Incident : Marri Pururava Reddy



stituency after unidentified miscreants allegedly stole the idol of Goddess Sri Adavi Maisamma from a temple located near IDH Colony, New Boiguda, in the early hours of Monday. The temple houses shrines of Sri Katta Maisamma, Sri Uppalamma, and Sri Adavi Maisamma. The theft of the Adavi Maisamma idol has created concern among local residents and devotees. Upon receiving information from local BJP cadre, BJP State Youth Leader Marri Pururava Reddy rushed to the spot in the afternoon and inspected the temple premises. He interacted with local Parthi community leaders and gathered details about the incident. Later, speaking to police officials present at the site, Marri Pururava Reddy demanded a thorough investigation into the incident. He questioned whether it was merely a theft or if there was any larger conspiracy angle behind it, especially in light of similar incidents occurring in the city recently.

He also urged authorities to ensure that the culprits are identified and punished as per law. He further pointed out that there have been criticisms regarding inadequate police patrolling in the Gandhi Nagar Police Station limits and called upon officials to rectify the situation. Addressing the media, Marri Pururava Reddy criticized the state government, questioning its effectiveness. He stated that such incidents have been recurring since the Congress government came to power and expressed concern over alleged attacks on temples, accusing the government of remaining indifferent. He demanded that the government issue an immediate statement on the incident and ensure a detailed probe into any possible conspiracy angle. Local BJP leaders including Division President Rammamcha Mahesh, Angamuthu Srinivas, Y. Suresh Kumar, S. Raju, Gunti Satyanarayana, Sagat Vamsi, Chandrapal Reddy, K. Naresh, and Gopi Srinivas were also present.



Indian chronicle, Secunderabad, April 20 : "Tension prevailed in Bansilalpet Division under Sanath Nagar con-

# TDP Chief Chandrababu Naidu's 76th Birthday Celebrated in Secunderabad



Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, April 20: "On the occasion of the 76th birthday of Telugu Desam Party National President and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, celebrations were held at Warasiguda Junction under the leadership of TDP Buddhannagar Division President Praveen Kumar. TDP Secunderabad Constituency In-charge Vallarapu Srinivas Kumar attended the event as the chief guest. He cut a cake and distributed fruits to mark the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Vallarapu



Srinivas Kumar praised Chandrababu Naidu, stating that he is a leader who tirelessly works day and night for the welfare and development of the poor, downtrodden, and weaker sections of society. The program was attended by TDP Buddhannagar Division President Praveen Kumar, senior leaders Paritala Vijay Kumar, Potti Srinu, Shankar Mudiraj, Venkataswamy, Devender, Dental Praveen, Chiranjeevi Raju, Sheshirekha, Murali Krishna, Chander Mudiraj, and Srinu Yadav, among others.

# Gleneagles Hospital Bike on World Liver Day

Gleneagles Hospital in Lakshikapalooza, Hyderabad, organized a massive bike rally titled "Ride for a Cause" on the occasion of World Liver Day 2026. The event aimed to raise awareness about liver health and early detection of diseases. On the occasion of World Liver Day, which is celebrated on April 19 every year, this year's theme is "Solid Habits, Strong Liver", and the rally focused on how healthy lifestyle habits can protect the liver. More than 500 people, including bike clubs, hospital staff and youth from across Hyderabad, participated. This rally was led by Saifabad ACP R. Sanjay. Kumar flagged off the rally. The rally, which started from the hospital in Lakshikapala, proceeded through the main roads of the city and returned to the hospital. Bikers carried flags with messages on liver health and wore helmets to create awareness among the people.

Speaking on the occasion, doctors suggested that liver diseases can be prevented by eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, avoiding alcohol and undergoing regular health check-ups. Experts said that early screening and timely treatment are very important. Regional CEO of the hospital, Bharat Kant Reddy, said, through healthy habits. Speaking, he said that their goal is to improve the long-term health of the people through healthy habits. Chief Administrator Bharat M said that the aim is to increase awareness among the youth and make them health ambassadors. In addition to distributing pamphlets on liver health to the participants of the program, awareness was created on issues like fatty liver, diabetes, and viral hepatitis. Hospital administrators said that similar awareness programs will be organized widely in the future as well.

# Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Participates in Mallanna Festival

Uppal, April 20 (Indian Chronicle): "On the occasion of the Mallanna Festival (Patnal), Bandari Lakshma Reddy visited the residence of BRS party leader Ailesh in the Uppal division and took part in the festival celebrations. On this occasion, the MLA was warmly felicitated by Ailesh's family members and TRS/BRS party leaders. Several BRS leaders and party workers also participated in the event, including Mekala Madhusudhan Reddy, Akula Mahender, Anya Balakrishna, Pilli Nagaraju, and Chintala Narasimha Reddy, along with other party activists.



# District Collector should pay special attention to quality meals in government schools.

Special focus on cleanliness and quality meals in schools Medak District Collector. From lunch, sanitation, toilets are thoroughly inspected. Medak District Collector Pratima Singh. District Collector Pratima Singh stated that special attention should be paid to cleanliness and quality meals in schools. As part of the 99-day public governance progress plan program, in the background of the welfare week from today. On the first day, under the awareness of welfare schools, dormitory kitchen rooms, surroundings, hygiene, sanitation management and food quality, the Minority Girls School and Dormitory in Medak district center was visited on Monday by the District Collector along with the Municipal Commissioner Srinivas Reddy, the concerned teachers, and conducted a surprise inspection. On this occasion, the Collector thoroughly inspected the implementation of toilets and sanitation mid-day meal scheme in the school. It is advised to examine the cooking method and the cooking process and ensure that the food served to the



students is clean and tasty. Special attention should be paid to the quality of the ingredients used for cooking and the quality of the goods should be of proper standards

# Grand Celebration of Mahatma Basaveshwara 893rd Jayanti

Floral tributes offered to statue under MRPS leadership..Message of equality reiterated..



Zaheerabad April 20 ( Indian Chronicle ): "On the occasion of the 893rd birth anniversary of Mahatma Basaveshwara, floral tributes were offered to his statue at Dattagiri Colony in the municipal limits of Zaheerabad, Sangareddy district, under the aegis of MRPS. Local leaders and activists participated in the program and paid homage, recalling the services of the great reformer. Speaking on the occasion, MSP District President Abraham Madiga stated that Basaveshwara was one of the reformers who transformed Hindu society. Popularly known as

Basavanna, Basavudu, and revered as a "Vishwaguru," he strongly opposed the caste system, social discrimination, and gender inequality, emerging as a progressive thinker of his time. He further said that through his Vachana Sahitya, Basavanna spread the values of equality, harmony, and morality, uniting people beyond caste and religious divisions. His teachings inspired many and played a vital role in creating social awareness. He also highlighted that Basaveshwara played a significant role in the revival of the Veerashaiva tradition and that his legacy spread far beyond Karnataka across the country. Abraham Madiga opined that Basavanna advocated the principles of equality, social justice, and socialism much before Karl Marx, emphasizing that every individual in society deserves equal rights and dignity. Those present at the event included Jai Raj Madiga (MSP District Vice President), Nirmal Madiga (MRPS Mogudampally Mandal In-charge), Kittu, Bala Narasimhulu Madiga, Augustine, and others. The program concluded with a pledge to carry forward the ideals of Basaveshwara.

# Grand Basava Jayanti Celebrations Held at Huggelli Village



Former SC Corporation Chairman Y. Narottam Pays Floral Tributes to Basaveshwara... Zaheerabad April 20 ( Indian Chronicle ): "Basava Jayanti was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Huggelli village, under Zaheerabad constituency of Sangareddy district. On this occasion, former SC Corporation Chairman Y. Narottam paid rich floral tributes to the statue of Basaveshwara at the village crossroads. MLA Manik Rao, who attended the event, stated that the ideals of Basaveshwara continue to guide society. He emphasized that equality, social justice, and human values form the core of Basaveshwara's teachings and called upon people to follow them in their daily lives. Former CDC Chairman Umakanth Patil, along with councillors Nama Ravikiran, Vishweshwar, R. Subhash, G. Narsimlu, Subhash Rao, and several other leaders, participated in the program and paid their respects. A large number of villagers attended the celebrations with devotion, making the event.

# Grand Basaveshwara 893rd Jayanti Celebrations Held at Huggelli

Basaveshwara hailed as a warrior for an egalitarian society free from discrimination. MLA Manik Rao pays floral tributes to the statue..



Basaveshwara's efforts to eliminate caste, religious, and social inequalities and to ensure equal rights for all are truly commendable. He further emphasized that the teachings of Basaveshwara continue to guide society even today. He called upon people

# Singareni placards diverted attention in Jagtial meeting

Jagtial: Placards displayed by Singareni workers at the BRS Praja Ashirvada Sabha held in Jagtial on Monday attracted the attention of the participants in a big way. To highlight the problems of Singareni workers, members of Telangana Boggu Gani Karmika Sangham (TBGKS) from Godavarihan in Peddapalli district displayed placards at the meeting.

The write-ups on the placards started with "KCR Babu" and tried to explain the indifferent attitude of the state government towards Singareni workers. The Congress government has completely failed in conducting the Singareni medical board, providing dependent jobs and resolving the issue of wrong names. Moreover, the government was doing injustice to workers by denying them a share in profits.

# Mahatma Basaveshwara 893rd Jayanti Celebrated Grandly

Basavanna's teachings inspire equality and human values Former Minister Dr. A. Chandrasekhar



Zaheerabad April 20 ( Indian Chronicle ): "The 893rd birth anniversary of social reformer and great thinker Mahatma Basaveshwara was celebrated with great fervor at Huggelli Bypass in Zaheerabad town. Former Minister and Zaheerabad in-charge Dr. A. Chandrasekhar attended the event as the chief guest and paid floral tributes to the statue of Basaveshwara. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Chandrasekhar said that the messages of Basavanna continue to guide society across generations. He emphasized that values such as equality, truth, and justice must be practiced in everyday life. He noted that Basavanna's teaching—work is worship—remains highly relevant even today. He further stated that true development can only be achieved by establishing equality beyond caste and religious differences. By adopting a humane outlook and practicing universal human values,

# Farmers Anguish Over NIMZ Land Acquisition Intensifies

False Cases Won't Deter Us - Our Fight Will Continue Until Justice is Done... Zaheerabad April 20 ( Indian Chronicle ): "Farmers have expressed deep anguish, alleging that under the name of NIMZ, they are being forced to part with their lands and are being harassed with false cases, dragging them around courts. They made it clear that no matter how many cases are filed, they will not be intimidated, and their struggle will continue until justice is delivered. The farmers strongly condemned the government's actions, stating that forcible land acquisition is unjust and unacceptable. They pointed out that acquiring land in violation of the 2013 Land Acquisition Act is a serious mistake by the government. They also criticized certain local leaders for failing to stand with the farmers and instead supporting the government's unjust actions, calling it a betrayal of the farming community. Farmers said they



are going through immense distress in the vill

## Pune Riverfront Project under scrutiny as most of 1,700 'transplanted' trees go missing



GNS News Agency, April 20

A group of four citizens studying the urban ecology of Pune has alerted the municipal commissioner that more than 1,000 of 1,713 trees to be transplanted for the Riverfront Development (RFD) project have 'gone missing'. The group alleged that at the sites where most of these trees were meant to be transplanted, there are newly-planted trees of the same species. The group comprises Prajakta Mahajan, Prashant Shevgaonkar, Rahul Karambelkar, and Sandhya Gajendragadkar. Earlier this month, they began a study to document the trees that the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) had marked for transplantation for the RFD. The first stretch of the RFD spans 3.7 km, between Sangamwadi and Bund Garden, and this is where the group also focused its efforts. On this stretch, the number of trees impacted by the RFD work was 2,304. According to the RTI response from the PMC, 591 trees were retained, and 1,713 trees were transplanted. There was no information on the number of trees removed.

"Based on their location, we marked the destination areas or the target sites of the transplanted trees into six clusters. In three clusters in Ranjeet Nagar in Sangamwadi,

the number of trees that were expected to be transplanted were 271, 277, and 136. In three other clusters in Ranjeet Nagar, the expected number of transplanted trees were 37, 136 and 126," says the study, available with. "In Cluster 2, which should have had 277 transplanted trees, Cluster 4, which should have had 136 trees, and Cluster 5, which should have had 755 trees, we did not find any transplanted tree. All the trees were newly planted. Most of the trees matched the species and the location. However, they were not transplanted and it is unclear where the original trees went," the study adds.

The group reached out to the PMC to red flag "Lack of monitoring and documentation of transplanted trees, and a potential loss of mature ecological assets". The four are requesting a detailed tree census (before and after projects); transparency in tree transplantation data; long-term monitoring of transplanted trees; and preference for in-situ conservation over transplantation. The Indian Express tried to contact the PMC Commissioner but did not receive a response as yet. It is mostly in the case of Karanj, Waval, and rain trees that there are newly planted trees where the old trees should be standing. The study has also highlighted that most of the newly-planted trees are stable. "Even though we could not locate 126 trees (in Cluster 6), the few trees (less than 50) we saw were indeed transplanted and most of them are stable. The majority of the transplanted trees are Vilayati Chinch, which is highly adaptable, easy to grow and easy to transplant. However, it is not native. A few of the transplanted trees here are Karanj. Karanj is a classic riparian tree and grows very well near water bodies. The destination site is near the river and is suitable for Karanj trees," the study adds. "We are quite sure that the PMC Commissioner is going to investigate. I am very sure that the commissioner is committed to conservation and protection of trees," says Mahajan.

## Maharashtra improves score marginally, 96.66% students pass this year

Pune region of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) that covers Maharashtra state has recorded pass percentage of 96.66, marginally higher than last year's 96.54 per cent, when the board declared its Class 10 results on Wednesday. According to the authorities of Mumbai schools, it was the tough mathematics paper that resulted in fewer centums in the subject that usually help improve the overall scores. However, there was a sharp increase in students scoring 100/100 marks in Sanskrit, English and Artificial Intelligence.

However, CBSE's new dual examination allows students to improve their score in May, if they want to reappear. In line with the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, CBSE has introduced two board examinations for Class 10 students this year. On Wednesday, the board declared the result of the first examination held in February-March, while the second is scheduled in May. This will be optional and students can appear for a maximum of three major papers for the second exam. According to city schools, many of these applications for the second exam would seek to appear for mathematics papers, in a bid to improve scores.

Recalling students' complaints about tough mathematics paper, Principal of Rajhans Vidyalyaya in Andheri, Ritu Dubey, said, "It was a major concern after the mathematics paper and the impact is evident with no student scoring 100/100 in mathematics, while in Sanskrit and AI, we have many students scoring 100/100." At R N Podar School in Santacruz, none of the students have scored 100/100 in mathematics, which according to Headmistress Suman Samarth is very uncommon. "But we are glad that our high-scoring students have been able to score up to 95/100 in mathematics. We have a record — 19 of our students scoring 100/100 in English," said Samarth. Kalpana Dwivedi, Principal of Bal Bharati School in Navi Mumbai also shared that many of her students have been able to score well in mathematics, despite challenging paper. "But nobody has scored 100/100. Almost the entire school has applied for the second exam," said Dwivedi. Leena Verma, principal of St Joseph School in Panvel, said the mathematics paper had many competency-based questions, which were challenging. "But these changes are as per the NEP recommendations... With the dual system, they have another



chance to improve their score," said Verma.

