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NGRI hands over SLBC tunnel safety survey report to Uttam

Hyderabad: The National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) submitted a comprehensive survey report on the structural integrity assessment and subsurface conditions of the ongoing Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel works to Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy. Geographic Reference

NGRI officials highlighted observations on stress zones, seepage patterns, and tunnel roof stability. They also explained factors behind the February 22, 2025 roof collapse. The report was formally handed over by NGRI Chief Scientist, HVS Satyanarayana, to the Minister during a review meeting on Friday.

Class X girl committed suicide fearing failure in board exams

Medak: The fear of failure in the exams cost the life of another teenager as a Class X girl committed suicide by hanging at Podichenpally Thanda in Papannapet mandal on Friday.

The deceased Banoth Saipriya (16), a student of ZPHS Kothapally, had appeared for the board examinations this year. However, she had doubts about her performance in the examination. As the day of declaring the results was approaching, she took the extreme step to end her life when the entire family was not at home.



TGRTC JAC Leaders' Meeting with Ministers Panel Underway

Hyderabad., April 24

A meeting between Telangana RTC Joint Action Committee (JAC) leaders and a panel of ministers, led by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, is currently underway at the Secretariat.

Ministers Ponnam Prabhakar, Sridhar Babu, Vivek, and Adluri Laxman Kumar are participating in

the meeting. Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao and Special Chief Secretary Vikas Raj are also in attendance.

At the outset, the ministers and JAC leaders expressed condolences over the death of RTC driver Shankar Goud. The discussions are now focused on the demands raised by the JAC leaders, with deliberations continuing.

AAP leaders Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak, Ashok Mittal join BJP



NEW DELHI, APRIL 24

AAP leaders Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak and Ashok Mittal have joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The three leaders announced this at a press conference in New Delhi today.

Chadha claimed that former cricketer and party leader Harbhajan Singh, Rajinder Gupta, Vikram Sahney and Swati Maliwal were also with them, taking the total MPs joining the BJP to seven.

"We are merging with the BJP. We have submitted papers to that effect with Rajya Sabha Secretariat," he announced.

Earlier in the day, AAP's Punjab unit accused the BJP of attempting to engineer a split within the party by creating an atmosphere of fear among its MPs through the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

AAP's chief spokesperson Baltej Pannu alleged that senior party leader and Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha had been "used as a tool" in the alleged conspiracy. He claimed that Chadha was promised a ministerial berth at the Centre in return for helping the BJP weaken AAP in Punjab.

Pannu directly accused Union Home Minister Amit Shah of being involved in the alleged plot.

CV Anand Set To Become Telangana's Next DGP

Hyderabad., April 24

In a major reshuffle within the state's top police brass, senior IPS officer CV Anand is widely expected to be appointed as the new Director General of Police (DGP) of Telangana.

The transition comes as the incumbent DGP, Shivadhar Reddy, reaches superannuation on April 30. According to official sources, Anand is slated to assume his new responsibilities in the first week of May.

Currently serving as the Special Chief Secretary of the Home Department, Anand's path to the top post was further signalled by recent administrative shifts. The state government has already issued orders appointing Shikha Goel to succeed him in the Home Department role, effectively clearing the decks for his elevation to the state's highest policing office.



Telangana govt extends ex-gratia of Rs 10 lakh to kin of driver Shankar Goud



Hyderabad., April 24

The Minister announced that a job would be provided to one family member, along with financial assistance of Rs 10 lakhs and an 'Indiramma' house.

Telangana Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar assured full support to the family of Shankar Goud, the RTC driver who took his own life.

The Minister announced that a job would be provided to one family member, along with financial assistance of ₹10 lakhs and an 'Indiramma' house. He urged JAC leaders to ensure that Goud's final rites are conducted smoothly and advised opposition parties against politicising the tragedy.

Meanwhile, a meeting was held at the Secretariat between a group of ministers and RTC JAC leaders, led by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka.

Courts can't force minor to carry pregnancy against her will, says Supreme Court



NEW DELHI, APRIL 24

Taking a pro-choice stand, the Supreme Court on Friday held that courts can't force a woman, especially a minor, to carry a pregnancy against her will and allowed a 15-year old girl to medically terminate her over seven-month pregnancy.

A Bench of Justice BV Nagarathna and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan said the reproductive autonomy of a woman must be accorded the highest importance and if a woman, carrying an unwanted pregnancy, was compelled to continue it then her constitutional rights would be violated.

"The right to make decisions concerning one's body particularly in matters of reproduction is an integral facet of personal liberty and privacy under Article 21 of the Constitution. The right cannot be rendered ineffective by imposing unreasonable restrictions especially in cases involving minors and unwanted pregnancies such as in the instant case," the Bench said.

"No court ought to compel any woman and more

so a minor child to carry a pregnancy to full term against her express will. Such compulsion would not only disregard her decision autonomy but also inflict grave mental, emotional and physical trauma in case she is compelled to give birth," it said.

The top court directed that she should be allowed to undergo medical termination of pregnancy at AIIMS, New Delhi, subject to all necessary medical safeguards. It directed the petitioner --- the minor's mother--- to submit an undertaking consenting to the procedure on her behalf.

Under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, the upper limit for termination of pregnancy is 24 weeks for married women, special categories, including survivors of rape and other vulnerable women such as those differently-abled and minors. In exceptional cases where the mother's life is in danger or the foetus is abnormal, the 24-week time limit can be breached. However, the Supreme Court has in several cases permitted termination of pregnancy beyond the statutory period.

The order came on a petition filed by the mother of the minor seeking permission for medical termination of pregnancy beyond the statutory period prescribed under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act.

The Bench sought to emphasise that the choice of the pregnant woman was relevant rather than that of the child to be born, saying continuation of such a pregnancy could have long lasting repercussions on the minor's mental health, educational prospects, social standing and overall development.

Refusing termination of pregnancy would compel the minor girl to endure irreversible consequences and such an approach would be contrary to the constitutional and settled principles recognising reproductive choice is a fundamental right, the top court noted.

Tarun Joshi Appointed Future City CP in Major Telangana IPS Reshuffle

Hyderabad: Senior IPS officer Shikha Goel was on Friday transferred and posted as principal secretary, home, indicating the imminent appointment of C.V. Anand, who currently holds the post, as the Director General of Police with effect from May 1.

The state government on Friday issued orders notifying transfers and postings of seven IPS officers, which will come into effect from May 1. The city region will also get two new commissioners of police --- Tarun Joshi for Future City and B. Sumathi for Malkajgiri.

Goel will continue to hold full additional charge (FAC) as director of the Telangana Cyber Security Bureau and director of the Telangana Forensic Science Laboratory until further orders.

Devendra Singh Chauhan was transferred and posted as director-general (vigilance and enforcement) and as ex officio principal secretary, general administration department, replacing Shikha Goel.

Shahnawaz Qasim, director general of the Drugs Control Administration, has been posted as Inspector General of police (IGP), Multi-Zone 2, and has also been placed in the FAC of IGP (Personnel).

Tarun Joshi, director of Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), has been posted as the commissioner of police, Future City, in place of G. Sudheer Babu, who will be retiring from service on April 30.



Avinash Mohanty was posted as director-general, Drugs Control Administration-Telangana, and Director of Prohibition and Excise. He has also been placed in FAC as Director, ACB.