Anshuman Das from RN Podar school has scored 99.4 per cent and plans to study for JEE with an aim to join an IIT to study computer science engineering. Anshuman's father is an engineer and sister is an engineering student. With interest in Physics, he said, "It is one of the toughest exams and I want to challenge myself." Playing musical instruments such as piano and guitar has been his favourite past-time to manage stress. "I would plan my study time in a way that the syllabus is distributed evenly across multiple days, and would still have days to revise," he said. Dhawal Sawant from Ryan International School in Kandivali scored 99.4 per cent. Aspiring to become an industrial engineer, Dhawal has begun his preparation to appear for various engineering entrance exams. He is keen to join IIT but is more focused on studying this particular branch of engineering. "I'm studying for all entrance tests and depending on my score, I will make a decision," said Dhawal, adding that he prefers taking one step at a time without any stress. "I plan my study time, including multiple breaks to relax or listen to music," he said. Garv Soni from St. Joseph School in Panvel has scored 99 per cent. An IIT aspirant, Garv has already begun preparation for JEE. Keen to become an AI engineer, he hopes to clear JEE Advanced to secure a seat in a good IIT. Garv's father is an engineer but he became inclined toward engineering following his interest in the emerging technology of AI. "During my board exam year, I managed to find time for cycling and to play chess, which worked as a stress-buster," he said.

## Mukarba Chowk underpass 98% complete, will be opened soon, says minister



GNS News Agency, April 20

Work on the construction of an underpass in North Delhi's congested Mukarba Chowk is 98% complete and it will be opened for traffic in a few days, Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh said on Wednesday. Singh, while inspecting the project, said that PWD has finished the construction work and only final touches remain. "We plan to open this for traffic in a few days, as the work is 98% complete," he added. In a statement, the Delhi government said the project, aimed at easing congestion at the busy Mukarba Chowk intersection on Outer Ring Road, has been executed using jack pushing technology — a method that uses hydraulic jacks to propel pre-cast reinforced concrete (RCC) structures through the ground to build underpasses or tunnels.

The project, which includes construction of three tun-

nels for two-wheelers, pedestrians and four-wheelers, had taken off in 2022. Addressing mediapersons, Singh said, "The stretch repeatedly witnesses heavy traffic. To fix this, our department has constructed three tunnels through which pedestrians can pass." The government said the underpass will provide direct connectivity between Badli/Rohini and Azadpur/Jahangirpuri, reducing the need for vehicles to navigate the congested interchange. Officials estimate that around 15,800 vehicles per day will use the corridor. The project is expected to reduce travel time by up to 10 minutes per vehicle and cut travel distance by about 1 km per trip. According to the statement, the project will also result in fuel savings of around 58,000 litres annually and reduce around 135 tonnes of CO2 emissions each year. The inclusion of dedicated pedestrian underpasses has been highlighted as a safety measure for people crossing the corridor. Lack of infrastructure for pedestrians and unsafe road crossing conditions have made Mukarba Chowk a major area prone to accidents. The junction functions both as a traffic and a transport interchange, with people relying on multiple modes of transport but without adequate facilities, such as waiting areas or designated pedestrian spaces, said officials. During the inspection, Singh also reviewed desilting work being carried out on supplementary drains by the Irrigation and Flood Control department to ensure that the underpass remains free of waterlogging during monsoon. "This is not just about completing a project, it's about improving one's daily life. People who pass through here daily should feel the difference," he added.

## LSR students protest Principal praising women quota in BJP video, she says 'views are personal'

GNS News Agency, April 20

Students of Lady Shri Ram College for Women (LSR) protested against Principal Dr Kanika K Ahuja on Wednesday after she appeared in a video posted on the BJP's official Instagram handle praising the Women's Reservation Bill. The video, shared on April 13 on BJP's 'BJP4India' Instagram handle as part of a series supporting the Bill, or 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam', featured Ahuja describing the legislation as "a constitutional course correction" and "long overdue." In the clip, she said the Bill reflects a shift "from women's development to women-led development" and expressed hope that it would enable more women, including LSR students, to take on leadership roles.

The Bill aims to implement 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies by the 2029 general election and increase Lok Sabha seats to 850, from 543. Speaking to The Indian Express on Wednesday, Ahuja said the views expressed were personal. "The views were shared in the video in an individual capacity. While I hold the office of the Principal, it is important to distinguish between personal intellectual engagement with a social subject and a formal institutional communication. The participation was an exercise of personal opinion and does not constitute an official policy stance of LSR." "The college's commitment to an apolitical environment refers to an absence of partisan affiliation not a detachment from critical social discourse. My support for the Women's Reservation Bill is rooted in the fundamental principle of gender justice, a value central to this institution's ethos. I view the Bill as a significant step toward empowering 50% of the population by ensuring their representation in the Lok Sabha. Analysing legislative moves that promote equity in an academic and social necessity, rather than a political contradiction," she added.

On students alleging that some speakers and events are restricted on the campus in the name of neutrality, Ahuja said, "The selection of speakers and the organisation of events are decentralised processes at LSR. These decisions are primarily driven by the respective student societies in consultation with their faculty advisors. The



administration's role is to facilitate a safe and conducive environment for these activities." Asked how the administration is dealing with the current protest, Ahuja said, "We are engaged in an active and transparent dialogue with the student body. We recognise that within a vibrant academic community, there will naturally be a diversity of opinions, some in agreement and others in opposition." "In fact, out of a population of 4,000 students, only around 175 students are questioning the video. Several have appreciated it and concurred with the views expressed in it. We view these disagreements as an opportunity for growth and mutual understanding. We are committed to resolving the current concerns through continued discussion and democratic engagement," she added. The protest on Wednesday saw students raising slogans against what they termed as "safronisation" of the college. Holding placards that read "Feminism is political" and "Safronisation se azadi," the protesters demanded that the administration should stop inviting BJP leaders and discontinue events perceived to be backed by the party. The Student Federation of India (SFI) also expressed support for the protesting students. In a statement posted on social media, SFI Delhi joint secretary Mehina Fathima said that "...using educational institutions as tools for propagating politics of BJP and RSS will not be tolerated by the student community". The protest at LSR reflects concerns being raised across campuses, the statement added.

## 8 Karnataka pilgrims killed as cement tanker hits vehicle near Mantralayam



GNS News Agency, April 20

As many as eight pilgrims, including six women, from Karnataka, on their way to seek blessings at Mantralayam, were killed and 13 others injured in a head-on collision between a cement-laden tanker and a Bolero goods vehicle in Andhra Pradesh's Kurnool district early Thursday. The accident occurred around 2.45 am near Chikalaladona village in Mantralayam mandal, when the Bolero, carrying pilgrims from Chikkamagaluru district, was en route to darshan. The

police said the vehicle, driven by Sunil, 40, collided with a tanker approaching from the opposite direction.

"The impact was severe as both vehicles were at considerable speed. Prima facie, rash and negligent driving by the tanker driver appears to have caused the collision," a police officer from Mantralayam Police Station said. Five occupants of the Bolero died on the spot, while several others sustained critical injuries. They were rushed to the Government Hospital in Mantralayam, where three more victims succumbed, taking the death toll to eight.

Among the deceased are Kumar, 60, Deepika Veena, 35, Sunil, 40, a three-year-old child, Belli, Puttamma, 60, Meenakshi, 50, Lolakshi, and Yashoda, 60. All the victims were residents of different villages in Chikkamagaluru district, the police said. Of the injured, nine were later referred to the Government General Hospital in Kurnool for advanced treatment, while others are undergoing care locally. The bodies have been shifted to the Government Hospital in Yemmiganur for post-mortem examination. The tanker driver, identified as Ramanna Basappa, 28, reportedly escaped unhurt. Senior police officials, including the Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) of Yemmiganur, visited the accident site and are supervising the investigation.

## Congress Bhavnagar city chief booked for abduction of own candidate, then a twist

Hours after Bhavnagar City Congress president Manoharsinh Gohil alias Lalbha was detained at Bortalav police station for allegedly abducting his own party candidate for Bhavnagar Municipal Corporation (BMC) election, the candidate himself released a video and submitted a notarised affidavit stating that he had gone into hiding in the neighbouring Amreli district "to protect democracy". Bhavnagar SP Nitesh Pandey confirmed that Lalbha Gohil was booked for abduction of Bharat Ramesh Kambad and brought to Bortalav police station for questioning, but he was allowed to leave later. The FIR was filed on the basis of a complaint by Saitesh Ramesh Kambad, a brother of Congress candidate Kambad, stating that the latter had been missing since April 14. Congress MP Shaktisinh Gohil on Wednesday night lambasted the BJP for carrying out "cheap politics" to make Congress candidates withdraw their nominations from the local body elections. Gohil told "Our candidate had left Bhavnagar of

his own volition, then did a video and the police still booked Lalbha Gohil, the Bhavnagar City president, for abduction and detained him. They let him go only after the candidate submitted an affidavit. But I've never seen such a misuse of power in my life. In this particular case, the FIR is also suspicious where the candidate's brother is saying someone told him that his brother may have been abducted." "The Indian Express has also seen the affidavit submitted by the Congress candidate Kambad, who has filed his nomination from the Vadva-A seat from Ward-8 of Bhavnagar Municipal Corporation (BMC). The notarized documents stated, "I solemnly swear that since I am the Congress party candidate from BMC, so that I do not face pressure, inducement or threat before the last day of withdrawing the nomination, I have, of my own volition and to protect democracy, stayed away from Bhavnagar. Nobody has taken me or abducted me against my will. When I reached Amreli, I learnt that there were rumours of my abduction.

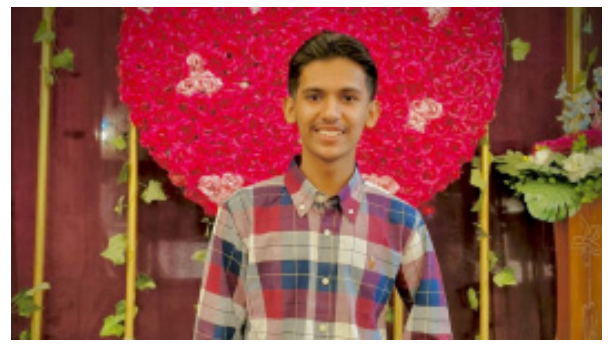
## Fazilka boy scores 100%, Ludhiana region records 95.70 pass pc

GNS News Agency, April 20

VAIBHAV ARORA of Holy Heart Day Boarding Public School in Fazilka scored a perfect 500 in the CBSE Class 10 board examinations (session-1). Arora secured 100 out of 100 in all five main subjects—English, Mathematics (Standard), Science, Social Studies and Punjabi along with a perfect 100 in Information Technology as his sixth subject. Congratulating Vaibhav and his parents, the school management described his accomplishment as a historic moment for the institution. Principal Ritu Bhursi said, "He is has been our student since kindergarten onwards. Now he has enrolled in class 11 in nonmedical stream. We are proud of his achievement."

Vaibhav credited his success to discipline and regular study habits. He said he studied for nearly eight hours daily and bal-anced academics with playing cricket in his free time. The pass percentage of Ludhiana region stood at 95.70%, higher than national average of 93.70%, as the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) declared class 10 results for 2025-26 session, Wednesday. Earlier, this region (consisting Punjab, UT Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir and Leh) was headquartered at Chandigarh, but recently the board relocated the region's headquarters to Ludhiana, renaming it as Ludhiana region. The pass percentage for boys in Ludhiana region stands at 94.6%, while for the girls it was 97.04%. A total of 5,975 candidates from Ludhiana region have been placed in compartment (4.13%). Two boys from Ludhiana, Saksham Mittal of DAV Public School, BRS Nagar and Divyanshu Jaju of Police DAV Public School, Civil Lines, cleared the exams scoring 99.8% marks.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Saksham, resident of Jagraon town, said that he never took board exam stress and had even "left a few chapters" during the final revision. "I took tuition for science but prepared for all other subjects on my own and did selfstudy," said Saksham, who has scored perfect 100 in English, Artificial Intelligence (AI),



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Punjabi and social studies and 99 in maths and science. His father Harish Kumar Mittal owns a rice mill and mother Sonia is a homemaker. "I did not study continuously for hours and hours. I divided my study hours chapterwise," he said. He has opted for non-medical stream in class 11. Divyanshu Jaju's father Dinesh Kumar Jaju is a businessman and mother Vandana is a homemaker. "Consistency is the key. Apart from my parents, I would credit my diary for this result. I have maintained a diary since the day I entered class 10. I write everything in that diary including my schedule, what I learnt and what remains pending, my plans for the next day and even my screen time. I am maintaining that diary even after exams are over as it helps me to keep myself organized and disciplined. I did not take tuition for any subject and it was all self-study," he said. He too has opted for non-medical in class 11 and is preparing for JEE. He scored perfect 100 in social studies, maths, Hindi and IT, and 99 in Punjabi and science. He loves to follow stock market. He is also the U-17 chess team captain in his school.

## Teenager chased, murdered with machete, bricks over past rivalry, search on for accused

GNS News Agency, April 20

AN 18-year-old youth was chased and brutally attacked with a machete and bludgeoned with bricks in the early hours of Wednesday in Yerawada area of Pune over past rivalries. Police have launched a search for the attackers including a man with whom the sister of the deceased is married, police said. Vishrantwadi police identified the deceased as Gaurav Ganesh Telangi (18), a resident of Sinhad Road area. Police identified the alleged assailants as Tofik Shaikh, Rajan Doraswami and Samir Shinde and their four to five accomplices. An FIR has been registered by Telangi's friend Sayan Nizamuddin Shaikh (18) at Vishrantwadi police station.

The incident took place sometime around 12.30 am on Wednesday when Telangi, Sayan and some other friends were returning home via Comerzone Road in Panchsheel Nagar part of Yerawada after watching the celebrations of the birth anniversary of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar in Vishrantwadi. Telangi and Sayan felt that a gunshot had been fired. Fearing risk to life they started running. Sayan saw Tofik Shaikh, Rajan Doraswami and Samir Shinde chasing Telangi. Tofik was carrying something that looked like a gun while others were carrying machetes, states the FIR. The assailants inflicted multiple injuries with sharp weapons and also hit Telangi multiple times with bricks leaving him bleeding profusely on the ground. The assailants then fled on their bikes. Telangi's friends stopped a rickshaw and rushed him to Sassoon General Hospital. He was pronounced dead by the doctors at Sassoon. Subsequently, a case of murder was registered at Vishrantwadi



police station. Senior Inspector Mangesh Hande of Vishrantwadi police station said, "A search is on for the suspects." Deputy Commissioner of Police Chilumula Rajnikanth said, "There have been past rivalries between the two groups over multiple reasons. Probe suggests that suspect Tofik and deceased Telangi used to be friends. However Telangi's sister married Tofik and since then their relations have gone sour. We are working on various leads to arrest the suspects. The family of Telangi has told us he was enrolled in a college but was not attending it regularly." Police said that investigation has also revealed that Telangi was one of the accused in an attack in which Rajan Doraswami's brother lost his forehead in a machete attack in July last year. Police are investigating whether this incident was one of the motives of the attack on Wednesday.

## Malad train stabbing: Chargesheet filed against 27-year-old for murder of professor



GNS News Agency, April 20

The Borivali Government Railway Police (GRP) on Wednesday filed a 250-page chargesheet against 27-year-old Omkar Eknath Shinde for the alleged murder of 32-year-old NM College professor Alok Kumar Singh in a crowded local train at Malad. According to police, the chargesheet lists 63 witnesses, including four eyewitnesses who directly saw the incident. Statements of two key witnesses have been recorded before the Borivali Magistrate Court, including Singh's colleague Sudhir Trivedi, who was present during the incident.

Investigators said key forensic evidence is still pending. Blood samples recovered from a tweezer—suspected to be the weapon—were sent to the Kalina Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), and the report is awaited. "Once the FSL report is received, it will be submitted before the court," an officer said. Police have also cited CCTV footage that allegedly shows the accused fleeing the platform and crossing the foot overbridge immediately after the attack. The incident occurred on January 24 when Singh and Shinde were travelling on a Borivali-bound local train. An argument reportedly broke out between them over getting down at Malad station. During the altercation, Shinde allegedly stabbed Singh in the left abdomen with a tweezer while alighting from the train. Though the external injury appeared minor, it proved fatal. The post-mortem report revealed that the weapon penetrated deep into the abdomen, damaging internal organs and major blood vessels, leading to severe internal bleeding. Doctors concluded that the injuries were sufficient to cause death. The weapon, described as a sharp tweezer about six inches long, was later recovered outside Malad railway station. Police said the force of the attack caused a deep internal injury despite minimal external bleeding.

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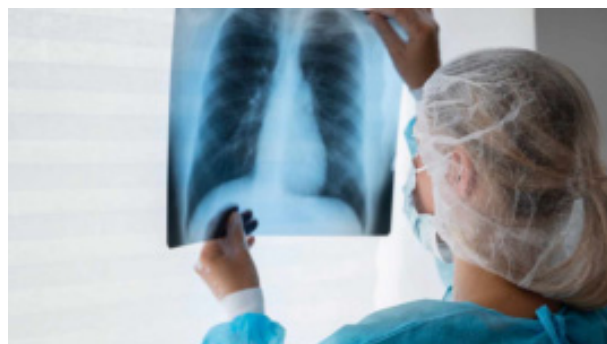
## Detained in Bhuj for two years, Pakistani man who crossed border dies of Tuberculosis

GNS News Agency, April 20

A 31-year-old man who had illegally crossed into India from Pakistan through the international border in Gujarat has died due to undiagnosed tuberculosis (TB) after over two years of detention at the Joint Interrogation Centre (JIC) in Bhuj, Kutch, officials said on Wednesday.

The deceased, whose identity remained unknown in life and, now, even in death, was said to be hearing- and speech-impaired, leaving authorities not able to communicate with him throughout his detention. The Kutch (West) police, which administers the JIC, only learnt of his approximate age by way of medical age estimation, which requires tests for skeletal age and dental age estimation, as established in law, to be carried out. SP Vikas Sunda of Kutch (West) told the Indian Express: "The individual was apprehended by the Border Security Force (BSF) on January 16, 2024, while attempting to cross the border from Pakistan. They handed him over to the Dayapar police station, where a diary note was made. He had been detained at JIC, Bhuj, since."

All illegal immigrants or infiltrators caught at the border are, if not booked for any other crimes on Indian soil, detained at one of two JICs in Gujarat, one at Bhuj and the other at Ahmedabad. The cause of death, said SP Sunda, was tuberculosis. Notably, the young man had never been under treatment and, in fact, had never even been diagnosed with the disease in the two years he was detained at the Joint Interrogation Centre.



Last week, he fell sick, after which officials called for a government doctor who suggested that he be transferred to a hospital for treatment. The man was admitted to GK General Hospital in Bhuj where he died on April 12, confirmed SP Sunda. His body was moved to a morgue even as officials awaited further legal processes. Following the death of the detainee, the Kutch (West) Police have written to the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi through the Ministry of Home Affairs with his photograph, description and details of his apprehension and detention. They were still awaiting a reply as of April 15, said SP Vikas Sunda. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in such cases, said the officer, are that if the body is claimed, it is handed over to the respective nation, and if not, the police carry out the final rites.

## Two women BJP leaders engage in verbal duel over girl's hostel

GNS News Agency, April 20

At a time when the political reservation for women in Lok Sabha and Assembly election will be discussed in Parliament on Thursday for implementation, two women BJP leaders — sitting corporator Rohini Chimte and former corporator Rajashree Kale — created a ruckus in the main building of Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) by engaging in verbal duel over construction of girls hostel in Baner. The PMC is constructing a four-storey building for residential education centre for backward community and tribal category girl students in Baner. The building will have parking on ground floor, four classrooms, kitchen, office, mess, meeting hall on first floor and 12 rooms each on the next three floors to accommodate a total of 120 girl students.

According to PMC, most of the civil work of the project has been completed at an expense of Rs 6.58 crore while additional expenses of Rs 3 crore has been approved for electric and furniture work to be undertaken in the current financial year. Chimte along with her supporters visited the civic main building on Wednesday to complain about the ongoing construction of the girls hostel which was put on hold and she reportedly urged the civic administration to send the contractor to meet her. At the same time, Kale reached the civic office and alleged that Chimte was stalling the implementation of the project. The two engaged in a verbal duel abusing each other. Chimte left the civic office as Kale continued to speak against her. Later, Kale alleged, "Chimte was demanding money from the contractor to let ongoing work continue. Work worth Rs 3 crore is to be done this year and there was no reason for her to interfere in the civic work." "The girls hostel is for backward class and tribal category students. What has Chimte done till now for the tribal and backward class community," Kale said. Chimte



said the allegations made by Kale were completely false. "I had visited the civic office to enquire about the damaged compound wall near the project site. Kale came and started an argument," she said. Chimte was elected to PMC on NCP ticket in previous term and shifted to BJP ahead of civic polls this year. Both Chimte and Kale were elected to PMC from the seat reserved for women in ST category. "The incident is very serious and needs to be condemned. Their political party should look into the issue as this is happening a day before there is a discussion of reservation for women in politics at state and national level. and the civic administration should enquire whether there was corruption in the past and present for implementation of the project," said civic activist Vivek Velankar. Activist Vaishali Patkar said the city has a woman mayor and women corporators have been doing good work in performing their duties. "Sitting and former corporator should not get into such fights as it sends wrong message in public when everyone is supporting the reservation of women in state assembly and Lok Sabha elections," she said.

## PMLA Tribunal partly overturns ED's asset seizures against builder Bhosale in Yes Bank-DHFL Case

GNS News Agency, April 20

Pune-based builder Avinash Bhosale has won partial relief from a money laundering tribunal, which overturned most of the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) seizures of his properties linked to the Yes Bank-DHFL case. The Appellate Tribunal under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) — the court that hears challenges to ED actions — set aside the bulk of provisional attachments the agency had made against Bhosale in 2022. However, it upheld attachments on properties worth Rs 25 crore that were allegedly received by his entities.

The properties where the attachment stands include a 6,143-square-metre land parcel in Pune, attached for Rs 14.65 crore under the name of Samit Realty, and a 20,200-square-foot land parcel in Nagpur valued at Rs 15.52 crore, registered in the name of his wife, Gauri Bhosale. The ED had originally seized assets worth over Rs 163 crore. These included a duplex flat in Mumbai worth Rs 102.8 crore; two land parcels in Pune worth Rs 14.65 crore and Rs 29.24 crore respectively; and two land parcels in Nagpur worth Rs 15.52 crore and Rs 1.45 crore respectively.

We find reason to cause interference in the impugned order for provisional attachment of the properties other than the properties worth Rs 25 crore," a bench comprising Chairman Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandari and Member G C Mishra held on April 1. The CBI arrested Yes Bank founder Rana Kapoor and DHFL promoters Kapil and Dheeraj Wadhawan in 2022 for allegedly conspiring to extend financial assistance to DHFL, a housing finance company, in exchange for substantial undue benefits to Kapoor and his family members. Yes Bank, under Kapoor, had invested Rs 3,700 crore into DHFL's short-term debentures in 2018. Bhosale entered the picture through developer Sanjay Chhabria of the Radius Group. Investigators alleged that DHFL diverted funds to Chhabria under the guise of developing his project called 'Avenue 54.' Chhabria then allegedly transferred Rs 431 crore — of which Rs 267 crore moved from April 2018 onwards — to Bhosale, his family, and their entities, including Nibodh Realty LLP.

What Bhosale argued Bhosale and others argued be-



fore the Appellate Tribunal that the transactions with Chhabria were between two independent parties who were not named in the predicate offence — the scheduled crime that gives rise to a money laundering charge — and constituted legitimate commercial dealings, including a 2014 loan agreement and consultancy arrangements. The Tribunal noted that the issue concerned the power of the Investigating Officer to "question the commercial transaction entered between the two parties four years prior to commission of the crime." The bench found that lawyers for the agencies "could not clarify the power of the IO to examine an agreement to be commercially irrational when no allegation by any of the parties was made for it." In other words, the ED had labelled the Chhabria-Bhosale deal commercially irrational, but could not show it had the legal authority to make that call, especially when no such allegation existed in either the CBI's FIR or the ED's own ECIR — the Enforcement Case Information Report, which is the document that initiates a money laundering investigation. "The respondents (authorities) have not taken the agreement to be illegal or void but held it to be commercially irrational without showing their authority to draw an inference for it when there was no allegation in the FIR or ECIR," the Tribunal noted. The bench further held that "the amount taken to be proceeds of crime" could not be determined based on assumptions, and that the reason for the provisional attachment of that tranche of funds could not be accepted.

## One more detained; probe widens into drug supply chain



GNS News Agency, April 20

The Vanrai police have detained one more person in connection with the deaths of two management students after alleged drug overdose during a concert in Goregaon (East) on April 11, even as six to seven police teams probe the case and hunt for others linked to the supply chain. Police said the bodies of the two students have been handed over to their families. A 24-year-old woman from Lucknow was taken to her hometown for last rites, while the male student from Delhi was cremated in Mumbai. Both were enrolled at a city business school and stayed at a South Mumbai hostel. A third student who had accompanied them survived and is recovering in a hospital.

Investigators said the students were part of a group of 20–22 who attended a techno music concert at an exhibition ground in Goregaon East. Police suspect the students consumed MDMA (ecstasy) pills at the event. So far, statements of 12 people, including students present at the concert, have been recorded to piece together the sequence of events. A senior officer said videography of the post-mortem was conducted and viscera samples have been preserved and sent for forensic analysis. Police said the drug trail has led to a suspected peddler, Anand Patel from Kalyan, who allegedly supplied the pills to a student a day before the event, who then distributed them among classmates. Six people have been arrested so far, including two students,

event organiser Akash Samal, NESCO employees Samir Jain alias Sani and Kurup Balkrishna, and alleged supplier Anand Patel. All have been remanded in police custody till April 16. Meanwhile in a parallel development, the Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC) of the Crime Branch arrested a suspected drug supplier from Sakinaka on Wednesday and seized 200 MDMA pills worth Rs 26 lakh. The accused identified as Irfan Ali Ansari (40), was earlier arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau in 2021 with 50 ecstasy pills and had spent nearly four years in jail before being released on bail last year. Police suspect he resumed drug supply operations after his release. Officials said Ansari is being questioned to ascertain any links to the Goregaon concert case. "As of now, no direct connection has been established, but the probe is ongoing," an officer said.

## IVRS glitch disrupts water tanker bookings, customer services

Hyderabad: A technical glitch in Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) of the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) faced ended up disrupting several customer related services on Thursday. The Water Board in a press release informed customers that the metro customer care number: 155313 was temporarily not operational due to an IVRS technical issue. The BSNL technical team is working urgently to resolve the problem, the water board said while advising customers to use alternative methods for water tanker booking as per their needs. Customers can book a tanker online through the HMWSSB official website: www.hyderabadwater.gov.in by logging in, entering the required details and completing the booking.

## Amid charges of kidnap & pressure tactics, last-minute withdrawals hits Congress hard



GNS News Agency, April 20

The last day of withdrawal of nominations for the April 26 Gujarat local body elections witnessed high drama with the Congress struggling to keep its flock together as some of its candidates withdrew from the contest at the last minute. In at least two districts, complaints of Congress candidates being "kidnapped" were filed by their family members.

Bharat Kambad, a Congress candidate for Bhavnagar Municipal Corporation released a statement saying that he was not kidnapped and that he had gone away from Bhavnagar as the date for withdrawal of nomination drew near "to protect himself and democracy from any kind of pressure, allurements or threat". In Kheda district, Chikhlod seat in Fagvel taluka will see fresh elections as all candidates withdrew their nominations, including those of the BJP, Congress and independents. Across the municipal corporations of Ahmedabad, Surat and Vadodara, at least nine candidates of the Congress withdrew from the contest — four in Ahmedabad, two in Surat and two in Vadodara — reportedly without taking their party into confidence.

In Surat, the Congress has allegedly whisked its candidates away to Udaipur, Daman and Vapi, to protect them from what the party alleged was "pressure tactics of the BJP", and yet two candidates reportedly "sneaked out" and withdrew their nominations. Thus, in Surat Municipal Corporation's 120 seats, the Congress will contest in 117 seats, as one candidate's nomination was rejected. Congress Rajya Sabha MP Shaktisinh Gohil has alleged in a statement on X that "false kidnapping cases are being filed by intimidating family members (of the Congress candidates)". He posted the notarised affidavit by Bharat Kambad on his X handle where the candidate has said the reports about his kidnapping are "rumours". Two Congress candidates — Sanjay Ramanandi from ward no. 18 and Bonnie Patel from ward no. 1 — reached the Surat district collector's office, "bypassing the Congress leaders", and submitted withdrawal forms. Their statements were recorded on video in which they said they were "not under any political pressure" and their withdrawal was "voluntary". Forms of three AAP candidates: Girish Chauhan from ward no. 20, Jagrutiben Baldaniya from ward no. 27 and Darshana Bhavsar from ward no. 21, and one of the Congress Bhupendra Solanki, from Ward No. 12 were rejected.

Surat City Congress president Vipul Udhawala told,

"The BJP is using all its machinery to get our candidates to withdraw their nomination forms. They are using tactics such as luring our candidates with money, threatening their businesses, and creating social pressure on them. We have somehow saved most of our candidates; Only two, on whom we had placed more faith, have surrendered to them. We had already learnt about the BJP's tactics, so we have taken out candidates to Udaipur, Vapi, and Daman, in banquet halls and farmhouses, etc. Seventy of our candidates are not only fresh faces but are new to the party". In Ahmedabad, Congress candidate Pradeep Patel from Chandodiya ward and candidate from Sarkhej ward Varis Alvi withdrew their nominations. Congress's Bharat Bharwad had withdrawn on Monday. Another setback for the party in the municipal corporation was from Thaltej ward where Congress candidate Ramlaben Thakor too withdrew, while the other woman candidate Falguni Rawal did not reach on time to file her nomination from the reserved seat of Vasna.

Congress candidate Kanu Prajapati of Ward-11 of Vadodara city withdrew his form on Wednesday, a day after he went "incommunicado". The Congress alleged that Prajapati was "escorted by police and BJP leaders" to the election office when he withdrew his nominations. Prajapati had filed nominations to contest from the ward where BJP fielded Upendra Prajapati, son of former Congress Vadodara Mayor Dalsukh Prajapati. On Wednesday, Prajapati arrived at the office of the Mamiatdar in Akota, accompanied by BJP leaders, and withdrew his nomination. Congress leaders, who were present at the spot, protested and chanted slogans accusing the saffron party of "murdering democracy". Congress city president Rutvij Joshi alleged that BJP leaders had threatened and lured Congress candidates. "Two of our candidates were out of contact since yesterday — from Ward 11 and 2 and today they, accompanied by BJP leaders, withdrew their nomination papers. The BJP is scared of losing this election and so they have adopted unfair means by misusing its power to commit the murder of democracy," Joshi alleged. Congress candidate from Ward 2 of the VMC Bhoomika Prajapati also withdrew her nomination form — she was also accompanied by BJP leaders. The VMC has a total of 76 councillor seats. In Dabhoi taluka of Vadodara district, Congress and BJP leaders came to blows after party candidate from Lingsthal seat Arvind Patanwadia withdrew his nomination form "in a surprise move". Congress taluka president Sudhir Barot and BJP MLA Shailesh Mehta engaged in a verbal spat and allegedly came to blows outside the taluka election office. The police intervened and ensured Mehta's departure even as BJP and Congress workers clashed at the spot. In Rapar taluka of Kutch district, the police are investigating a complaint regarding the alleged kidnapping of Congress candidate Rajesh Bhil from Bhimasar village. He went missing three days ago and is still untraceable. On Wednesday, the Junagadh district police booked a candidate of the Aam Aadmi Party from the Osa seat of the Junagadh taluka panchayat, Nilesh Hardas Malam, for possessing illicit liquor worth Rs one lakh. Elections to 15 municipal corporations, 84 municipalities, 34 district panchayats and 260 taluka panchayats totalling to 9,952 seats will be held on April 26, and the results declared on April 28.