B. Sumathi, who is the IGP of the Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB), Intelligence, has been transferred and posted as the commissioner of police, Malkajgiri. Kartikeya, IGP, Intelligence, has been placed in FAC as the IGP, SIB, Intelligence, relieving Sumathi from the post.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

A blot on human dignity

For a country that aspires to be a Vishwaguru, it is embarrassing that the successive governments have failed to rid the country of the abominable practice of manual scavenging. It is a matter of collective shame that over 315 sanitation workers have died in the last five years while cleaning sewers and septic tanks across the country. For many hapless workers, sewers are turning out to be virtual death traps. Though the dehumanising practice was officially banned in 2013, people from disadvantaged sections are being forced into it because of lack of other livelihood options. They are hired by local corporations and even private contractors to clean the blocked sewers and drains. The presence of lethal gases such as methane and hydrogen sulphide in sewers puts the lives of these workers at risk. Carbon monoxide poisoning, diarrhoea, nausea and tuberculosis are some of the other health problems faced by them. Yet, safety protocols are routinely ignored by contractors seeking to cut costs, and the authorities look the other way. Manual scavenging is not merely a vestige of colonial sanitation methods but remains a continuing human rights violation, entrenched in caste hierarchies and social complicity. Globally recognised as a form of modern slavery, it stands in direct violation of international treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), all of which are binding on India. The government's efforts towards complete mechanisation of sewer and septic tank cleaning have not yielded desired results.

Protection for Children from Heatwave



... "Water Bell System" Sets a New Standard in Student Health Care—Hyderabad, April 2026: In response to the rising summer temperatures and increasing heatwave conditions, Lotus Lap Public Schools (Boduppall, Dilukhnagar, and Badangipet branches) have taken a proactive and innovative step to safeguard student health by successfully implementing a "Water Bell System" over the past two years. Recognizing that children often forget to drink water while engaged in academics and activities, the school management introduced a structured system where a bell rings every hour, reminding all students to drink wa-

ter without fail. In addition, students are encouraged to drink water before and after lunch, and at the end of the school day, every child is required to show an empty water bottle, ensuring adequate hydration throughout the day. "This initiative has significantly helped in preventing dehydration among students while maintaining their overall physical and mental well-being. Adequate water intake plays a crucial role in improving brain function, enhancing concentration, strengthening memory, and increasing comprehension abilities, thereby directly contributing to better academic performance. Furthermore, proper hydration helps regulate body temperature, especially during extreme summer conditions, reducing the risk of heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Students who drink sufficient water experience less fatigue, remain active and energetic throughout the day, and actively participate in both academic and co-curricular activities." "Health-wise, regular water intake supports better digestion, reduces headaches, prevents constipation, and helps in flushing out toxins from the body. It also contributes to emotional stability, as well-hydrated children tend to remain calm, focused, and mentally balanced." "Dr. Lion Komatireddy Gopal Reddy, eminent educationist and environmentalist and Chairman of Lotus Lap Public Schools Group, emphasized the importance of this initiative, stating that developing the habit of drinking water every hour is essential for children, particularly during summer. He urged school leaders across the country to adopt this system, highlighting that such a simple yet powerful practice can bring about a significant improvement in student health and learning outcomes." "By prioritizing health alongside education, this initiative stands as a model for other institutions, proving that small changes can create a lasting and meaningful impact on the future generation."

Raghuram's Vision... Development in Villages



Khammam ,April 24, (Indian Chronicle): "Khammam: With a clear goal of transforming rural areas into model villages, Khammam MP Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy is taking significant steps toward rural development. Through MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) funds for 2025-26, he is actively working to improve infrastructure across the district. A total of ₹8.50 crore has been allocated for 199 development works, leaving a strong mark on rural progress. "Major Share for Singareni Mandal" Among all allocations, special priority has been given to Singareni (Karepalli) mandal. The highest funds in the district— ₹152.50 lakh—have been sanctioned for this mandal alone, covering 34 development works aimed at transforming village infrastructure. "Funds and Works Across Mandals" The MP has ensured balanced distribution of funds across all mandals: "Thallada: ₹95 lakh (23 works)" "Bonakal: ₹78.50 lakh (18 works)" "Kallur: ₹58.50 lakh (15 works)" "Mudigonda: ₹53.50 lakh (12 works)" "Chinthakani: ₹50 lakh (13 works)" "Ragunadhapalem: ₹42 lakh (9 works)" "Wyra: ₹40.50 lakh (11 works)" "Konijerla: ₹35 lakh (10 works)" "Madhira: ₹22.50 lakh (6 works)" "Sathupalli: ₹22 lakh (7 works)" "Enkooor: ₹16 lakh (4 works)" "Vemsur: ₹15 lakh (4 works)" "Tirumalayapalem: ₹13 lakh (3 works)" "Errupalem: ₹12.50 lakh (3 works)" "Khammam Rural: ₹10 lakh (2 works)" "Penuballi: ₹9.50 lakh (2 works)" "₹1.5 Crore for Paleru Constituency" In Paleru constituency, covering Khammam Rural, Kusumanchi, Tirumalayapalem, and Nelakondapalli mandals, development works worth ₹1,00,50,000 are already underway, focusing on strengthening basic infrastructure. "Strict Monitoring for Quality" Out of the 199 sanctioned works, procedures for 157 have been completed. Currently, 43 works are progressing rapidly, while 51 have already been completed. MP Raghuram Reddy has instructed officials to ensure high-quality execution without compromise and to complete all works within the stipulated time. He is personally monitoring the progress and conducting regular reviews, accelerating development in rural areas. "Local sarpanches and residents have expressed appreciation for the MP's dedicated efforts in driving village development."

Mass Protest in Khammam Over Farmers' Issues Led by BRS Leaders

"Khammam ,April 24, (Indian Chronicle): "A massive protest (Maha Dharna) was organized in Khammam demanding immediate solutions to farmers' problems. The protest was led by BRS Parliamentary Party Deputy Leader and Rajya Sabha MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra, along with former minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar, BRS district president and MLC Tata Madhusudan, and former MLAs Sandra Venkata Veeraiah and Kandala Upender Reddy, among other senior leaders. "Speaking at the protest, MP Ravichandra strongly criticized the Congress government, alleging that it has completely failed to address the urgent issues faced by farmers. He said farmers and the public are deeply frustrated due to the government's negligence toward the agriculture sector. "The protest, organized under the leadership of the BRS Khammam district unit in front of the Collectorate, highlighted several key concerns. Ravichandra pointed out that despite extreme heat conditions, authorities are deducting 5 kg per quintal of maize citing moisture content, which he termed unreasonable. He also alleged that due to the government's failure to procure paddy, procurement centers and roads are overflowing with unsold grain. "He recalled that under former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, schemes like Rythu Bandhu provided consistent financial support to farmers. However, he accused the current Congress government of attempting to dilute such schemes and failing to deliver on promises like extending support to tenant farmers under Rythu Bharosa. "Ravichandra further criticized the government for inadequate irrigation and power supply, stating that crops are drying up under the current administration led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He also mentioned that farmers are struggling to procure urea due to the introduction of an app-based system. "The MP questioned the role of ministers from Khammam district, alleging that despite having three senior ministers, the government has failed to ensure procurement of farmers' produce. He contrasted this with the previous BRS government, where, he claimed, every grain produced by farmers was procured under the supervision of KCR and then Civil Supplies Minister Gangula Kamalakar. "He also referred to the High Court's verdict stating that the Justice P.C. Ghose report on the Kaleshwaram project was invalid, calling it a setback for the current



government. "After the protest, Ravichandra, along with party leaders, marched into the Collectorate under the scorching sun, holding placards and staging a sit-in. They demanded immediate procurement of maize and paddy to ensure justice for farmers. A memorandum was later submitted to Additional Collector Pin Reddy Srinivasa Reddy. "Large numbers of BRS workers participated in the protest, wearing party scarves and caps, and raised slogans such as "Jai Telangana," "Long live BRS," "We want KCR back," and "Down with anti-farmer policies," expressing strong opposition to the current government's approach toward agriculture."