## Iran's military forces combine state-of-art drones, hackers with out-of-date conventional weapons -



Six weeks of US and Israeli bombardment have served to degrade Iran's nuclear facilities and cripple parts of its military. But the Islamic Republic's offensive capabilities have been built up over nearly 50 years, during which Iran has been either at war or under the threat of conflict. As an expert in military history and theory, I believe that to understand what may come next in Operation Epic Fury, it's valuable to grasp the development of Iran's modern military structure, capabilities and international activities. Iranian military technology

Prior to the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, Iran's military was largely supplied by Western powers, particularly the United States. It entered the Iran-Iraq war in 1980 with a substantial amount of then-modern equipment. That included nearly 80 F-14 fighter aircraft, over 200 F-4 and F-5 aircraft and thousands of tanks. But Iran's military was exhausted when the war ended in 1988. And the government had by then become a world pariah, making resupply all but impossible. Although Iran imported some military equipment from the Soviet Union and China in 1990, its economy could not support substantial military spending.

Ironically, the arms embargoes that Iran faced during and after its war with Iraq made the regime self-reliant on its weapons stockpiles. And that triggered the development of a substantial domestic arms industry. Most modern Iranian military equipment consists of reverse-engineered American and Soviet equipment, much of it obsolete. Since 1990, however, Iranian missile technology has substantially improved. That's due to domestic production and importing expertise from other marginalised states, such as North Korea. Starting in the 1990s, Iran also innovated a series of one-way attack drones, a relatively inexpensive way to attack distant targets. The modern Iranian military

The Iranian military is split into the regular military, or "Artesh," and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The Artesh plays a domestic defence role akin to a militia, while the Revolutionary Guard serves as the more professional military force. The Revolutionary Guard projects regional power. During the 2003 US-Iraq war, for instance, it provided improvised explosive devices to insurgents targeting American forces. The Revolutionary Guard tends to receive the bulk of Iranian military resources, including the best personnel and equipment. Quds Force, the unconventional warfare wing of the Revolutionary Guard, has long played a role in exporting the revolutionary beliefs of the Iranian rulers.

The Quds Force provides arms and guidance to proxies throughout the Middle East, primarily by fomenting insurrections against Arab Sunni governments. Iran has long been the patron of Hezbollah, based in Lebanon, whose

primary goal is the eradication of Israel. More recently, Iran has also engaged in substantial support of Hamas in Gaza, despite the fact that Hamas is a Sunni organisation, while the rulers of Iran are members of the Shiite branch of Islam. Iran has constantly sought means of exerting military influence beyond its borders, without risking external attack. It has embraced the use of cyber warfare, a method of attack with a relatively low cost for participation and a potentially outsized influence on the world stage. Iranian hackers have attacked Western military and government networks, including a hack of FBI Director Kash Patel's personal emails. Iranian-backed hackers have also launched attacks on infrastructure and cultural institutions, including US wastewater treatment plants and electrical grids. Iran's pursuit of atomic weaponry

Iran's government has relentlessly pursued nuclear weapons since at least the 1980s. The Iranian government has always maintained that its nuclear program is to provide power for the developing nation, rather than weaponry. But definitive evidence of uranium enrichment far beyond the requirements of power generation has caused Western states to demand an end to the Iranian nuclear program. In 2010, cybersecurity researcher Sergey Ulasen discovered an incredibly complex malware program, dubbed Stuxnet, that was created to undermine the Iranian nuclear program by disrupting the function of enrichment centrifuges. No nation has ever taken responsibility for the attack, which set back Iranian uranium enrichment efforts by years.

In 2015, after negotiations with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany, Iran agreed to halt its uranium enrichment program in exchange for relief from economic sanctions and the release of frozen Iranian assets. The negotiations resulted in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA. Although the Trump administration withdrew the US from the JCPOA in 2018, the agreement continued to function, and Iran seemed poised to reenter the global economy. However, in 2020, the Iranians restarted their nuclear program. They also ramped up production of ballistic missiles and one-way attack drones.

In June 2025, the United States and Israel launched a massive aerial attack on Iranian nuclear facilities, an effort that Trump characterised as having destroyed Iran's nuclear facilities. Iran responded by launching a wave of ballistic missiles and drones toward Israel, most of which were intercepted before entering Israeli airspace. The missile and interceptor war

Prior to Operation Epic Fury, analysts estimated that Iran possessed 3,000 ballistic missiles and tens of thousands of one-way attack drones. They also concluded that Iran had a substantial production capacity to increase its stockpiles. In the first six weeks of the current conflict, Iran expended at least 650 missiles in attacks on Israel and hundreds more against other targets in the region. The US has placed a heavy emphasis on attacking missile production and storage facilities. But it's difficult to ascertain how many missiles and drones the Iranian military might still possess. Iranian production and transportation have almost certainly sustained substantial losses in capacity. And US and Israeli aircraft prowled the skies over Iran seeking signs of mobile launchers or attempts to transport missiles to firing locations. The rate of Iranian missile fire has substantially declined since the first days of the conflict, but it has never dropped to zero. That has led some analysts to suspect that Iran maintains a significant cache of long-range weaponry in reserve, while US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth argues that it has lost the capacity to launch major barrages.

## War 'close to over': Trump as Pakistan Army Chief Asim Munir reaches Tehran to push mediation -

GNS News Agency, April 20

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday claimed the conflict with Iran was "very close to over", even as Pakistan intensified backchannel diplomacy with a high-level delegation, led by Army Chief Asim Munir, reaching Tehran to push for a renewed ceasefire framework. In remarks to Fox Business, Trump asserted that Iran had been "hit very hard" and warned that US forces could "take out every one of their bridges and power plants in one hour" if negotiations failed. "I think they want to make a deal very badly," he said, signalling that a second round of talks could resume soon.

The diplomatic momentum comes amid efforts to extend the fragile US-Iran truce, set to expire on April 22. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei confirmed that message exchanges between Tehran and Washington were continuing through Pakistan, with "multiple messages" already conveyed since the last round of talks. Baghaei said a Pakistani delegation was expected in Tehran to "discuss the views of both sides", indicating a move towards structured negotiations. "We entered talks to end the war, secure Iran's rights and obtain war reparations," he said, reiterating that Tehran's nuclear programme remained "purely peaceful" while leaving room for discussions on enrichment levels within a broader agreement.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian struck a cautious note, saying Tehran was open to "constructive engagement" but would not yield to pressure. "Any attempt to impose will or force the country into submission is doomed to fail," he said. Trump, meanwhile, doubled down on his military posture, claiming the US intervention had prevented Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

In a post on Truth Social, he suggested improving coordination with China, stating that Beijing had agreed not to supply weapons to Tehran and backing efforts to keep the Strait of Hormuz open. "China is very happy that I am permanently opening the Strait of Hormuz. I am doing it for them, also for the world. This situation will never happen again. They have agreed not to send weapons to Iran. President Xi will give me a big, fat hug when I get there in a few



weeks," Trump wrote. The developments come against the backdrop of a US-enforced blockade on Iranian ports, which has heightened regional tensions but also accelerated diplomatic efforts to avert further escalation. Meanwhile, two days into the US Navy enforced blockade of ships entering and exiting Iranian ports, Tehran has threatened to retaliate and block trade through the Red Sea along with the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman if the US naval blockade continues. The US move constitutes a violation of the ceasefire, said the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, Iran's top joint military command.

"Our armed forces will not allow trade to flow through the Red Sea. We will not allow any exports or imports in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman if the American blockade continues," its commander said in a statement. Meanwhile, the US Central Command, posted an update on Wednesday evening, saying, "No vessels have made it past the US forces." The post said "during the first 48 hours of the US blockade on ships entering and exiting Iranian ports, no vessels have made it past U.S. forces". Additionally, 9 vessels complied with direction from US forces to turn around and return toward an Iranian port or coastal area."

## HRFP condemns Maria Shahbaz case, says it exemplifies child marriage, forced conversion, judicial failure

Faisalabad [Pakistan], April 16 (ANI): Human Rights Focus Pakistan (HRFP) has expressed deep concern and strong condemnation over the case of Maria Shahbaz, a 13-year-old Christian girl who was abducted in Lahore, forcibly converted to Islam, and subjected to a forced marriage recently upheld by court rulings, according to the official press release. HRFP has emphasised that this case is not an isolated incident but part of a persistent and well-documented pattern involving the abduction, forced conversion, and forced marriage of minority girls in Pakistan, particularly from Christian and Hindu communities.

According to HRFP, Maria Shahbaz was abducted on July 29, 2025, and later presented before a magistrate, where a statement was recorded claiming that she had voluntarily converted and married a 30-year-old man. Despite official documentation confirming her minor status, the Federal Constitutional Court, in March, upheld the marriage and granted custody to the accused. As of April, Maria remains in his custody while her family continues to pursue legal appeals, according to the HRFP. HRFP has strongly criticised the court's decision, noting that it declared the minor to be of "mature" age, accepted her conversion without adherence to formal legal procedures, and dismissed verified documentary evidence regarding her age.

Naveed Walter, President of Human Rights Focus Pakistan (HRFP), stated that this case represents one of the most alarming examples of child marriage, forced conversion, and judicial failure. He stressed that the ruling effectively legitimises the marriage of a minor under the pretext of Sharia law, in clear contradiction to Pakistan's child protection laws, which set the legal age of marriage at 18 under various provincial statutes. HRFP has condemned the judgment for undermining child protection frameworks and failing to safeguard minority girls from exploitation, calling for an immediate judicial review and justice for the victim.

The organisation further highlighted that Maria's case reflects a broader and deeply concerning trend. Numerous reported incidents across Pakistan indicate that Christian and Hindu girls, often between the ages of 12 and 15, are abducted, forcibly converted, and married to adult men. Courts frequently rely on disputed statements rather than verified documentation, contributing to systemic injustice. Human rights organisations estimate that hundreds of such cases occur annually, particularly in Sindh, Punjab, and the southern regions of the country. HRFP's fact-finding team continued its monitoring and documentation efforts, while providing assistance and advocating for justice based on verified facts and evidence. The organisation also raised concerns over recent incidents of violence against minority communities. In Lahore, 25-year-old Christian labourer Sialtiel Masih (Sealtiel) was fatally attacked following a dispute reportedly involving religious discrimination. According to the HRFP, he was brutally assaulted with knives and later succumbed to his injuries despite being transported to

a hospital. Although a First Information Report (FIR) has been registered, no satisfactory progress has been made in ensuring accountability. According to the HRFP, in another alarming incident on March 23, in Joseph Colony, Lahore, previously the site of a devastating mob attack in 2013, Babar Masih and his young daughter, named Sataish Masih, were threatened and narrowly escaped an armed assault. The accused reportedly used abusive language, issued threats to burn down the colony again, and opened fire, missing the victims. Despite the severity of the incident, no case has been registered, leaving the community in fear and insecurity. Similarly, according to the HRFP, on April 13, in Samundri, Faisalabad, the home of Hanoq Masih and Faisal Masih was set on fire at night by individuals, with Muhammad Zaman pressuring the family to withdraw a prior case involving the kidnapping and sexual assault of a minor girl, Muskan Masih, last year by the same perpetrator Muhammad Zaman. While a case of attacking Hanoq's home was registered with the police on the same day of the incident, no arrests have been made to date. In another disturbing case, as per the official press release, Tanveer Masih, a brick kiln labourer from Samundri, Faisalabad was allegedly deceived into undergoing medical treatment that resulted in the illegal removal of his kidney. After police failed to register his complaint, he was forced to seek legal recourse through the courts, but there has been no progress to date. He reported ongoing threats and highlighted his vulnerability as a poor Christian labourer. HRFP has strongly condemned these incidents, stating that abductions, forced conversions, forced marriages, targeted violence, and workplace discrimination reflect a pattern of systemic marginalisation. The organisation noted that the use of coerced or disputed statements in legal proceedings constitutes misuse of the law, while judicial decisions that disregard child protection frameworks contribute to the continued targeting of religious minorities. HRFP research has estimated that hundreds of Hindu and Christian girls are abducted and forcibly converted annually in Pakistan, with many cases involving minors and weak enforcement of existing laws and often with falsified age declarations in marriage documents, like the Maria Shahbaz case. HRFP has reiterated that such practices violate both national legislation and international human rights obligations, including protections against child marriage and religious coercion. HRFP has called for strict enforcement of laws against child marriage and forced conversion, and violations against religious minorities. According to the official press release, HRFP remains committed to documenting such cases through Fact Findings mission trips, supporting victims, and advocating for justice, accountability, and institutional reform. Human Rights Focus Pakistan (HRFP) is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights, particularly for marginalised and minority communities, through advocacy, legal assistance, and documentation.

## Tensions rise as US Navy enforces Iran trade blockade

"Vessels will be boarded for interdiction and seizure transiting to or from Iranian port," a Navy radio message, posted to social media by US Central Command,

Washington: US Navy warships are telling merchant ships in and around Iran that they are ready to board them and use force to compel compliance with the blockade on ships trading with Iran.

"Vessels will be boarded for interdiction and seizure transiting to or from Iranian port," a Navy radio message, posted to social media by US Central Command, said. A military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing military operation, confirmed the message is currently being broadcast to all ships in the region. "If you do not comply with this blockade, we will use force," the radio message added.



## Failure to count DNTs in 2027 Census could alienate over 10 crore people: G.N. Devy



As denotified, nomadic, and semi-nomadic tribes (DNTs) across the country come together to demand a "separate column" for themselves in the 2027 Census forms, linguist and cultural scholar professor G.N. Devy has warned that India risks further alienating these communities—classified as "criminal" under the colonial-era 1871 Criminal Tribes Act and left uncounted since the formation of the Republic—if they are not explicitly counted.

In an exclusive interview with The Hindu, professor Devy—who headed the Ministry of Social Justice's Technical Advisory Group on DNTs in 2006, and co-founded the DNT-Rights Action Group (DNT-RAG) with author Mahasweta Devi—said that inclusion of the DNTs must begin with a declaration by the Census Commissioner that these communities will be counted explicitly. He added that the problem of alienating over 10 crore people could become much bigger than that of counting them.

What opportunity does the upcoming Census present for the welfare of DNTs, given that caste will be enumerated in 2027?

The census and the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) were both instituted in 1871. While the census has continued unbroken, except for this time, the plight of DNTs has also continued, with no proper count, except in 1931. The Iyengar Committee in 1950, the NHRC in the early 2000s, the Renke Commission in 2008, and the Idate Commission (2017) have all called for a census of DNTs. Yet questions such as "Have you been a DNT? Have you been nomadic or semi-nomadic? Or denotified former criminal tribe?" have never been included in census schedules. If that is not done this time, and if the DNTs are taken for a ride again with no specific data emerging at the end of the exercise, India will alienate close to 10 crore or more people from the mainstream. The problem can be much bigger than the problem of calculating, tabulating, and making a proper list. This should have been a primary question even in the household surveys. It would be of great interest to any household surveyor to account for nomadic communities. People without houses are counted as a general classification. That speaks about houseless people, but not about DNTs. This exclusion has been the worst. This is a motiveless malignity, and the census has no reason to exclude them. But the Census excludes them just because it did so earlier.

How can the government ensure the Census is truly inclusive of DNTs?

First, the census should declare that DNTs will be enumerated. That message will go around the communities across the country. Now, saying that "we will enumerate everybody, and therefore that will also include DNTs", is like saying that "we are not doing an independent and exclusive census of the DNTs". So that must be done. They do not need any special permission to introduce the question. Secondly, the technology used should be accessible. Where it is not, there must be a system for people to go to an office and declare their DNT status. Third, the Cen-

sus must avoid creating a long and unmanageable list of documents, because historically, even panchayats have refused to issue birth certificates to DNTs. And the fourth, after the census gets its data on DNTs, they must quickly consult the Anthropological Survey of India and get that data verified. And this data must be open for scrutiny by scholars as far as the DNTs issue is concerned.

There is a resentment among many DNT communities over their misclassification into SC/ST/OBC lists when they seek a list of their own. Must the DNT classification be exclusive of these identities?

The question of identity is never singular. The DNT identity is not exclusive of other identities. There is intersectionality. This is a complexity in the bureaucratic process. I accept that. But that is no fault of the DNTs. We cannot tell them that we have already messed up our bureaucratic processes, and therefore, we can no longer think of you. That's not a good justification. These processes can be improved. Fortunately, with the help of technology, multiple classifications and multiple classificatory tags can be sorted out easily.

Amidst calls for separate quotas for DNTs, exclusive of SC, ST, and OBC identities (where they might exist), how can these reservations account for this intersectionality?

The demands for reservations, DNT reservations, and DNT representation in the Assembly, Panchayat or Parliament have been around for quite a while. But there are two different issues: the first is just to count the DNTs and create a factual report on who they are, where they are, and how many they are. The second question is whether they should be given reservations or not. That will depend on the results of the Census. The political decisions on whether to give reservations to DNTs or not and whether it should be aligned with the SC or ST reservation, or independent, are the next step. But in the absence of credible data, no such decision can be taken at all. To fear that such a decision will have to be taken, and therefore not to do enumeration, is not a logical line of action. Let the count take place first. Governments can then decide, and the people themselves will also know whether to demand reservations or drop the demand.



pursue a refund of the premium. With family hospitalisation premiums easily touching ₹1 lakh or more, who compensates her for the opportunity cost of funds lying with the insurer? More importantly, had the old policy become unavailable due to this delay and reversal, would the new insurer/intermediary have stepped in to compensate for the loss of lifelong guaranteed renewal on original terms?

The IRDAI's portability framework for hospitalisation cover is designed to protect policyholders and ensure continuity of cover. Requirements such as initiating the process at least two months before renewal reflect that intent. However, the framework is silent on the consequences of post-premium rejection. There is no explicit deterrent against collecting premiums before underwriting is completed nor clear accountability when such practices jeopardise continuity of cover. This is a regulatory gap deserving urgent attention. At least, insurers should not be allowed to collect premiums before underwriting decisions are final. Where premiums are collected and proposals rejected, timelines for refunds, compensation for delay and responsibility for loss of continuity must be defined. Intermediaries must be held accountable when their actions/advice expose clients to avoidable risk. Until such safeguards are firmly embedded, consumer awareness remains the first — and often only — line of defence.

Here are tips to avoid such heartburn: Start renewal/portal process in advance. Follow up persistently with the intermediary and the insurer, preferably in writing. Above all, do not allow existing policy to lapse until the new cover is formally issued. In case of doubts, renewing the current policy preserves certainty — and buys you a full year to thoughtfully reassess coverage, insurer and the fine print that too often shows its sting only when it is already too late.

## Manipur district issued prohibitory orders over Kuki-Naga tension

Administration of Manipur's Ukhrul district on Sunday (February 8, 2026) imposed prohibitory orders in Litan area of the district "until further notice", following tension between Naga and Kuki-Zo villagers over an assault case.

District Magistrate Asish Das said the restrictions, under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, were imposed on apprehension of breach of peace and public tranquillity in the area. The restrictions came into force from 7 p.m. .

The district administration also requisitioned the services of the Army and paramilitary forces, including the Assam Rifles, as a preventive measure. According to reports, a Kuki-Zo group allegedly assaulted a Tangkhul Naga man at Litan on Saturday (February 7, 2026) night. The situation turned tense on Sunday (February 8, 2026) afternoon when Naga villagers approached the chief of a Kuki village and asked him to produce the culprits before them.

The district authorities stepped in after people in several Naga villages called for action against those who thrashed the Naga man. Earlier, the Kuki Students' Organisation (KSO) issued a statement saying that the "incident originated from a minor altercation involving a few intoxicated individuals from both villages". It also said that the matter was being addressed peacefully and customarily through the established authority of the Litan Sareikhong village "in consultation with the family of the injured person". The Katho Katamnao Long (KKL), a Tangkhul students' organisation, asked the KSO to retract the statement as "no such step had been taken to rectify the situation". The KKL said Sterling, a Tangkhul youth, was beaten up after he switched on his torch after hearing some voices in the dark. It said the group of people, who turned out to be from Kuki-Zo community, beat him up grievously "on the pretext that the light fell on their faces".

## When institutional reliability matters: the story of di-ethylene glycol

The government of Tamil Nadu's Directorate of Drug Control recently issued a public notice against a specific batch of Almond Kit syrup, after laboratory tests detected adulteration with ethylene glycol. This finding emerged during routine surveillance. It comes barely five months after India lost over 20 children in Madhya Pradesh last year due to contaminated cough syrups. Together, these episodes underline the fact that India faces a long battle against adulterations to protect patients from avoidable deaths, bringing to the fore, the inability of the public to rely on governmental institutions meant to protect them.

The rise of the world's most influential drug regulator, the United States' Food and Drug Administration (FDA), is linked to the same chemical, Di-Ethylene Glycol (DEG) that caused the deaths last year, and its origin story is one of tragedy. In 1937, sulfanilamide was a wonder drug. It was one of the first antibiotics to be made, and had saved countless lives from deadly bacterial infections. Yet, it posed a practical challenge: it did not dissolve easily in water. In liquid medicines such as syrups, a solvent plays a central role in making the drug usable and reliable. Many active drug substances do not dissolve in plain water, and without a suitable solvent, they would settle unevenly, leading to inaccurate dosing with each spoonful. A proper solvent keeps the drug uniformly distributed, improves stability during storage, and allows the medicine to be absorbed predictably in the body. Solvents also influence taste, texture, and shelf life, making them essential components in the design of safe and effective liquid formulations.

A pharmaceutical company in the USA decided to solve this by dissolving it in a seemingly harmless solvent, DEG. Within weeks, more than 100 people died across the country, many of them children. The solvent was the killer, not the drug. At the time, the company had broken no law. There was no legal requirement to test drugs for safety before marketing. The tragedy shocked the nation and led to a historic shift. In 1938, the United States passed the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, mandating pre-market safety testing for medicines. This transformed the FDA from a modest office into a scientific regulatory authority with the power to inspect, test, approve, and recall drugs.

DEG is a simple organic chemical belonging to the glycol family, with the formula (HOCH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>O. It is a colourless, odourless, slightly viscous liquid with a faintly sweet taste. It mixes easily with water and alcohol, does not evaporate quickly, remains stable over a wide temperature range, and is inexpensive to manufacture. These properties make it an excellent industrial solvent. DEG mimics safer pharmaceutical solvents such as glycerine or propylene glycol. From an unscrupulous manufacturer's perspective, DEG is far cheaper than glycerine or propylene glycol, which costs more, requires better sourcing, and demands quality control. In poorly-regulated environments, DEG becomes a convenient substitute that reduces production costs without visibly altering the final product.

The exact mechanism of DEG toxicity remains unclear. Once ingested, it is absorbed from the gut and metabolised in the liver by enzymes such as alcohol dehydrogenase. It is converted into toxic acidic metabolites, particularly diglycolic acid, which is the principal agent responsible for organ damage. Diglycolic acid has a direct toxic effect on the proximal renal tubules of the kidneys. These tubules are responsible for filtering and reabsorbing essential substances from the blood. When they are damaged, the kidneys abruptly fail. This leads to acute kidney injury, accumulation of toxins in the blood, electrolyte disturbances, and severe metabolic acidosis. Clinically, this



explains the typical pattern seen in DEG poisoning: early nausea and vomiting, followed after a deceptive period of apparent improvement followed by rapid deterioration, kidney failure, reduced urine output, confusion, seizures, and, in severe cases, death.

DEG cannot be banned altogether, as its legitimate uses are numerous and essential. It is used in antifreeze and brake fluids, where it prevents freezing and ensures mechanical reliability. It plays a role in the manufacture of resins, plasticisers, inks, adhesives, and dyes. In the textile industry, it helps produce polyester fibres. In natural gas processing, it removes moisture from pipelines. In all these applications, DEG performs efficiently and safely. The chemical is not the villain. Its migration into medicines is.

DEG has been linked to deaths across multiple countries for nearly a century, since 1937 in the USA. In Spain in 1985, contaminated topical preparations caused five deaths. In Nigeria in 1990, contaminated paracetamol syrup caused 47 child deaths, followed by another outbreak in 2008 that resulted in 84 child deaths. In Bangladesh between 1990 and 1992, DEG in paracetamol syrups was associated with the deaths of more than 300 children. In Argentina in 1992, contaminated propolis syrup caused 29 deaths. In Haiti in 1996, contaminated acetaminophen syrups led to around 88 child deaths. In Panama in 2006, DEG in medicines were linked to 365 deaths. In The Gambia in 2022, cough syrups were associated with 70 child deaths, followed by Uzbekistan and Indonesia in the same year, where contaminated syrups were linked to about 20 and nearly 100 child deaths, respectively. India's encounter with DEG has occurred at multiple points over the past four decades. In 1986, a glycerin batch contaminated with DEG used in hospitals in Mumbai led to the deaths of at least 21 patients due to acute kidney failure. More recently, in 2022 and 2023, Indian-manufactured cough syrups containing DEG were linked to child deaths in several countries abroad. The lesson for India from the United States here, is in replicating its institutional courage. The FDA was not built because America loved regulation; it was built because America learnt, painfully, that without strong institutions, the nation can't prosper. If India truly wants to become self-reliant, then it must ensure its institutions are strong, reliable and safeguard public health. Without this, we will simply be reacting to tragedy, not averting it.

## Are you tax aware?



You are a tax-aware investor if you actively integrate the impact of taxes into all investment decisions. Should you? In this article, we discuss what it takes to be a tax-aware investor.

HNWIs vs. mass affluent The rich are typically tax-aware investors. The asset management industry refers to them as High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs), which include Very HNWI and Ultra HNWIs. The middle-class span a wide range of wealth, where the top-end of the spectrum could be tax-aware investors. So, a large part may not be tax-aware investors. The middle-class is typically referred to as mass-affluent investors.

The investment process starts with the asset allocation decision. This involves deciding how much of your expected annual savings should be allocated to each asset class you intend to invest to achieve life goals. The next

step is the asset location decision. This refers to deciding how to invest in a tax-efficient way to achieve the asset allocation decision. This is based on three locations- taxable, tax-deferred and tax-exempt. The tax-exempt location includes provident fund, public provident fund and national pension scheme. All capital appreciation products fall into the tax-deferred location, where tax liability arises only when you sell the investment. The rest falls into the taxable location.

Most mass-affluent investors must choose from the three locations. Some mass-affluent investors and typically all HNWIs create tax shelters, in addition to using investments that directly fall into these three locations. Setting up tax shelters may be optimal only beyond a wealth level. So, for most mass-affluent investors, the goal must be to align asset allocation to achieve their goals even if some investments are taxable. If you want capital appreciation along with stable income, invest in equity funds and bank deposits. The former will fit into tax-deferred location and latter, the taxable location. While tax on accrued interest will hit the bond exposure in portfolio, there is the benefit of diversifying source of returns. Most mass-affluent investors may not have the choices available to HNWIs. The decision to invest tax-efficiently is nevertheless crucial. So, they should first decide on asset allocation. Then, check if bond asset-class exposure can be in a tax-exempt location, given the objective to earn income returns with minimal reinvestment risk. If not, they may have to choose the taxable location. The trade-off is the tax incurred for lowering the reinvestment risk.

## Moody's projects India's GDP to grow 6.4% in FY'27, fastest among G20 economies

Moody's Ratings on Monday projected India's GDP to grow at 6.4% in the next fiscal, the fastest pace among G-20 economies, driven by strong domestic consumption, policy measures, and a stable banking system. In its banking system outlook report, Moody's said their asset quality will remain resilient, with some stress among micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Regardless, banks have sufficient reserves to absorb loan losses, it said.

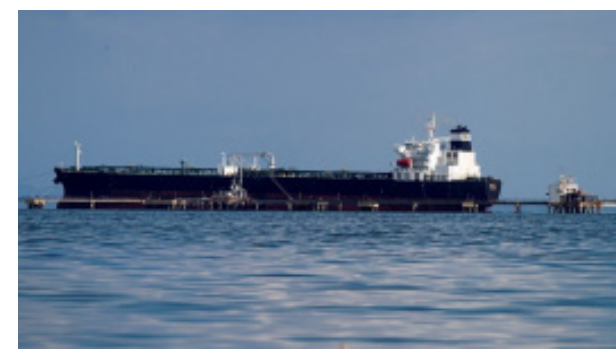
The operating environment for banks will remain strong in 2026, supported by robust macroeconomic conditions and structural reforms, it said. "We forecast India's real GDP will grow 6.4% for fiscal 2026-27, the fastest pace among G-20 economies, driven by strong domestic consumption and policy measures.

"The rationalization of the goods and services tax (GST) in September 2025 and an earlier increase in personal income tax thresholds will help improve affordability for consumers and support consumption-led growth," Moody's said. The FY'27 GDP growth estimates by Moody's are lower than the 6.8-7.2% range projected by the Finance Ministry's Economic Survey tabled in Parliament last month. As per official estimates, India is likely to grow at a



faster pace of 7.4% in the current fiscal (2025-26), higher than 6.5 per cent growth clocked in 2024-25. Moody's said with inflation under control and growth momentum remaining strong, Moody's anticipates RBI will further ease monetary policy in fiscal 2026-27 only if there are signs of a slowdown in economic activity. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lowered its policy rate by a total of 125 basis points to 5.25% in 2025.

## Iranian oil tanker arrives at Indian shores with no takers



Tuesday.

Amid the West Asia war, the US on March 21 suspended for a month the sanctions on Iranian crude already loaded on tankers in a bid to allow as many barrels of oil as possible to flow into the international market to improve the global oil supply situation and curb spiralling crude oil prices. The waiver from Washington was similar to the one issued for Russian oil earlier in March; India's Russian oil imports have surged since the war began. India hasn't imported Iranian crude since May 2019 due to reimposition of US sanctions on Tehran by the first Trump administration.

According to the general licence issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the US Department of the Treasury on March 21, transactions related to the sale, delivery, or offloading of crude oil and petroleum products of Iranian origin — loaded on any vessel, including tankers sanctioned by the US, as of 12.01 eastern daylight time (9.31 am India time) on March 20 — are authorised until April 19. Given the waiver, at least two tankers carrying Iranian oil and one tanker with Iranian LPG arrived at Indian ports over the past few days. These marked the first energy supplies to India from Iran in nearly seven years. Over the weekend, tankers Jaya and Felicity—both carrying Iranian oil—arrived in Indian waters. Jaya came to Paradip port with oil for Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), while Felicity came to Sikka port with oil for Reliance Industries (RIL), according to industry sources. Earlier this month, the government confirmed that India is buying Iranian crude and there were no payment-related hurdles in buying Tehran's oil, following the sanctions waiver for Iranian oil on water. "India imports crude oil from 40+ countries, with companies having full flexibility to source oil from different sources & geographies based on commercial considerations. Amid Middle East supply disruptions, Indian refiners have secured their crude oil requirements, including from Iran; and there is no payment hurdle for Iranian crude imports..." the Petroleum Ministry had said in an April 4 post on social media platform X. It had also announced that a tanker carrying Iranian liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) was discharging cargo at the New Mangalore port. Vessel movements through the Strait of Hormuz were effectively halted due to the conflict that began on February 28; Iranian oil shipments largely continued unabated though. The Strait accounted for one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) flows. Around 2.5–2.7 million bpd of India's crude imports—around half of the overall oil imports—have transited the Strait in recent months, while the longer-term average is around 40%. India depends on imports to meet over 88% of its requirement of crude oil.