Protest against the death of RTC driver Shankar Goud – Vatte Janhaiya Yadav arrested

Telangana Rajya Sabha state general secretary Vatte Janhaiya Yadav has staged a protest against the death of RTC driver Shankar Goud. He along with his party workers staged a dharna demanding strict action against those responsible for the death of Shankar Goud and immediate justice for the victim's family. "Speaking on the occasion, Janaiya Yadav alleged that the government was ignoring the problems of RTC employees engaged in public service. He demanded that the real reasons behind Shankar Goud's death should be unearthed, financial assistance should be provided to the family members and cases should be registered against those responsible. "As the dharna became tense, the police intervened and arrested several leaders and activists, including Janaiya Yadav. During the arrest, the activists continued their agitation by raising slogans against the government. "Reacting to the incident, the party leaders said that it was not right to arrest leaders who were fighting for democratic rights and demanded immediate release. The Telangana Rajya Sabha leaders made it clear that the struggle will continue till justice is done to Shankar Goud's family.



Suryapet District SP issues insurance cheque



"Police Salary Package Insurance cheque of Rs.10 lakh through SBI Bank Account Insurance. "District SP Narasimha IPS handed over a salary package of Rs. 10 lakh to the family of ASI Satyanarayana, who died untimely while working in the district police department, at his office today. The State Bank of India has given a special salary package to the police. In case of the death of a police personnel, this police salary package will provide an insurance of Rs. 10 lakh through the account. The SP said that a cheque of Rs. 10 lakh has been handed over to the family members of Satyanarayana today through this scheme and this scheme will help the police families a lot. The SP appealed to all the personnel to take health precautions, stay away from accidents and take precautions while travelling. He also asked every police personnel to convert their salary package into an account. He congratulated the State Bank of India for coming up with this scheme. "Additional SP Ravinder Reddy, AO Manju Bhargavi, Special Branch Inspector Rama Rao, Police Association President SI Ramachandra Goud, State Bank of India officials Mohan Kumar, Mahesh and staff were present on the occasion.

Let's create Suryapet Fresh Brand Focus on oil palm and horticulture crops



Farmers should choose crops that yield high yield with less water" "Oil farm cultivation can help farmers grow economically" "Let's set up a cold storage facility to market the crop" "We are going to set up a mango market in 15 acres soon" "Let's move forward with the help of Revantha, Uttamanna, Tummala Nageswara Rao and Raghuvver Reddy. "AICC member Ram Reddy Sarvottam Reddy at an awareness seminar on oil farm crop" "AICC member Ramreddy Sarvottam Reddy said that farmers should choose high yielding crops with less water availability and develop economically. "They were speaking at an awareness seminar on oil farm cultivation for farmers organized by the Horticulture Department and Sericulture Department of the Telangana State Government at Star Barket Hall here on Friday. "He said that in the present situation, it is very good for the farmers to cultivate oil farms. He said that due to the increasing shortage of labourers and today's availability, farmers should take up oil farm cultivation. He said that the state government provides special subsidies to the farmers who cultivate oil and they should take advantage of them. He said that under the NMEOP scheme, a sub-

sidey of Rs 50,918 will be given for the first four years for the establishment of plants, fertilizers and inter-cropping drip irrigation equipment. "The farmer has to pay Rs 20 per Oppo plant as his share for the plants.

RWAs pledge support to GHMC's voter awareness drive

Hyderabad: The United Federation of Resident Welfare Associations (UFERWAS), an apex body of Greater Hyderabad RWAs, assured the GHMC election authorities of its support in promoting voter awareness and ensuring an accurate and inclusive electoral process during the implementation of Special Intensive Revision (SIR). The GHMC authorities invited UFERWAS representatives and various RWAs to an awareness session on the SIR on Friday. B T Srinivasan.

Accreditation Cards for Eligible Journalists



"District Collector Tejas Nandlal Pawar" District Collector Tejas Nand Lal Pawar said that it is the responsibility of the District Media Accreditation Committee to ensure that all eligible journalists get accreditation cards and all the eligible journalists will be given accreditation cards soon. "The District Media Accreditation Committee held an introductory function in his chamber on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that it is the responsibility of newspapers and channels to take the development and welfare schemes of the government to the people and the identity cards issued by the government to the journalists who perform such duties should be given to the deserving people and the District Media Accreditation Committee should take steps accordingly. The Collector has advised the journalists who have not applied before Friday evening of 24th of this month to apply online immediately. "The District Collector congratulated the newly elected accreditation committee members Chalasani Srinivasa Rao, Vajje Veeraiah, Sheikh Saida, Kola Nageswara Rao, MD Khaleel Ahmed, Dr. Bantu Krishna, Rebba Vijayakumar, Sankaramanchi Ravinder Sharma, Battula Mallikarjun and Bukka Upender. "On this occasion, the members of the District Media Accreditation Committee presented a bouquet of flowers to the District Collector and presented a shawl. "RTC Regional Manager Sucharitha, Deputy Executive Information Engineer Darshanam Mallesham and District Public Relations Officer Valloji Srinivasa Rao were present.

Congress In-charge Parameshwar Reddy Condoles Gundu Raju

UPPAL, APRIL 24 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "The mother of senior Congress leader from Habsiguda, Gundu Raju, Mrs. Gundu Anasuya, passed away on Tuesday. "On this occasion, Uppal Constituency Congress Party in-charge Mandula Parameshwar Reddy visited Gundu Raju and expressed his profound condolences to the bereaved family. "Several party leaders and workers participated in the condolence visit, including Kandi Shraavan Reddy, Division President Vijay, Peta Murali Mudiraj, Vallapu Srikanth Yadav, Ajij, Malu Nayak, and Vasu Nayak, among others.



Jogu Ramanna slams govt over RTC driver's death

Adilabad: Former minister Jogu Ramanna termed the death of RTC driver Shankar Goud a "murder committed by the State".

SP Nithika Pant Visits RTC Workers' Strike Camp in Asifabad



their issues and demands. The SP listened patiently to the concerns raised by the workers and emphasized the importance of continuing their protest in a peaceful and lawful manner. She advised the workers to ensure that no untoward incidents occur during the strike and urged them to express their grievances while respecting the law. The SP strongly cautioned them against taking any extreme steps such as suicide, stating that such actions would only worsen the situation. She explained that every issue has a legal solution and encouraged the workers to resolve their problems through proper channels and discussions with the government. Speaking on the occasion, SP Nithika Pant said that the police department is committed to maintaining public safety and ensuring law and order at all times. She added that necessary security arrangements have been put in place at the strike camp and that the police are vigilant to prevent any undesirable incidents. During her visit, the SP also motivated the workers to stay strong and pursue their demands through peaceful means. Local police officials, RTC union leaders, and staff members were present at the camp.

“Indian Chronicle, Jade Srinivas, April, 24.” “District Superintendent of Police Nithika Pant visited the RTC workers' strike camp being held at the Asifabad RTC bus stand on Thursday. On this occasion, she interacted directly with the workers participating in the strike and enquired about

Foundation Laid for New Toilets at Tribal Ashram School in Bambara Village

“Indian Chronicle, Jade Srinivas, April, 24.” “In a significant step towards improving basic facilities for students, a foundation stone laying ceremony for the construction of new toilets for girl students was held today at the Tribal Ashram School in Bambara village of Wankidi mandal, Komaram Bheem Asifabad district. The project is being undertaken under the aegis of Das Seva Samiti (Hyderabad) with an estimated cost of ₹6 lakh. The initiative aims to enhance sanitation and provide better infrastructure for girl students, ensuring a safe and hygienic environment within the school premises. The program was attended by School Headmistress Lakshmi Prasanna, Bambara village Sarpanch Bendarai Krishna, Deputy Sarpanch Jada Santosh, BJYM State Official Spokesperson Elagati Suchit, members of Das Seva Samiti and Yashasvi Malika team, Ravi, BJYM Wankidi Mandal President Vikas, BJP SC Morcha Wankidi Mandal President Vanesh, BJYM Vice President Bhavana Kundan, ward members, and several other dignitaries and villagers. The speakers on the occasion highlighted the importance of sanitation facilities in schools, especially for girl students, and appreciated the efforts of Das Seva Samiti for taking up this noble initiative. They expressed hope that such developmental



activities would continue in the future for the betterment of education and student welfare in the region.”

May Day Celebrations: CITU Organizes Games Competitions for Students in Bhupalapatnam

Indian Chronicle, Jade Srinivas, April, 24. “In connection with the upcoming May Day celebrations, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) organized a series of games competitions for students at the Primary School in Bhupalapatnam village, Sirpur (T) mandal of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district. The initiative aimed at creating awareness among students about the importance of International Workers' Day while also encouraging participation in recreational and team-building activities. As part of the program, several traditional and fun-filled games such as musical chairs, spoon race, and needle-and-thread competitions were conducted for both boys and girls. The school premises turned vibrant as students participated with great enthusiasm and competitive spirit. The event not only provided entertainment but also helped in promoting coordination, confidence, and unity among the children. The competitions were organized under the guidance of CITU village committee convener Durgayya and co-convenor Prameela, along with the active support of village committee members. Their efforts ensured the smooth and successful conduct of the event. Winners of the competitions were carefully selected, and the organizers announced that first and second prizes would be distributed on the occasion of May Day. The prize distribution ceremony will be held as part of the International Workers' Day celebrations,



recognizing the efforts and talents of the participating students. On this occasion, the organizers spoke about the significance of May Day, emphasizing the struggles, sacrifices, and achievements of workers around the world. They highlighted the importance of unity among workers and the need to uphold their rights and dignity. The message of solidarity and respect for labor was conveyed to the students in an engaging manner. The program witnessed the presence of CITU village committee members including Durgayya, Tirupati, Brahmaiah Aatram Lakshmi, Nanayya, and several others, who contributed to making the event a success. The celebration concluded on a positive note, leaving students motivated and informed about the importance of May Day.

Khammam District Accreditation Committee Should Be Announced Immediately: TJA

KHAMMAM APRIL 23 INDIAN CHRONICLE : “Telangana Journalist Association (TJA) Khammam district president G. Naga Swamy has urged the government and concerned authorities to immediately announce the pending accreditation committee in Khammam district and issue accreditation cards to eligible journalists. Speaking to the media on Friday in Khammam, he expressed concern that while accreditation committees have already been formed and even held their first meetings in almost all districts across Telangana, Khammam district is yet to see any such development. He said that journalists in the district have been waiting for a long time for their accreditation cards, and the delay in forming the committee is causing several difficulties for them. Emphasizing the rights and welfare of journalists, Naga Swamy appealed to the government to respond promptly by constituting the accreditation committee and speeding up the process of issuing accreditation cards. He also stated that intentional negligence towards Khammam district is unacceptable and demanded that the government address journalists' issues on an urgent basis.



MP Ravichandra Consoles Bereaved Families in Khammam

“Khammam, April 24: Indian Chronicle.” “Raja Sabha MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra on Friday visited and consoled the family members of several individuals who recently passed away in Khammam city. He first visited the residence of Alla Venkata Reddy at Agrharam in Damsalapuram, where he paid floral tributes to the deceased's portrait and extended his condolences to the family members, including his sons Shesha Vardhan Reddy and Anji Reddy, and sons-in-law Beerreddy Nagachandra Reddy and Satya Vardhan Reddy. Later, he visited Sriram Hills, where Kamartapu Bathukamma had passed away a few days ago. He consoled her sons Murali and Ravinder, along with other family members including Kurapati Venkateswarlu and Dr. Kurapati Pradeep. Subsequently,



the MP visited Madhira and paid homage to his close relative Adi Venkateswarlu (Peddabbayi).

District Collector Ankit emphasized that through skill development, youth can access broad employment opportunities, and by leveraging government schemes to achieve self-employment, they should strive for economic self-reliance.

“Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Bhadradi Kothagudem Staff Reporter, April 24, Indian Chronicle: As part of the “Praja Palana Pragathi Plan” (People’s Administration Progress Plan)—a 99-day action agenda—and within the framework of the “Welfare Week” programs organized by the state government, a skill development awareness program was held on Friday at the Nava Vocational Institute in Palvancha. District Collector Ankit attended the event as the chief guest and conducted a comprehensive inspection of the activities being conducted at the training center. On this occasion, the Collector interacted directly with the men and women currently undergoing training in various vocational courses. He gathered details regarding the quality of the training provided, the duration of the courses, post-training employment prospects, strategies for marketing their products, and opportunities for income generation. After eliciting feedback from the trainees, he issued instructions to the concerned officials to ensure that the training programs are conducted even more effectively and fruitfully. Officials explained that the “Nava Bharat Vocational Institute”—established in 2010 with the objective of creating employment for unemployed youth—provides high-quality, free training in vocational trades such as welding, electrical work, fitting, and solar technology to underprivileged youth from the surrounding areas. They reported that, to date, training—accompanying a stipend—has been provided to 2,200 individuals; furthermore, in the current year alone, training and subsequent employment opportunities have been facilitated for 80 individuals. The collector remarked that it is a matter of great pride that candidates who have completed their training have successfully secured employment not only in industries under the central and state governments and in private sector organizations but also in foreign countries. It was observed that for some individuals, establishing a stable livelihood through self-employment is a highly encouraging path. Speaking at the awareness session held subsequently, the Collector emphasized the need for the youth to fully grasp the significance of vocational education in the current era. He stated that ample employment opportunities become available only when one possesses vocational skills in addition to traditional academic qualifications. He clarified that merely obtaining a degree is insufficient; acquiring practical skills aligned with the specific requirements of the job market is of paramount importance. He noted that industries and the service sectors currently seek skilled personnel, and there is a strong demand for individuals trained in fields such as welding, electrical work, plumbing, fitting, solar technology, machine operation, and digital services. He added that these courses offer the advantage of being short-term programs that also facilitate quick employment placement. He further remarked that vocational edu-



cation is not limited solely to securing jobs but also paves a robust path toward self-employment. He suggested that trained youth could establish small-scale units and gradually expand their businesses, thereby creating employment opportunities for others as well. He pointed out that, on a global stage, nations like Japan and Russia have achieved significant industrial growth by prioritizing vocational education; similarly, our country too can attain economic progress through skill development. He urged the youth to fully utilize the skill development schemes being implemented by both the central and state governments. The Collector urged the youth to effectively utilize the training programs and schemes offered by the government to achieve self-employment and attain economic growth. He stated that by fostering respect for traditional crafts and gradually expanding businesses started on a small scale, a bright future can be secured. He highlighted that the state government is undertaking extensive initiatives through ATC centers—equipped with modern facilities—to enable individuals to acquire skills in vocational courses. He further suggested that by undergoing training in modern technological fields—such as solar energy and digital technology—in addition to traditional courses, individuals can secure better employment opportunities. Subsequently, the collector presented certificates to the candidates who had successfully completed their training; he also distributed checks in recognition of the income they had generated through their craft-based activities during the previous month. The event was attended by CPO Sanjeeva Rao; Tahsildar Dhara Prasad; Nav Bharat Vocational Institute HR Manager Srinivasa Reddy; SC Welfare Officer Srilatha; BC Welfare Officer Vijayalakshmi; SC Corporation Officer Upender; APM Venkaiah; representatives of women’s empowerment groups; staff from Nav Vocational Institute; and officials from various concerned departments.

Healthy Citizens Are the Nation's True Wealth

Says District Additional Collector Vidyachandana; Poshan Pakwada Concluding Ceremony Held Grandly in the District.



“Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Bhadradi Kothagudem Staff Reporter, April 24, Indian Chronicle: The district-level concluding ceremony of ‘Poshan Pakwada’ (Nutrition Fortnight) was held in the meeting hall located within the local Integrated Collectorate Complex. The event was organized under the aegis of J. Swarnalatha Lenina, the District Officer for the Department of Women, Child, Differently-abled, and Senior Citizens’ Welfare. The program featured a ‘Graduation Day’ for students who completed their early education at Anganwadi centers, along with traditional rituals such as Aksharabhyasam (initiation into learning), Annaprāsana (first solid food ceremony), and Seemantham (baby shower ceremonies) for pregnant women. Furthermore, as part of the district-level Poshan Pakwada initiative, mementos and certificates of appreciation were presented to District-level CDPOs, Supervisors, Poshan Abhiyan staff, and Anganwadi teachers who demonstrated exceptional performance. Speaking as the Chief Guest at the event, District Additional Collector Vidyachandana emphasized that healthy citizens constitute the true wealth of a nation, adding that “every morsel of food we consume should serve as an investment in our health.” He urged the Department of Women and Child Welfare to formulate a special action plan to ensure that the spirit of this ‘Poshan Pakwada’ (Nutrition Fortnight) is sustained throughout the year—rather than being limited to these 15 days—and to provide high-quality nutritious food to beneficiaries registered at Anganwadi centers. He emphasized that field-level staff must work with the specific objective of transforming our district into a malnutrition-free district by the end of 2026, noting the distinction between merely consuming food and consuming food with true ‘nutritional value’ that provides the body with essential vitamins and minerals. Speaking on this occasion, District Welfare Officer J. Swarnalatha stated that, as part of the ‘Poshan Pakwada 2026’ initiative, awareness regarding nutritional values has been successfully raised not only among the beneficiaries registered across the district’s 2,061 Anganwadi centers but also among the general public. She highlighted that a child’s health journey begins while still in the mother’s womb, and therefore, pregnant women should consume nutritious foods—such as leafy greens, milk, and eggs—in addition to taking Iron and Folic Acid tablets. It was stated that exclusively breastfeeding an infant for the first six months of life provides the child with lifelong immunity. It was further noted that if community celebrations—such as Annaprāsana (first solid food ceremony), Aksharabhyasam (initiation into learning), and Srimantham (baby shower)—are conducted periodically across all Anganwadi centers in the district, and if greater awareness is created regarding nutritional values and the holistic development of children under six years of age, then everyone will become active partners in build-



ing a ‘Healthy Telangana.’ As part of this program, a ‘Graduation Day’ ceremony was organized for children who completed their pre-primary education at the Anganwadi centers; additionally, Annaprāsana, Aksharabhyasam, and Srimantham ceremonies were conducted. Furthermore, mementos and certificates were presented to individuals who demonstrated exceptional performance during the Poshan Pakwada (Nutrition Fortnight) campaign. The event was attended by District BC Development Officer Vijayalakshmi, District SC Development Officer Srilatha, Medical Education Department officials Satish and Dr. Rakesh, as well as District CDPOs, supervisors, Anganwadi teachers, Poshan Abhiyan staff, District Women’s Empowerment staff, and others.

Free Mega Medical Camp Launched in Venkatagiri



“Khammam, Edulapuram, April 24 (Indian Chronicle):” “A mega free medical camp was inaugurated in Venkatagiri village under the 9th ward of Edulapuram Municipality. The camp was organized at the Zilla Parishad High School under the aegis of Kalla Foundation, in collaboration with Jangala Rajeswara Rao’s Save Your Liver Foundation and Sairam Hospital. The camp was formally inaugurated by Maddulapalli Market Committee Chairman Bairu Harinath Babu. Several local leaders and representatives participated in the event, including 9th ward councillor Kandukuri Shesamma Venkata Narayana, 13th ward councillor Bairu Koteswara Rao, 12th ward Congress leader Sappidi Govinda Rao, 8th ward councillor Sanghani Suseela’s son Sanghani Venkatesh, along with Gogula Srinivasa Rao, Burra Radhakrishna, Bairu Koteswara Rao, and others. The camp aimed to provide free medical services to local residents and raise awareness about liver health.”

Uppal MLA secures 4.25 lakh LOC aid in two phases BRS leaders hand over LOC papers to beneficiary family



“UPPAL, APRIL 24(INDIAN CHRONICAL):“Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy secured LOC assistance of ₹4.25 lakh in two phases for a patient from Chilukanagar division who was suffering from a serious medical condition. According to party leaders, Shailesh, son of Gudur Rajappa, was facing severe health complications due to a tumour in the back. In view of the family's distress, senior local BRS leader Gudi Madhusudan Reddy brought the matter to the notice of the MLA. Responding immediately, the MLA first sanctioned an LOC of ₹2 lakh for the treatment. However, complications arose during the surgery, prompting the family to approach him again. The MLA once again responded swiftly and arranged a second-phase LOC of ₹2.25 lakh. With this, a total of ₹4.25 lakh financial assistance was extended to the victim through the MLA's intervention. As per the MLA's directions, BRS leaders Gudi Madhusudan Reddy, Ravinder Reddy and Santosh Reddy handed over the LOC documents to the family of Gudur Rajappa. The family members expressed their heartfelt gratitude to MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy and BRS leaders Gudi Madhusudan Reddy, Eerelli Ravinder Reddy and Kolani Santosh Reddy for their timely support. Speaking on the occasion, BRS leaders said that the MLA has been consistently extending support to the public and making efforts to resolve every issue brought to his notice.

BRS leaders have no credibility to speak for farmers: Rayala Nageswara Rao



“Khammam, April 24, Indian Chronicle:“State Warehousing Corporation Chairman Rayala Nageswara Rao stated that BRS leaders have no right to speak on behalf of farmers. He was addressing a press conference held at the District Congress Party office in Khammam on Friday. He criticized BRS leaders for staging protests in support of farmers, calling it ironic and inappropriate. He said that farmers in Telangana are currently in a happy state due to record production of paddy and maize over the past two years. He added that the government is fully committed to supporting farmers by procuring their produce at Minimum Support Price (MSP). Procurement centers have been set up across the district, and the government is ready to purchase every grain produced by farmers. Nageswara Rao warned opposition leaders against shedding "crocodile tears" for farmers and trying to gain sympathy. He said farmers are actively engaged in stacking grain bags in market yards and that procurement operations are progressing smoothly. He further stated that the government has issued clear instructions to open procurement centers wher-

ever needed to ensure farmers do not face any inconvenience. Despite financial challenges, the government is prepared to bear the burden in the interest of farmers. He mentioned that leaders like Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Tummala Nageswara Rao, and Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy have given clear directions to ensure smooth procurement. So far, 30 procurement centers have been established in the district, and more will be set up if required.

He revealed that 50,000 metric tonnes of paddy have already been procured, and the government is prepared to procure an additional 2 lakh metric tonnes. The press conference was attended by DCC President Nuthi Satyanarayana Goud, former DCC President Puvvalla Durgaprasad, City Congress President Nagandla Deepak Chowdary, OBC Cell District President Puchakayala Veerabhadram, Mahila Congress President Dobbala Soujanya, Balagandhar Tilak, Banala Lakshman, Palakurthi Nageswara Rao, Moodumunthala Gangaraju, and other party leaders.

New Electricity Cables Installed in Venkat Reddy Nagar Colony by Uppal Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel

“UPPAL, APRIL 24(INDIAN CHRONICAL):“Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel fulfilled the promise he had made during the Basti Bata programme in Venkat Reddy Nagar Colony. As assured to the residents, he addressed the issue of old and dangerous electricity wires in the colony by getting them replaced with new cable wiring on Friday, demonstrating his commitment and sincerity. The works included installation of 3 spans of cable wiring in Anjaiah Shop Galli, 4 spans in Bhoomayya Galli, and 2 spans in the Venkat Reddy Nagar Bus Stop lane. On the occasion, Arun Patel expressed special thanks to Uppal constituency in-charge Mandamula Paramesh Reddy, along with officials of the Electricity Department including the DE, ADE, AE, and line inspectors Srinivas, Kishore, and Anil for their prompt response and cooperation. Residents of the colony also conveyed their gratitude to Akarapu Arun Patel and Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy for immediately responding to their



concerns and ensuring the safety of the local people by arranging the new cable wires.