## Plastic bags to playing cards: Wholesale prices jump, push March WPI inflation to 38-month high

India's wholesale inflation in March jumped to the highest in over three years as the West Asia war propelled crude petroleum prices almost 50% higher from February, with prices of common every-day plastic items, such as playing cards and plastic bags, seeing the sharpest sequential rise since the early months of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. According to data released by the commerce ministry on Wednesday, India's Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation rose to a 38-month high of 3.88% in March, up from 2.13% in February, as crude petroleum prices surged 49.1% from February — the highest ever month-on-month increase as per data in the current WPI series going back till 2012. Other petrochemical items which saw the largest-ever month-on-month increase in wholesale prices in March included ammonia gas (up 22.3%) — used to make fertilisers — and Poly Vinyl Chloride, or PVC (up 8.4%). Plastic products like playing cards saw their wholesale price rise by 4.1% — the most in almost four years.

"WPI inflation is a cleaner reflection of global commodity prices and captures the ongoing energy price shock better than CPI," Barclays economists Aastha Gudwani and Amruta Ghare said. "Of the 174 bps increase in headline WPI inflation, 93 bps was driven by crude petroleum and natural gas, followed by a 63 bps increase led by fuel and power WPI," they added.

The wholesale inflation data for March comes two days after the statistics ministry released consumer price numbers for last month, which showed headline retail inflation only rose marginally to 3.4% year-on-year from 3.21% in February. However, certain components of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) — such as airfares and LPG cylinders and piped natural gas — showed a sharp up-tick in prices from the previous month. 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 the government has shielded consumers — the pump price of petrol and diesel has not changed — producers are seeing their costs rise.

According to data released Wednesday, March saw the wholesale price of LPG, petrol, kerosene, Aviation Turbine Fuel, and high-speed diesel rise by 4-8% compared to



February. This is one of the largest increases in the wholesale prices of all these five fuels in around four years. Some of the other energy-related items that witnessed a big jump in wholesale prices in March from February include furnace oil (up 28%) and naphtha (19%). Materials used in packaging, such as corrugated paper board, were 3% more expensive compared to February. Meanwhile, the wholesale price of items like plastic bags jumped 3.5% from February — the highest sequential rise since October 2021.

Wholesale food prices were largely unchanged in March compared to February, with their inflation rate — or the year-on-year change — steady at 1.85%. Economists expect companies to soon start passing on these higher costs to consumers. This will make the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) interest rate decisions more difficult, as economic activity is also taking a hit from energy shortages and the consequent price increases as well as the rise in input costs. The Indian central bank left the policy repo rate unchanged at 5.25% last week, but predicted that headline retail inflation — which it is legally mandated to keep at 4% in the medium term — is set to more than double to 4.6% in 2026-27. Meanwhile, GDP growth is seen declining to 6.9% this year from 7.6% in 2025-26. "A possible reescalation in West Asia conflict leading to higher price of crude and edible oil, along with currency depreciation will pose the upside risk to inflation. In the medium term, El Nino effect is expected to increase food prices," Megha Arora, Director-Economics at India Ratings & Research, said, adding that wholesale inflation may rise further to 4.7% in April.

## 'How can someone differentiate between normal dehydration and the excessive thirst associated with diabetes?'

We all feel thirsty after a workout, in hot weather, or even after a salty meal. But when that thirst doesn't go away even after drinking enough water, it could be your body trying to signal something more serious. One such concerned internet user took to online forum Quora seeking answers: "How can someone differentiate between normal thirst and the excessive thirst associated with diabetes?" Curious, we decided to dig deeper and reached out to Dr Manjusha Agarwal, Consultant- Internal Medicine at Gleneagles Hospital, Mumbai, who said there's a clear difference between everyday thirst and the kind linked to diabetes. Let's understand more below.

Normal vs excessive thirst: What's the difference?

Thirst Excessive thirst in Diabetes is persistent, often accompanied by frequent urination and fatigue (Image: Unsplash) Normal thirst usually occurs after heat, exercise, or dehydration and improves after drinking fluids," she explains. Occasional thirst is normal. But if it becomes constant, unquenched, or is paired with other symptoms, it shouldn't be ignored. Excessive thirst associated with diabetes is often persistent and doesn't ease easily. "It is often



accompanied by frequent urination, fatigue, and unexplained weight loss," Dr Agarwal adds. The reason lies in how the body reacts to high blood sugar levels. "In diabetes, high blood sugar pulls fluid out of body tissues and increases urine production, leading to dehydration," Dr Agarwal explains. This fluid loss triggers a cycle: your body keeps asking for more water, even when you're drinking enough. This means if you're drinking water but still feel constantly thirsty, it may not be just dehydration.

## Industrial workers say wage hikes trail rise in cost of living; factories stay shut after protests



The Uttar Pradesh and Haryana governments may have hiked the minimum wage for workers in the state after days of protest, but labour union leaders said the hikes fail to adequately cover for the rise in the cost of living, especially given that the last minimum wage revision happened a decade ago or even earlier in these states. The rise in prices of LPG gas cylinders after the war in West Asia has pushed workers over the edge, resulting in spiralling protests, the union leaders said. Workers said minimum wage rates differ across states, which was also one of the major causes of discontentment, especially in the Noida industrial area, where widespread protests turned violent on Monday.

Violence in the industrial area on the outskirts of the national capital commenced on Monday after the Haryana government hiked minimum monthly wages by 35%.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) on Tuesday also pointed out that revised wages for unskilled workers in Uttar Pradesh stood at Rs 13,690. In contrast, the comparable figures for New Delhi and Haryana were Rs 15,221 and Rs 18,456, it said. Meanwhile, the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) also said that the minimum wage revision is ineffective. "Workers have long simmered with anger over extremely difficult working conditions, very low wages, accidents, and humiliating treatment. Over the past month, a shortage of gas (LPG) and rampant inflation pushed their tolerance beyond its limit. Due to black marketeering in gas and rising inflation, prices of vegetables, food items, and daily necessities in workers' localities are rising rapidly. A meal plate at roadside eateries that previously cost Rs 60 has now reached Rs 100-120," CITU said. Naim Ahmed, the District Secretary of the AITUC in Noida, said workers are unhappy with the hike, and the minimum wage for unskilled workers should be at least Rs 21,000. He told The Indian Express that several labour union leaders, including him, have been under house arrest since April 9. "Cost of living on the rise" "The reality is that in many states, minimum wages have not been revised for the past 10 years, even as prices of essential commodities have continuously risen. In most industrial areas, contract workers are migrants who live in extremely difficult conditions, deprived of basic facilities. This movement is not an isolated incident. Just two months ago, thousands of contract workers in the Barauni Refinery area launched a similar agitation. This was followed by large-scale protests in Panipat and Surat as well," AITUC said.

Several days of protests in industrial hubs of Haryana and UP led to their state governments hiking minimum wages. The Haryana government on April 9 revised the monthly minimum wages for unskilled workers to Rs 15,220 with effect from April 1. On Tuesday, the UP government also increased interim monthly wages to Rs 13,690 for unskilled workers from Rs 11,313. However, labour unions in Haryana also said the government and administration

should take steps to improve the poor conditions of workers, and the minimum wage should be revised to Rs 23,196. CITU said the police administration is trying to defame the workers' movement by claiming that outsiders are instigating it. Factories shut after protest damages At 12:30 in the noon on Tuesday, most of the hundred-odd workers of the Noida-based footwear manufacturer, Ess Aar Pvt Ltd, were slated to get together to commemorate the factory's foundation day. However, on Tuesday afternoon, the notice on the ground floor of the factory stood as a grim reminder of the planned celebration as the factory found itself in the middle of workers' unrest that became violent on Monday. The windshield of the director's vehicle had been smashed into pieces, the reception vandalised, and the operation was brought to a grinding halt. Down the road, nearly four cars were gutted in a fire near the Maruti Suzuki service centre where angry workers had stormed inside the facility, vandalising the premises. Across the industrial hub in Noida, scars of the unrest — damaged office premises and shattered glasses from broken tinted glasses — still scattered like remnants of a storm.

Across protest sites in Noida, the workers complained that their monthly wages barely rose over the years, even as living expenses increased manifold. 19-year-old Pradeep (name changed), who has been working at a factory for the past two years in Noida phase 2 industrial area, said the rent for the tiny room where he and three others stay has increased from Rs 5,500 to Rs 6,500 since April 1. Similarly, LPG shortage has also pushed them to shift to induction as the price of LPG in the black market has been skyrocketing. Blue collar vs white collar

Several white collar employees in Noida, who saw vandalism in their office premises said a group of workers asked them to join in protests, and their personal vehicles were also damaged. Vikram (name changed), who worked at a Noida-based Maruti Suzuki service centre, said several bikes that belonged to semi-skilled workers were torched. "On seeing a crowd with mobs, I quickly tried to take my bike inside. But several bikes that belonged to employees were torched," Vikram said, while showing the damaged portions of the premises. Manisha (name changed), who works at a corporate office in Sector 63, said the workers stormed their office during lunchtime and vandalised whatever they found on their way. She maintained that while they did not attack any individuals, they insisted on joining them in the protest going on at a nearby factory. "When our male colleagues urged them to let the women employees leave, one of the protesting workers said, 'You guys only work in air conditioning, and have no idea how our women face hardship every day.' After that, we had no option but to join the protest." sVisuals from Monday showed dozens of four-wheeler vehicles have been damaged during the protests across Noida. At a factory in Sector 63, protesters smashed two four-wheelers parked inside its premises, but did not touch the temple in the same yard. "They know four-wheelers mainly belong to either owners or management," a worker in charge of security said. West Asia crisis sparks inflation hike Meanwhile, the inflation has begun picking up amid the continued blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. Dipti Deshpande, Principal Economist, Crisil said inflation based on the Consumer Price Index edged up to 3.4% in March from 3.2% in February and food inflation was the largest contributor as it rose to 3.9% from 3.5%, while fuel inflation rose to 1.7% from 0.1% and core inflation stood unchanged at 3.7% for a third month in a row. The industrial impact of the war in West Asia is emerging across industrial areas, with India's manufacturing PMI index slipping to 53.9 in March from 56.9 in February.

## Functional nutritionist says combining black coffee with these spices can be a 'smart' move: 'It can do more than just wake you up'

Many of us prefer a shot of black coffee to kickstart our mornings. But according to functional nutritionist Reshmi Verma, black coffee does more than that, especially when it is combined with certain Indian spices. "Your coffee can do more than just wake you up. As a functional nutritionist, I use black coffee as a base to support metabolism, gut health, blood sugar, and even mood, just by adding the right ingredients. Swipe through these 4 powerful combos and make your coffee work for you, not just with you," Verma said in an Instagram post.

Kanikka Malhotra, consultant dietitian and certified diabetes educator, said she finds the concept of "smart coffee" — combining black coffee with functional ingredients like cacao, cinnamon, ginger, or cloves — both scientifically promising and nutritionally sound when used mindfully. "Black coffee itself is a rich source of chlorogenic acids and antioxidants, supporting metabolic and cognitive health. Adding natural ingredients, when free from added sugars or artificial additives, can synergistically enhance their benefits," said Malhotra. For example, cinnamon supports blood sugar regulation and has been shown to improve insulin sensitivity. Ginger exhibits anti-inflammatory and digestive properties, and may aid in reducing nausea,



while cloves are potent in eugenol and may contribute to improved gut and immune health. Similarly, raw cocoa (cacao) is rich in flavonoids that support cardiovascular functioning, according to Malhotra. However, while these combinations can enhance the health value of coffee, one must consider individual tolerance to caffeine and spices. "Overuse may pose risks over time. Also, these additions should not substitute balanced nutrition or clinical line of treatment," said Malhotra. In moderation, smart coffee can serve as a wellness-supporting beverage — an enjoyable, functional upgrade to traditional coffee for those seeking added health benefits.

## Meet the insect that navigates via the Milky Way

High above the African deserts, where the night sky stretches endlessly, and shadows disappear into silence, the tiny dung beetle is doing something extraordinary! While most insects rely on smell or sunlight to find their way, certain dung beetles have a unique navigation system that uses the stars to find their way. In fact, not just any stars, this tiny creature follows the Milky Way like Google Maps.

A tiny navigator with a cosmic compass Scientists have discovered that these beetles don't just move randomly at night after rolling their dung balls (their famous survival routine). Instead, they roll in remarkably straight lines—even in complete darkness—by reading the faint glow of the night sky. When the sky is clear, they orient themselves using the band of light created by our galaxy, the Milky Way. It acts like a glowing roadmap across the sky, helping them move in a straight, efficient path away from competition. For such a small insect, it's a surprisingly advanced survival strategy.

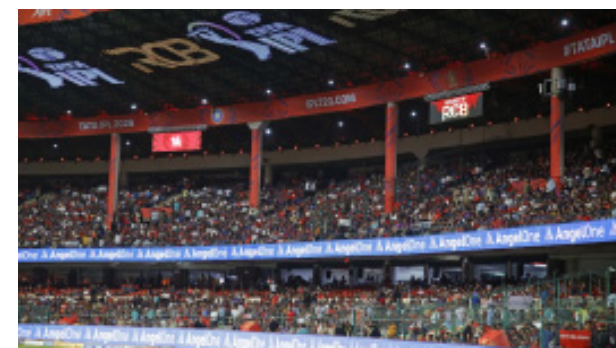
How do they actually "see" the stars?

Researchers believe these beetles are sensitive to polarised light patterns in the sky. Even when individual stars are hard to distinguish, the Milky Way's diffuse glow provides a directional cue strong enough for them to navigate. In



experiments, when scientists blocked the view of the sky or recreated artificial skies without the Milky Way pattern, the beetles began to wander in circles—lost without their cosmic guide. Why this matters! It may sound like a quirky nature fact, but it reveals something profound: intelligence in nature doesn't always look like brains or complexity. Sometimes, it's about adaptation—turning even faint starlight into survival. In a world where humans build GPS systems and satellites, this tiny beetle has been using the universe itself as a compass for millions of years.

## CSK complains to BCCI about song at rival RCB's home: 'Dosa, idli' track not in good taste



GNS News Agency, April 20

Royal Challengers Bengaluru, M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Chennai Super Kings, BCCI, Royal Challengers Bangalore, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), Kasi Viswanathan, csk, Indian express news, current affairs The song, originally composed by musician Gana Appu, has a history and often gets mentioned during CSK-RCB games and on social media. Indian Premier League franchise Chennai Super Kings has complained to the BCCI over the DJ's choice of song and comments at their April 5 away game against Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. According to the CSK, the playing of the track 'Dosa, idli, sambar, chutney, chutney' — a popular background score to memes about South Indian stereotypes — before their innings was not in good taste.

Confirming the development, a top IPL official said the governing council would look into the matter. "We have received a complaint from CSK and are looking into it," the official said. CSK managing director Kasi Viswanathan told

The Indian Express: "The DJs are usually around to support the home team. But at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, it was different. Certain comments were made against our players. Considering it, we have written to the BCCI to have a look into it."