Free Soil Testing Camp Successfully Conducted in Gubbagurthi Village



“Khammam, Konijerla, April 24:“A free soil testing program aimed at benefiting farmers was successfully conducted in Gubbagurthi village of Khammam district. Organized under the auspices of Coromandel, the initiative involved collecting soil samples, conducting tests, and immediately explaining the results to the farmers. On this occasion, experts created awareness among farmers about methods to improve soil fertility, the use of organic fertilizers, and modern techniques to increase crop yields. They explained that soil testing helps identify deficiencies of essential nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, and that using fertilizers accordingly can lead to bet-

ter productivity. Participants in the program included Agro Rythu Seva Kendra proprietor Kummari Nageswara Rao, Coromandel AP & Telangana Business Development Manager Ramesh, Khammam Zonal Manager Suman Reddy, Marketing Officer Phani, Agronomist Nikhileshwar, and Wyra MDT Gupta Nageswara Rao.

They provided valuable guidance to the farmers. A large number of local farmers attended the program and made good use of the opportunity. They expressed that such free soil testing initiatives are highly beneficial and requested that more such programs be organized in the future.

Indiramma Houses' for all eligible people, irrespective of party lines

Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy

“Hanumakonda, April 24 (Indian Chronicle) : Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy stated that the Congress government is taking steps to ensure that welfare schemes reach people of all sections and that the implementation of schemes will be transparent, without middlemen and beyond party affiliations. On Friday, along with City Mayor Gundu Sudharani, he distributed Indiramma house sanction letters to 256 poor beneficiaries from the West constituency at the Hanumakonda District Collectorate. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA expressed happiness that the dream of owning a house is becoming a reality for the poor through the Indiramma housing scheme being implemented by the state government. He said that the Chief Minister is striving to sanction 3,500 houses for each constituency. He mentioned that about ₹20.80 crore has already been released to nearly 2,000 beneficiaries in the Warangal West constituency so far, and another ₹42.03 crore is yet to be sanctioned. He clarified that the government is ready to sanction houses to every eligible applicant and that benefits will be delivered directly to beneficiaries without any middlemen. He reiterated the government's commitment to transparency in the implementation of welfare schemes. He also noted that steps are being taken to ensure that schemes such as ration cards, pensions, free electricity, and free travel for women reach the underprivileged sections. The government has decided to construct houses in a G+3 model for the poor who do not own house sites, identifying government lands for this purpose. The MLA announced that a grievance redressal program will be held on the 28th of this month at the MLA camp office in Balasamudram to resolve beneficiaries' issues. District Additional Collector Ravi, District Library Society Chairman Aziz Khan, Corporation Floor Leader Thota Venkanna, cor-



porators, Deputy Commissioner Srinivas, officials, public representatives, and others participated in the program.

ED widens AP liquor scam probe with fresh searches in Hyd

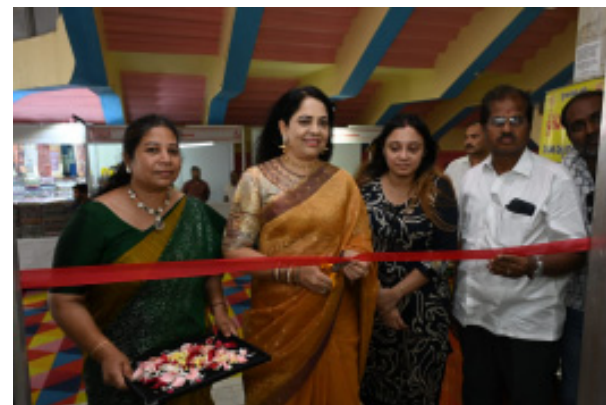
Hyderabad: Stepping up its investigation into the alleged Andhra Pradesh liquor scam, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at multiple locations in Hyderabad and Tirupati, targeting individuals believed to be closely linked to the previous YSR Congress Party regime.

Appointment of Manna Gopi Yadav as Executive Member of Head World Human Rights Council

“UPPAL, APRIL 24(INDIAN CHRONICAL):“Manna Gopi Yadav, a resident of the Secunderabad constituency, has been appointed as the Executive Member of the Head World Human Rights Council, an organization actively working across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. On Friday, the organization's Chairman, Madhav, issued the appointment orders and formally handed over the appointment letter at the council's office in Habsiguda. Speaking on the occasion, Manna Gopi Yadav expressed his gratitude to Chairman Madhav for entrusting him with the responsibility and thanked National General Secretary Satish Devarakonda for his efforts in facilitating the appointment. He said that he would work to the best of his ability for the protection of human rights and assured that he would stand by victims and continuously strive to ensure justice. I will work for the development of the organization and strongly respond on behalf of the Head World Human Rights Council whenever rights are violated, making every effort to secure justice for the victims, he said. He further stated that the appointment has increased his sense of responsibility. On this occasion, trust members, local dignitaries, and social activists felicitated the newly appointed Executive Member of the Secunderabad constituency and extended their best wishes.



Handloom is the Soul of India's Cultural Heritage": Padmaja Reddy Opens National Silk Expo



“Hyderabad correspondent, April 24 (Indian Chronicle):“Handloom crafts are an integral part of India's cultural heritage and every citizen should support weavers by embracing handloom garments, said Padma Shri awardee Dr. Padmaja Reddy while inaugurating the "National Silk Expo" at Sathya Sai Nigamagaram in Srinagar Colony on Friday. Highlighting the importance of preserving traditional weaving practices, she noted that handloom not only reflects the country's rich cultural identity but also sustains the livelihoods of thousands of artisans. She appreciated the initiative behind the expo, stating that such platforms enable weavers to directly connect with consum-

ers, ensuring fair recognition and improved income without the involvement of intermediaries. Encouraging greater public participation, Dr. Padmaja Reddy said the exhibition showcases an extensive range of silk, cotton, and designer collections suitable for festivals and auspicious occasions. She also visited various stalls, interacted with artisans, and commended their craftsmanship. Expo organizer Jayesh Gupta informed that artisans from across the country are participating, with nearly 80 stalls displaying a diverse array of handloom products. The exhibition will remain open to visitors until the 28th of this month, offering a valuable opportunity to experience and support India's enduring handloom tradition.

MP Ravichandra Distributes CMRF Cheques in Khammam

“Khammam, April 24 Indian Chronicle:“Rajya Sabha MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra distributed Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) cheques on Friday, which were sanctioned by the government based on his recommendations. The distribution took place at his camp office in Burhanpur, Khammam, where cheques worth ₹8.50 lakh were handed over to 19 beneficiaries. Additionally, Letters of Credit (LOC) worth ₹4 lakh were provided to two individuals for advance medical treatment. On the occasion, the MP interacted with beneficiaries who had undergone treatment for various health issues and enquired about their well-being. Several local leaders and representatives attended the event, including former Zilla Parishad Chairman Lingala Kamal Raju, former Madhira Market Committee Chairman Chittaru Nageswara Rao, Madhira Municipal Councillor Vennamsetti Appa Rao, BRS town secretary Arige Srinivasa Rao, former



Rama Rao, award-winning teacher Gopal Rao, and other BRS leaders.

Privatizing RTC assets in the name of 'Mega' is unjust: MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy

* Stop privatization conspiracies** BJP will stand by RTC workers** MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy criticizes state government at strike camp *



“Khammam, April 24 Indian Chronicle:”Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, Member of Parliament and BJP leader, stated that the Bharatiya Janata Party will extend full support to RTC workers who are on strike in the state to achieve their legitimate demands. On Friday, along with BJP district president Nelluri Koteswara Rao, he visited the striking workers at the Khammam RTC depot and expressed solidarity with them. On this occasion, he strongly criticized both the previous BRS government and the current Congress government. He expressed concern that despite changes in governments, the condition of RTC workers has not improved, and alleged that efforts to privatize the corporation are intensifying. He recalled that RTC has been an excellent transport system since the Nizam era of the 1930s and was one of the few government-run organizations operating profitably. He criticized the previous KCR government for damaging RTC, comparing it to “killing a goose that lays golden eggs.” He said that both workers and the BJP had hoped that RTC’s problems would be resolved after the end of KCR’s rule, but alleged that the present government led by Revanth Reddy is worsening the situation. He questioned why leaders like Revanth Reddy and Kodandaram, who had earlier raised their voices on RTC issues while in opposition, are now silent after coming to power. He alleged that about 50 acres of valuable RTC land at Miyapur bus depot in Hyderabad has been handed over to a private entity, ‘Mega’ Krishna Reddy, under the

pretext of setting up electric bus charging stations, calling it a serious wrongdoing. He noted that the central government is providing a subsidy of ₹55 lakh per electric bus for environmental protection and argued that RTC itself should purchase and operate these buses instead of handing over operations to private parties. He also pointed out that RTCs in other states are successfully running electric buses. He stated that the free bus travel scheme for women is a Congress government initiative and that the financial burden of the scheme should be borne entirely by the government, rather than being imposed on RTC, calling it unlawful. He criticized local ministers from Khammam district, including Bhatti Vikramarka, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, and Tummala Nageswara Rao, for not responding to the RTC workers’ strike and their issues. He praised RTC drivers for their dedication, noting instances where drivers continued their duty even during severe health emergencies to ensure passenger safety. He assured the workers not to lose confidence and affirmed that the BJP will stand with them until their rightful demands are achieved. Several BJP leaders, including state treasurer Devaki Vasudeva Rao, state leaders Gongura Venkateswara Rao, media spokesperson Vakadani Pulla Rao Yadav, Mandadapu Subba Rao, Mekala Nagender, Gutta Venkateswarlu, Verelli Rajesh, Ravi Rathod, Nakarikanti Veerabhadram, Ravi Goud, Dhaniyakula Venkata Narayana, Boyinapalli Chandrasekhar, Boyinapalli Suresh, Kandula Srikrishna, Gutta Vamsi and others participated in the program.

Bold Step by Modi on Women’s Reservations

A bold initiative has been taken by Narendra Modi regarding women’s reservations. “There will be no loss to southern states due to constituency delimitation. The Indian National Congress has always maintained an opposing stance on reservations. Delimitation of constituencies is inevitable. These remarks were made by Chevella MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy during a media conference.”

“KHAMMAM APRIL 23 INDIAN CHRONICLE:”Chevella MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy described the Women’s Reservation initiative introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a bold and historic step toward “women’s empowerment. He stated that the “Nari Shakti Vandan Act” (131st Constitutional Amendment Bill) marks a golden chapter in India’s democratic history. Speaking at a press conference held in Khammam on Friday under the leadership of BJP district president Nelluri Koteswara Rao, the MP said that the issue, which remained unresolved for 27 years, has now found a permanent solution under Modi’s leadership. He urged people to view the bill not merely from a political angle but as a major social reform. Delimitation essential for full implementation of women’s quota Konda Vishweshwar Reddy expressed happiness over the passage of the Women’s Reservation Bill, noting that despite nine previous attempts, it could not become law due to lack of political will. He clarified that the implementation of 33% reservation for women is linked to the processes of census and delimitation of constituencies. He explained that instead of reducing existing seats, increasing the total number of seats would ensure fair representation for women without disadvantaging male members. Therefore, delimitation is essential. He also recalled that almost all members in Parliament supported the bill, with only two MPs—Asaduddin Owaisi and Imtiaz Jaleel—opposing it. No injustice to South India due to delimitation Rejecting opposition claims that delimitation would harm southern states, the MP cited historical data. He pointed out that during Congress rule, earlier delimitation exercises actually disadvantaged South India. For instance, in the 1963 delimitation, North India gained 29 seats, while South India saw a net increase of only 2 seats, with Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu even losing some seats. Referring to statements by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, he assured that no state would lose seats and southern states could even gain an additional 0.1% to 0.2% advantage. He highlighted the growing voter density as a key reason for increasing constituencies. In 1971, each MP represented around 10 lakh voters, but by 2024, this has risen significantly—19.3 lakh in Uttar Pradesh, 19.5 lakh in Telangana, and 16.6 lakh in Andhra Pradesh. Based on this, Telangana’s current 17 Lok Sabha seats could increase to around 26 after delimitation. Congress has a history of opposing reservations The MP criticized the Congress party for what he called a historical double standard on reservations. He cited a letter written by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1961



opposing reservations, and alleged that the Indira Gandhi government did not implement the Mandal Commission recommendations in 1980. He also referred to a 1990 speech by Rajiv Gandhi in Lok Sabha warning that implementing OBC reservations could lead to social conflict. In contrast, he said, current Congress leader Rahul Gandhi speaks of “jitni abadi utna haq,” but opposes population-based delimitation. Allegations of gerrymandering in Hyderabad Konda Vishweshwar Reddy alleged irregularities in constituency division in Hyderabad, claiming that areas with Muslim majorities have one corporator for every 20,000–25,000 people, while Hindu-majority areas have one for every 50,000 people. He termed this as an example of gerrymandering and stressed the need for scientific delimitation to correct such disparities. He concluded by alleging that opposition parties are opposing the process out of fear that political credit would go to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Several BJP leaders and women representatives were present at the press conference.

Raos Junior College Recognized as Best Educational Institution



Wanaparthi Correspondent April 24, (Indian Chronicle):“ The recently announced Intermediate examination results have brought pride to Raos Junior College, as its students showcased outstanding performance at the state level. At a program organized by the Human Rights Protection Service at Ravindra Bharathi, the college was honored as the Best Educational Institution at the state level. The award was presented to the Principal, Mr. Ramu Kumar, by the National President of the organization, Uppala Srinivas. Speaking on the occasion, he appreciated the college for its consistent excellent results and encouraged the management and faculty to continue their efforts in achieving top ranks every year. He also emphasized the

importance of guiding students toward higher achievements in the future. The event was attended by the college management members A. Srinivasulu, Amarender, K. Srinivasulu, Ramesh, and others.

The government will stand by RTC workers

“...May the soul of Kola Shankar Goud rest in peace” — Former Floor Leader Vemula Sambayya Goud

“Narsampet/Warangal, April 24 (Indian Chronicle) : “Former Municipal Floor Leader Vemula Sambayya Goud said that the Congress government will support RTC workers and appealed to them not to take extreme steps in moments of emotional distress. He paid floral tributes to the mortal remains of RTC worker Kola Shankar Goud, who died after taking his own life. He consoled the family members and expressed his condolences and sympathy. He prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace. Speaking on the occasion, Vemula Sambayya Goud stated that the government would ensure proper justice for RTC workers and requested RTC employees to remain peaceful. He mentioned that MLA Madhav Reddy spoke to Shankar Goud’s family members over the phone, expressed grief over his death, conveyed condolences, and assured full government support to the family. He further said that, through the initiative of Donthi Madhav Reddy, the government would provide ₹10 lakh as ex gratia, and the MLA would personally contribute ₹5 lakh. He also stated that the MLA had taken special initiative to provide a job in the corporation to one family member of the deceased and to allot an Indiramma house to Shankar Goud’s family. Vemula Sambayya Goud reiterated that RTC workers should continue their strike peacefully and affirmed that the government stands with RTC workers. Along with Vemula Sambayya Goud, Muthojpet Councillor Veena Vijender Reddy, 29th Division Councillor Vemula Sandhya, Town Congress Party Secre-



tary Nampally Venkateswarlu Goud, minority leaders Nizam Karthik, Uttam, Ratan Kumar, and others participated in the program.