The song, originally composed by musician Gana Appu, has a history and often gets mentioned during CSK-RCB games and on social media. It started last year when RCB, ahead of their game in Chennai, posted a clip of their wicketkeeper, Vidarbha's Jitesh Sharma, singing 'Dosa, idli, sambar, chutney, chutney'. He was subsequently trolled by CSK fans. After the episode, the CSK management stepped in and laid out clear instructions that no comment be made against opposition players and fans. "After that incident, there hasn't been any repeat of it. The DJ isn't supposed to make any comment on the opposition players. Moreover, we are fortunate to have a lovely fanbase that cheers us in numbers," Viswanathan said. Besides the song, the CSK management has also objected to comments made by the DJ on the public address system after dismissal of their players during the April 5 game. They maintain that the DJ job is to create a positive atmosphere by cheering big hits and wickets. "They are not there to undermine the rivals or insult them," a CSK official said.

Over the years, the CSK-RCB rivalry, sometimes called the Southern Derby, has turned bitter. Historically, CSK had an edge over their regional rivals but the tide turned in recent times. Since 2024, RCB has won four games in a row, including the most recent one. Soon after the game, videos of fans clashing surfaced on social media platforms, with the police having to step in to control one altercation. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, where the two franchises are based, have a long-running dispute over the sharing of the Cauvery river water.

## CSK's Khaleel Ahmed ruled out of IPL 2026 with long-term injury

GNS News Agency, April 20

Chennai Super Kings suffered a significant setback after left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed was ruled out of the remainder of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season due to a right quadriceps injury. In an official statement, the five-time champions confirmed that the recovery period is expected to exceed 12 weeks, effectively ending his campaign with nine more league matches to go this season. "The injury sustained will take more than 12 weeks to heal," the franchise said in a statement. The injury occurred during CSK's clash against Kolkata Knight Riders in Chennai on April 14, when the pacer was forced off the field midway through his final over after delivering just one ball. Gurjapneet Singh stepped in to complete the over and is now likely to see an expanded role within the bowling unit.

Khaleel's absence adds to CSK's growing list of concerns. The side is already missing key players, including former captain MS Dhoni, who continues to recover from a calf strain. Although Dhoni has resumed light training with the squad, he is yet to return to full-intensity match preparation and is likely to make a comeback for the game against Mumbai Indians on April 23. Additionally, Nathan Ellis has been unavailable for the entire tournament and his replacement, Spencer Johnson, is also yet to join the squad as he works his way back to fitness. To address the gap in the



pace attack, CSK could turn to domestic options such as Mukesh Choudhary or Ramakrishna Ghosh. Choudhary offers a left-arm alternative similar to Khaleel, while Ghosh brings a different skill set as a right-arm fast bowler capable of contributing useful runs down the order. Ghosh, in particular, made headlines during the 2025-26 domestic season representing Maharashtra. In the Vijay Hazare Trophy, he produced a remarkable spell of 7 for 42 against Himachal Pradesh in Jaipur — the best List A figures for his state. CSK, who have managed two victories from their first five matches, are set to take on Sunrisers Hyderabad in Hyderabad on Saturday.

## When a food poisoning bout and forced 2-month rest worked its magic for Vaishali Rameshbabu to rediscover joy in chess in 2024



GNS News Agency, April 20

Vaishali Rameshbabu had just been knocked out of the World Cup in July and returned home, falling ill immediately. She would miss out on tournaments for two months, trying to recoup, and discover a broader life beyond chess, which in fact helped her to fall in love with chess again, and this time feel "sorta, kinda something like happy." India's brand new challenger for the Women's Chess World Championships after winning Candidates at Cyprus, recalled how the lowest point brought on enduring joy for the game thereafter.

The year was 2023-24 — and it had been a rollercoaster, she told Chess.com two years ago. "It was just a food poisoning. But it was bad for me. In a way it was good. I took a break from the game, to take some positives from it. But I had to miss some tournaments," she revealed to the website. The lead-up she told Chess.com had been filled with losses. "Last year was a rollercoaster. Wijk an Zee was ok. Didn't play well in Grand Prix, lost my rating so much. Fell sick in between and I had to withdraw from some tournaments. It was really tough for me at that point," she would say.

Becoming Grandmaster had been a childhood goal. "I played World Cup in July. Got knocked out and came back. And I fell sick. It was so bad that I had to cancel few tournaments. I could not play World Teams, Kolkata Rapid Blitz. I cancelled back to back tournaments," she would narrate. It was heading home and being away from the crucible of chess that actually proved beneficial. "I was home for two months. In that period I sort of — I was seeing life in a different way. In a way I was becoming happy kinda, sort of, I was seeing different things," she told chess.com. It helped her fall for chess all over again, after the fun of it had gone missing due to the pressure of results. "Chess-wise I was just happy to play tournaments after a long break. My first tournament was Asian Games where we won silver for India. And next day I flew to Qatar. And everything went well. And my approach to the game changed. I was happy playing the game," she said. The Grand Swiss title and qualifying for her first Candidates would follow.

"I started playing chess as a kid because I used to

enjoy chess. But somehow in last few years I had ended up playing for results, to complete GM title, going behind rating, norms. And once I got back the joy of playing chess, results started coming. Not for results or goals, but just playing the game as I used to when I was a kid," she recalled in 2024 of a predicament all chess prodigies face at one point or another. Dreams are young and relentless, maturity takes its time. "To become GM and Women's World champion was always in my head. I don't want to take pressure, but the tournament is always full of pressure," she explained to Chess.com.

Losses would take their toll. "Sometimes go for a walk alone, watch comedy movies, sometimes can't sleep whole night. I'm sensitive to losses. There are some games where I don't get sleep for days," she said of the brutal struggle to shrug off defeats. She had subsequently figured mind flowcharts, training herself to think in a particular way. Speaking to FIDE ahead of the 2024 Candidates, Vaishali had said, "Best advice I got was to enjoy whatever I do and rest is to do the job well on your part, and accept whatever it gives. It's difficult sometimes. The stress takes you. But every time you feel stressed you know it's time to take a pause for a minute and look back at how you have come so far, to think for some time and you can start fresh." Back then, Vaishali had told FIDE she wanted to become World Champion and cross 2600 in ELO, though that figure could be pegged higher now. Speaking of her preparation,

## SRH fan gets massive tattoo of team logo, calls Sunrisers Hyderabad an emotion

GNS News Agency, April 20

Hyderabad: It is a simple case of a die-hard fan extending his passion towards an IPL franchise, Sunrisers Hyderabad, to the next level. For, the 26-year-old Kandukuri Dharma Rakshith, founder of the Orange Army Fan Club, the official fan club of SRH, has now come up with a massive tattoo of the SRH logo on his arm of the former champions. Inspiration for this tattoo? "From 2013 to 2026, my journey with SRH has been long-lasting. I have never missed a single SRH match in the IPL, and I even traveled to South Africa this year to support our extended team. SRH has become an inseparable part of my life. To honor this 13-year journey and emotional connection, I decided to get a tattoo, a permanent memory of my passion and loyalty," he revealed. "Initially, my family was not supportive of the idea of getting a tattoo. However, during this IPL season, they understood my deep connection with the team and gave me their approval. For me, this moment felt like a reminder that when your passion is genuine, even your dreams eventually find acceptance," he said. "I have been

## MCA becomes first state association to introduce player contract system from 2026-27 domestic season



GNS News Agency, April 20

The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) has decided to implement annual contracts for its players, effective from the 2026-27 season onwards. The MCA has decided to introduce Grades A, B, and C, where players will be remunerated and the proposal was passed during the recent Apex Council meeting.

Grade A players will be paid between 12 lakh to 20 lakh per annum, Grade B cricketers will be paid between 8 lakh to 12 lakh, while Grade C players will get 8 lakh rupees. "We had earlier promised that MCA will bring up the contract system, and we have finalised it in the last Apex

Council meeting. A lot of thought has gone into it, and we have tried to cover each area. All players don't get the opportunity to play in the IPL. This contract will help many players of today's time who play all formats of the game for Mumbai," MCA President Ajinkya Naik said. The MCA has become the first association to have a contract system for its players. However, the association has also kept certain guidelines for players who can avail the contract. The player should be registered with MCA and should meet the minimum fitness requirement set by the association.

The salary brackets as per MCA's grades The salary brackets as per MCA's grades Players should not have represented India in any format in the past two seasons. Players should not have been selected by an IPL team in the past two seasons. The player has to be recommended by the selection committee. Many players who represent Mumbai and have been doing well are not part of any IPL team. To offer them some stability, the MCA has decided to introduce a new grade structure. In 2024, the association had decided to pay its Ranji Trophy cricketers match fees on par with what they get from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). Match fees paid by BCCI are between Rs 40,000 and Rs 60,000 per day, depending on the number of games a cricketer has played. The MCA will match this, which means a Mumbai player will get fees from the BCCI as well as the state association.

## Saudi Arabia weighs LIV Golf exit as West Asia war forces sports investment rethink

GNS News Agency, April 20

If Saudi Arabia pulls back, it would mark a major setback not only for LIV Golf but also for PIF's broader sports investment strategy, which has made the kingdom a dominant force in global events from Formula 1 to the FIFA World Cup. (Reuters file photo) If Saudi Arabia pulls back, it would mark a major setback not only for LIV Golf but also for PIF's broader sports investment strategy, which has made the kingdom a dominant force in global events from Formula 1 to the FIFA World Cup.

Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund is reassessing its priorities under the strain of geopolitical tensions, with officials warning that the US-Israel war against Iran is adding pressure to rethink major investments — including the LIV Golf. According to the Financial Times, Yasir al-Rumayyan, governor of the Public Investment Fund (PIF), acknowledged that the conflict is forcing a shift in strategy, saying the war would "add more pressure to reposition some priorities." The comments come as the nearly \$1tn fund unveiled a new five-year plan aimed at tightening spending after a decade of aggressive global investments.

If Saudi Arabia pulls back, it would mark a major setback not only for LIV but also for PIF's broader sports investment strategy, which has made the kingdom a dominant force in global events from Formula 1 to the Fifa World Cup. Against this backdrop, PIF is now on the verge of scaling back — or even ending — its support for LIV Golf, the breakout tour that ignited a bitter civil war within the sport. A decision could come as soon as Thursday, Financial Times reported citing 'people familiar with the matter', though no final call has been made.



Launched five years ago with roughly \$5bn in Saudi backing, LIV has disrupted professional golf by luring elite players with massive payouts and introducing a team-based format. Stars such as Jon Rahm and Bryson DeChambeau defected from the PGA Tour, intensifying a feud that spiralled into legal battles and accusations of anti-competitive behaviour. Despite the hype, LIV has struggled to build a sustainable business. Its UK entity alone lost nearly \$500mn in 2024, and chief executive Scott O'Neil has said profitability may still be five to 10 years away, as per British media reports. The league has also faced hurdles securing lucrative broadcast deals and initially lacked world ranking points — a key draw for top players — though it recently secured limited recognition. Some momentum has already begun to reverse, with players including Brooks Koepka and Patrick Reed returning to the PGA Tour. A proposed merger between the rival tours, announced in 2023, ultimately collapsed.

## IPL 2026, MI vs PBKS Playing 11 Today Match: Mumbai Indians sweat on Rohit Sharma's fitness



GNS News Agency, April 20c

IPL 2026, Mumbai Indians (MI) vs Punjab Kings (PBKS) Playing 11, Full Squad, Players List: The Mumbai Indians and Punjab Kings are on opposite ends of the IPL 2026 table and they face each other with similarly opposite reasons for needing a win. PBKS are the only unbeaten team in the tournament and will be looking to maintain their grip on the top spot, having been pushed down to third since the time that they last played by Rajasthan Royals and Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

Mumbai Indians have also been pushed down, to the second bottom spot in the table after the Chennai Super Kings recorded two consecutive victories to end their own poor start. MI could end up staying ninth, two points behind the teams above them if they lose this match. Veteran opener Rohit Sharma and star pacer Jasprit Bumrah have been pretty much the only source of consistency for them, al-

though the latter has also been subdued this season compared to his lofty standards. Rohit, though, is a doubt for this match as he had to retire hurt during MI's last match against RCB due to a hamstring problem. Rohit was seen batting in nets on the eve of the match but the jury is out on whether MI will risk pushing the 38-year-old too much.

MI vs PBKS Predicted XI: MI Probable XI: Ryan Rickleton, Quinton de Kock, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya, Sherfane Rutherford, Naman Dhir, Mitchell Santner, Shardul Thakur, Deepak Chahar, Jasprit Bumrah, Ashwani Kumar, Vishnu Vinod, Suryansh Shedge, Nehal Wadhwa, Marcus Stoinis, Shashank Singh, Marco Jansen, Xavier Bartlett, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Arshdeep Singh, Yuzvendra Chahal

MI vs PBKS Squads: Punjab Kings: Priyansh Arya, Prabhshimran Singh(w), Cooper Connolly, Shreyas Iyer(c), Nehal Wadhwa, Shashank Singh, Marcus Stoinis, Marco Jansen, Xavier Bartlett, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Arshdeep Singh, Yuzvendra Chahal, Vishnu Vinod, Suryansh Shedge, Yash Thakur, Harpreet Brar, Mitchell Owen, Harnoor Singh, Musheer Khan, Pyla Avinash, Vishal Nishad, Azmatullah Omarzai, Lockie Ferguson, Praveen Dubey, Ben Dwarshuis Mumbai Indians: Ryan Rickleton(w), Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Hardik Pandya(c), Sherfane Rutherford, Naman Dhir, Mitchell Santner, Shardul Thakur, Trent Boult, Mayank Markande, Jasprit Bumrah, Corbin Bosch, Ashwani Kumar, Raghuvir Sharma, Raj Bawa, Deepak Chahar, Quinton de Kock, Will Jacks, Mayank Rawat, Atharva Ankolekar, Robin Minz, AM Ghazanfar, Danish Malewar, Mohammed Salahuddin Izhar

tity, and our spirit in the IPL. Let's stand united and cheer for Sunrisers Hyderabad with everything we have," Rakshith said. "How did the whole concept of fan club evolve? "Well, back in 2013, I observed strong fan communities like "Whistle Podu Army" for CSK and "Namma Team RCB." However, there wasn't a dedicated fan club for SRH. That inspired me to start one myself during the inaugural season," said Rakshith. "The journey began as a simple Facebook group, and today, Orange Army Fan Club has grown across multiple social media platforms, representing the voice and passion of SRH fans. We've built a community where passionate supporters come together — especially during home games, where we gather in the West Stand at Uppal Stadium to cheer for our team," he said. But, why SRH? "For me, SRH is not just a cricket team it is an emotion. I have always felt a strong personal connection with the team. The name "Hyderabad" itself carries legacy, culture, and pride. While many of my friends chose teams based on their favourite players, I chose to stand by my city first," Rakshith said. "My biggest inspiration has always been my father.

## Rajat Kapoor feels Hindi cinema lost its 'feminine' hero with Amitabh Bachchan's Angry Young Man in 1970s: 'Only violent men on screen today'



"We lost that gentle, caring guy in the 1970s maybe when the Angry Young Man came in. Maybe with Shah Rukh Khan, the sweet, gentle face got revived again (in the 1990s). But ya, we've lost that man with feminine traits. Now, of course, we see violent men on screen," adds Rajat. Even Shah Rukh is playing the violent man on screen now, with blockbusters like Siddharth Anand's Pathaan and Atlee's Jawan in 2023, and his upcoming action thriller, King, also helmed by Siddharth. As of now, even the two highest grossing Indian films at the domestic box office star Allu Arjun and Ranveer Singh as extremely violent men — Sukumar's 2024 Telugu action thriller Pushpa 2: The Rule and Aditya Dhar's spy thriller Dhurandhar 2: The Revenge, which released earlier this year. When Vinay asks if men have informed violence or vice-versa, Kapoor claims it's a symptom of a larger societal shift. "When you're rooted to the ground, based in a village, agriculture is still your primary activity, and you're addressing that audience, then you make a Do Bigha Zameen," argues Rajat, referring to Bimal Roy's 1953 seminal film, starring Sahni in the lead role. When Vinay enquires if that film is reinterpreted today, would it be a violent movie, Rajat laughs and says, "I suppose so. Who knows?"

"The whole shift to city, the migration, and the loss of connection with the pind has something to do with violence. Cities are violent. To survive in a city is violent. You've lost the connection with your roots, your home. That must be the beginning of the violent gene that I'll be a gangster and rule over this city," adds Rajat. For Vinay, however, slipping into the role of a violent man as Sohrab Handa wasn't a task despite his bumbling onscreen image. "I hail from a very middle-class family in Bihar. Even the most lovable human in the state I come from has a very evolved and accepted streak of violence. I don't think anyone in Bihar would be shocked with any kind of violence even though they're not violent themselves," claimed Vinay. He points out that in the history of Bihar, there's a lot of blood in the form of Kalinga War, resistance to Buddhism and Jainism, the modern struggle of Bihar to be autonomous, the class and caste divides, the zamindari pratha, and the coal mines. "Bihar is a complete life in itself. It's fascinating to find a streak of that in a character somebody else thought of, who has no Bihar connection (laughs)," adds Vinay. Vinay admitted he was quite scared to take up this role because there were so many Handas around him growing up, some of them even related to him. "Some of them are still around," says Vinay, to which Rajat responds, "Still alive?" as both crack up. Everybody Loves Sohrab Handa is streaming on ZEE5.

"The Indian man has lost that feminine side. If you look at films of the 1950s, you'd see a lot of gentleness. Actors like Shashi Kapoor were celebrated. Or there was Rajesh Khanna, the 'chocolate hero'. Or even Dilip Kumar, the tragic hero," argues Rajat. "Balraj Sahni," adds Vinay as Rajat seconds that inclusion. Rajat feels a tectonic shift in that landscape happened in the 1970s with the advent of Amitabh Bachchan as the Angry Young Man. Though Bachchan also played a gentle hero in films of Hrishikesh Mukherjee, his metamorphosis into Vijay by legendary screenwriter duo Salim-Javed remains his most enduring legacy.

Rajat Kapoor and Vinay Pathak share a professional association of over 25 years, which extends across theatre and cinema. Their most recent collaboration is the former's new directorial Everybody Loves Sohrab Handa. While Rajat also plays a key role in the rich ensemble, Vinay plays the titular protagonist, the one who's ironically found dead at the start of the film. Handa is somewhere symbolic of the leading man we see in Indian cinema today — an aggressive, violent, entitled man, who's undeniably charming and unmissable. On SCREEN's Creator X Creator, chatting with his longtime collaborator Vinay, Rajat points out that the Hindi film hero used to be conventionally very gentle and in touch with his feminine side.

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## Who is Anudeep Katikala: Andhra Police travel 1,100 km to detain comedian over his 'Tollywood roast' on Pawan Kalyan, Ram Charan



ing regularly across Hyderabad and Bengaluru. He also produced a special called The Tollywood Roast Show, with his own brief about it reading: "We're going all out on Tollywood and we promise to spare none."

What did he say about Konidela family?

The video that triggered all of this was framed, at least by Anudeep, as a conversation about feminism and the stigma around divorce. He started with Ram Charan. Using a Telugu expletive that loosely refers to a man who lives off his wife's wealth, he built a joke around Ram Charan's financial standing compared to his wife Upanasa Kamineni, who is the granddaughter of Prathap C Reddy, the founder of Apollo Hospitals. He also took digs at Pawan Kalyan and Niharika Konidela's divorces. He reportedly paused mid-set to acknowledge that divorce is not something to laugh at and that people have their own reasons for it. That part, however, did not make it into the clips that spread across social media. The backlash Mega fans gathered outside the Street Comedy Club in Hyderabad and protested, searching inside for Anudeep. Realising the situation, he switched off his phone and left the premises. On social media, particularly on X, fans demanded strict legal action. Jana Sena leader Sandeep Panchakarla issued a public warning asking Anudeep to release a video apology, calling his comedy low-level and offensive.

A separate complaint was also filed by Jana Sena State Secretary Akepati Subhashini with the Tirupati District Superintendent of Police. After fans demanded an apology, Anudeep posted a video on social media saying he was sorry if his words had hurt anyone, that his aim was to normalise topics like feminism and divorce through humour, and that audiences should try to understand the intention behind comedy.

The stand-up comedian who made jokes about Pawan Kalyan's divorces, used a derogatory term while talking about Ram Charan, and brought Niharika Konidela's failed marriage into a comedy set has been detained. Andhra Pradesh Police picked up Anudeep Katikala, three days after an FIR was filed against him at the Kakinada I Town police station on a complaint by Jana Sena Party functionary Bade Venkata Krishna.

Who is Anudeep Katikala?

Anudeep Katikala is a Hyderabad-based comedian, also the founder of the Silly South Comedy Club, a collective of Telugu stand-up comedians, and has been perform-

## Sannidhanam first single Yeri Vanthom Ayyappa released

Chennai: The makers of director Amutha Sarathi's 'Sannidhanam (P.O)', featuring actor Yogi Babu in the lead, have now released the film's first single, 'Yeri Vanthom Ayyappa', a soulful and devotional track that beautifully captures the essence of faith and devotion associated with the Sabarimala pilgrimage. Set to tune by AGR, the song has lyrics by Mohan Rajan. It has been rendered with heartfelt intensity by Abhishek Raju and Vishnu Ram.

The film has been evoking interest in fans and film buffs ever acclaimed filmmaker Cheran and celebrated actress Manju Warrier released its first look. Produced by Sarvata Cine Garage and Shimoga Creations, 'Sannidhanam (P.O)' has been directed by Amutha Sarathi, who has also penned the dialogues for the film. The film is being jointly produced by Madhusudhan Rao, V Vivekanandan, and Ramasamy Velu. Featuring a strong ensemble led by Yogi Babu, Roopesh Shetty, and Varsha Viswanath, the film brings together talents from across industries. The lead actors in the film have been supported by a seasoned cast including actors Sithara, Pramod Shetty, Munnar Ramesh and Gajaraj among others. Shot across spiritually significant and visually rich locations such as Sabarimala, Pamba, Erumeli, Chennai, and Pollachi, the film promises an authentic and immersive backdrop. At its core, Sannidhanam (P.O) is



driven by powerful human emotions, revolving around an unexpected incident faced by Ayyappa devotees and the transformative journey that unfolds thereafter. With a narrative rooted in faith, resilience, and human connection, the film aims to deliver a deeply moving cinematic experience. The film's story and screenplay have been penned by Ajinu Ayyappan. The film has cinematography by Vinoth Bharathi and editing by PK. Art direction for the film is by Vijay Thennarasu. Metro Mahesh has choreographed the stunts in the film while Joy Mathi has choreographed the dances.

## 'What Shah Rukh brought to Aryan is truly one of a kind': Maneesh Sharma on 10 years of Fan



There's a moment in Fan, directed by Maneesh Sharma, that strikes at the heart of the film's polarising second half. It's where we see Gaurav Chandna, a die-hard fan and lookalike of his idol Aryan Khanna (both played by Shah Rukh Khan, in what is arguably the finest performance of the last decade) storming into the luxurious seaside home of the star he worshipped, moving into his private study: a room filled with trophies, posters, and every tangible memory of Aryan's career. It's in this study, where in one terrific long take, Gaurav begins to dismantle it piece by piece, his bitterness seeping through. What was once adoration has now turned into bitter resentment. The scene is a masterpiece, a deep dive into the darkness of fandom, and how it evolves into something that can claim ownership over the very stars they adore, a sort of a sentiment that has only become more relevant in today's time. Though the film may not have made a big splash at the box office, it has since become a seminal talking point in both SRK's and Sharma's careers. A decade later, Sharma, in an exclusive chat with SCREEN, reflects on the film's thematic motifs, some of its key scenes, and his experience of working with Khan.

The larger arc is, of course, about a fan who turns into a fanatic. So tell me about the choice to have him run a cyber cafe in the opening of the film, as it's a perfect foreshadowing of how the digital world fuels both devotion and destruction.

What you're deducing about Gaurav owning a cyber cafe is partly a directorial choice. When we were writing the character, the larger idea was that he comes from a middle-class family, not the brightest kid, so running an internet cafe was just a way to earn a living. The idea was that at 24, his only aspiration was to be like Aryan Khanna. As for foreshadowing, I'm not sure how much of it was planned from the start. This choice came up during discussions with my screenwriters, Habib Faisal and Sharat Katariya. And filmmaking is a process, and such choices evolve when they fit the larger theme of the story.

One of the major talking points of the film has been the second half, where the tone shifts drastically from a psychological thriller to an actioner, which some feel detracts from the originality that made it stand out in the first place. For all of us, myself, my writers, Aditya Chopra (the producer), and even Shah Rukh, the film was never conceived in halves.

## Ek Din trailer: Junaid Khan, Sai Pallavi and amnesia make for a tragic love triangle

In the last few years, there's been a dearth of romantic films in Hindi cinema but after the success of Mohit Suri's Saiyaara in 2025, there was a renewed interest in the genre. Now, Aamir Khan's son Junaid, along with Sai Pallavi, are starring in the film Ek Din, directed by Sunil Pandey, and produced by Aamir himself and from the trailer, it appears to be a tragic love story.

The trailer introduces Junaid's character as an office geek who secretly admires Sai Pallavi's character from afar, but doesn't have the courage to speak to her. Since they work in the same office, they head for a company retreat to Japan, where Sai Pallavi's character meets with an accident and loses her memory, but only for a day. The trailer describes it as 'transient global amnesia' where a person has lost their memories for a day. We are told that after a day's time, they won't remember what they have experienced during that day. Junaid's character becomes her support, but it appears that he doesn't tell her the entire truth, which obviously upsets her.

For a trailer, Ek Din has shared more than its viewers could have asked for as the basic plot of the film is already clear here. The film is inspired by a Thai film called One Day, which was also extensively shot in Japan. Junaid's character is quite reminiscent of the 'one-sided lover' trope often seen in Hindi movies, and he even describes himself as a 'haara hua aashiq (lover who has lost)' when he hasn't even spoken to the woman he supposedly loves.

Junaid Khan's father Aamir has previously played a patient of anterograde amnesia in 2008's Ghajini. In an earlier interview, Mansoor Khan shared with Variety India that

We viewed it as a continuous journey of an eccentric young man and his obsessive admiration for a star. In that journey, there's a pivotal shift that occurs, and once it does, the story becomes a relentless, no-holds-barred ride. The goal was always to introduce Gaurav, establish his world, his devotion to his idol, and then show a turning point that alters him completely. And, by the midpoint, the intent was that the audience is so deeply invested in his emotional journey, making them ready to follow him wherever his path leads. Shah Rukh Khan Maneesh Sharma opened up about the polarising second half of Fan.

With each viewing, I've realised that Gaurav and Aryan are reflections of each other. This brings me to my favorite scene, where they're sitting in front of mirrors, their first interaction. Do you remember shooting that?

That scene was the very first thing we shot. Actually, we had a test shoot before, where we wanted to test Gaurav's look, and we filmed that train sequence where he's heading to Mumbai. But we later reshot it as we were just experimenting with a lot of things, including the shooting style. So, the first proper thing we shot was this mirror scene, which set the tone for both characters right away. Everyone was like, 'Aren't you nervous?' But I was very excited because I thought, if I can pull this off, then we're sorted.

What you're saying about them mirroring each other is absolutely true: reflection was always the thematic core of Fan. I told Manu Anand (the Director of Photography) that I wanted many reflections in the film, but none of the mirror shots should be too obvious; they had to carry a psychological layer. For example, Gaurav never looks at the mirror; he's only seen in it. Or, one of my favorite shots is when Aryan looks at the mirror on the plane and gives a fake smile. These were the kinds of thematic motifs we aimed to weave throughout the film. Shah Rukh Khan The mirror scene in Fan subtly underscores how Aryan and Gaurav are inherent reflections of each other. In the shot where Gaurav sees Aryan for the first time outside Mannat, Shah Rukh's performance is just otherworldly, and he truly deserved every accolade for that reaction alone. What you see in the film is the first take. When I saw it, it hit me in the heart. I was shaking when I watched it. The first thing my DOP said was that he thought he lost camera's focus, and I told him, 'You can't tell me that after such a performance.' I said, 'This take will go, even if it's out of focus,' which it was. He kept asking to do another, but I told him, 'Do as many as you want, but this one is it.' It's not that Shah Rukh couldn't do it all over again, but some moments just happen, and you have to be there to witness that magic.

People might talk a lot about Gaurav's portrayal, and rightly so, but it's actually Shah Rukh's performance as Aryan that stands out. Absolutely. What Shah Rukh brought to Aryan is truly one of a kind. In many of our discussions, he kept adding very intricate details to Aryan's character. For instance, the moment in the wedding sequence where the businessman shuts Aryan down was actually Shah Rukh's idea. Or, there's a close-up shot where Aryan is looking at his phone. These small, subtle moments are very difficult to explain, but you can sense the vulnerability he brought to the performance, and he did so with such gravitas.



Aamir rewrote the ending of the film. "Aamir had reservations about the climax scene. He rewrote it. We agreed he was right," he told Variety India. Mansoor, who has directed films like Josh and Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar, is a co-producer on the film.

This will be Junaid's third film, and his second theatrical release. He made his debut with Netflix release Maharaj, which drew mixed reactions. His theatrical debut Loveyapa, also starring Khushi Kapoor, flopped at the box office. After Ek Din, he is also looking forward to the third part of the Ragini MMS franchise, starring Tamannaah Bhatia. For Sai Pallavi, this is her Bollywood debut. She has worked in films like Gargi, Shyam Singha Roy, Premam, Amaran across the South Indian film industries. Later this year, she will be seen with Ranbir Kapoor in Ramayana.

## Sundeep Kishan's next with Krishna Chaitanya titled Power Peta

Hyderabad: Well known actor Sundeep Kishan's next film, which is to be written and directed by Krishna Chaitanya, has now been titled 'Power Peta', its makers announced on Thursday. Well known production house 70mm Entertainments, headed by producers Vijay Chilla and Shashi Devireddy, which is known for backing content-driven, impactful cinema, is producing this film.

The makers chose to announce the title of their film on the occasion of actor Sundeep Kishan completing 16 years in the film industry. The title poster of 'Power Peta' makes a powerful impression. Dark, gritty, and rich in symbolism, the poster features a blood-soaked chessboard—a classic metaphor for strategy, power, and sacrifice. The pieces appear broken, fallen, or standing in uneasy victory, while a crushed rose lies amid the chaos, stained by violence. The visual sets the tone for the film's core themes—love, honour and politics, hinting at an intense narrative where emotions and power struggles collide, and every move comes at a cost.

Sources close to the unit say that director Krishna Chaitanya has crafted a compelling story that blends multiple genres into a gripping narrative for this film. Sundeep Kishan is expected to undergo a complete transformation, stepping into what could be the most intense role of his career. Sources say that the makers are likely to announce the other members of the cast shortly.

Beyond its scale in storytelling, 'Power Peta' also boasts a stellar technical team. Music for this film is to be composed by one of the best in the business, music director Mani Sharma. Cinematography is to be handled by the acclaimed Madhie, who is best known for having shot critically acclaimed films like 'Veyil', 'Naan Mahaan Alla' and the Mahesh Babu-starrer 'Srimanthudu'. National Award-winning editor Sreekar Prasad takes charge of editing, with Ramakrishna and Monika leading the production design. Sound design will be crafted by Sachin Sudhakaran and Hariharan.