Hyderabad DCC chief urges RTC staff to end strike, blames opposition for fuelling unrest



as 2013 bonds had also been settled. He said Provident Fund dues had been reduced from Rs 1,205 crore to around Rs 600 crore, and CCS liabilities brought down from Rs 690 crore to about Rs 300 crore. “The government is consistently paying Rs 75 crore every month to clear liabilities. This reflects a sustained effort to stabilise RTC finances,” he said. “On employment measures, Khalid Saifullah said 4,538 recruitments were underway, 1,134 compassionate appointments had been provided, and around 250 dismissed employees had been reinstated. He described this as a corrective and humane approach towards the workforce. “He said RTC was gradually recovering after years of financial stress and cautioned that disruptions at this stage could reverse the gains made so far. “The focus is on strengthening RTC, not weakening it,” he added. “Emphasising public impact, he said RTC remained a lifeline for nearly 65 lakh passengers daily, including about 45 lakh women, students, workers and patients who depend on the service for essential travel. He said the ongoing strike was causing significant hardship to the most vulnerable sections. “Khalid Saifullah also criticised the opposition, particularly the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), accusing its leaders of attempting to mislead RTC employees and escalate tensions for political gain. “He alleged that provocative statements by opposition leaders were contributing to unrest and urged them to exercise restraint. “Political parties may extend support, but inflammatory remarks can trigger avoidable situations,” he said, adding that responsible conduct was essential during sensitive situations. “He further said that the Congress government was simultaneously committed to employee welfare and public interest. “This government stands with RTC employees, but it also stands with 65 lakh passengers. We must protect both,” he said. “Expressing condolences over the death of RTC driver Shankar Goud, Khalid Saifullah described it as a shock and assured that the government would extend support to the bereaved family. He urged RTC employees to remain hopeful and emphasised that protests should be peaceful and conducted through democratic means, cautioning against any extreme steps driven by distress. “Reiterating his appeal, he called upon union leaders to end the strike and resume services, stating that dialogue remained the only viable path to resolving the remaining issues in a balanced and sustainable manner.

“Hyderabad, April 24: Hyderabad District Congress Committee (DCC) President Syed Khalid Saifullah on Friday met Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGRTC) employees participating in the ongoing strike at the Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station (MGBS) and appealed for immediate dialogue and restoration of services, stating that the government had already addressed the majority of workers’ concerns. Accompanied by DCC vice-presidents, Assembly constituency in-charges and other office-bearers, he interacted with employees and union representatives and urged them to return to work in the larger public interest. Addressing the media later, Khalid Saifullah said the government had not ignored employees’ demands and had, in fact, acted on most of them. Out of 32 demands, 29 are acceptable and can be resolved. This reflects intent, not indifference,” he said, adding that a strike at this stage was unnecessary and counterproductive. He said a four-member high-level committee had been constituted to examine the remaining demands, including RTC merger and union recognition. Detailing financial measures, he said salaries were now being paid on the first of every month, restoring stability for employees. He added that long-pending PRC and DA dues had been cleared, while legacy liabilities such

Youth Detained for Harassing Girl at Asifabad Bus Stand



She Team Responds Swiftly Indian Chronicle, Jade Srinivas. April, 24. “A case of harassment was reported at the bus stand in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district, where a young man allegedly followed and harassed a girl, causing concern among the public. Upon receiving information, the district police She Team acted promptly and initiated immediate action. Based on CCTV footage and inputs from locals, the She Team identified the perpetrator and took him into custody. The operation was carried out under the leadership of She Team SI Bikkalal, along with team members Swapna, Rajini, and Dinesh. The accused was taken to the police station, where counseling was conducted. Police officials warned him that harassment of women, including eve-teasing, is a serious offense and will lead to strict legal action. He was given a stern warning to ensure that such behavior is not repeated. Police stated that ensuring the safety of women is a top priority, and special surveillance is being maintained at public places such as bus stands, schools, colleges, and other crowded areas. The She Team continues to monitor such incidents and take strict action against offenders. Women and girls have been advised to report any incidents immediately by contacting the police through Dial 100 or the She Team helpline. The public has also been requested to cooperate by informing the authorities about any such incidents. The swift action taken by the She Team

has been appreciated by local residents, highlighting the police department’s commitment to maintaining women’s safety in the district.”

Women Successfully Complete Uniform Stitching Training

“UPPAL, APRIL 24 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):”The Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation is making efforts to improve livelihood opportunities for women. As part of this initiative, the UCD wing successfully conducted a four-day special training programme for women from self-help groups in stitching government school uniforms. Around 40 to 50 women participated in each batch of the training programme. Women from the circles of Uppal, Ghatkesar, Nagole, Hayathnagar, Alwal, Bowenpally, and Saroornagar were provided training. So far, a total of 323 women have successfully completed the training and acquired the skills required to stitch government school uniforms with quality standards. Training centres were set up in Uppal, Ghatkesar, and Secunderabad, enabling women from nearby areas to easily take part in the programme. The MEPMA organisation, under the jurisdiction of the Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation, had set a target of providing stitching training to 300 women and has successfully achieved 100 per cent of its target. Certificates were distributed to the women who completed the training under the supervision of Project Director Suresh Kumar. PD Suresh Kumar said that the programme is playing a key role not only in promoting women’s economic empowerment but also in creating employment opportunities for them.”



BMW owner kills man over car parking dispute in East Delhi, flees



GNS News Agency, April 24

The victim, Pankaj Nayyar (34), lived in Noida with his family. He had come to meet his brother, Paras (43), when the two got into an argument with Gaurav Sharma, a neighbour who owns a BMW and a Toyota Fortuner. Sharma had parking space allotted for only one vehicle. With his BMW already parked in the designated spot, a dispute erupted over parking the Fortuner, police sources said. Initially, an argument broke out over the phone between Paras and Gaurav regarding the parking of his Fortuner. Around midnight, Pankaj also arrived, and the argument escalated into a physical fight before Gaurav pulled out a

pistol and shot Pankaj in the chest. Police received two PCR calls about the incident — at 2.22 am and 2.26 am — reporting a quarrel and firing. "The quarrel took place at A-144, Preet Vihar, over a parking dispute between Pankaj Nayyar and his brother Paras on one side, and Gaurav Sharma on the other," police said in a statement.

During the argument, Sharma allegedly opened fire. Pankaj sustained a gunshot wound to the chest and was rushed to Malik Radix Health Care Hospital in Nirman Vihar, where he was declared dead on arrival. The accused fled the scene. A case has been registered under sections 103(1), 115(2), and 3(5) of the BNS, along with sections 25/27 of the Arms Act, at Preet Vihar Police Station. Efforts are underway to trace and apprehend the accused.

Pankaj and Paras ran garment shops in Chandni Chowk in Central Delhi. Gaurav, who lives with his wife, owns some properties in Shakarpur and also runs an import-export business. In a statement to the police, Gaurav's wife claimed that he does not carry any weapon. However, the police are verifying these claims. This isn't the first time a parking dispute took a deadly turn. In August last year, actress Huma Qureshi's cousin was beaten and stabbed to death by two brothers, who lived in his neighbourhood in Nizamuddin. Police later arrested both the brothers and booked them for murder.

Man who raped, killed his minor niece shot dead in encounter by Ghaziabad cops

GNS News Agency, April 24

The maternal uncle accused of raping and murdering his 4-year-old niece in Ghaziabad was killed in a police shootout near Teela Mod on Sunday night, ending a week-long manhunt for the absconding suspect. (File/Representational Image) The maternal uncle accused of raping and murdering his 4-year-old niece in Ghaziabad was killed in a police shootout near Teela Mod on Sunday night, ending a week-long manhunt for the absconding suspect. A man accused of allegedly raping and killing his minor niece in Ghaziabad was killed in a police shootout on Sunday at the Teela Mod police station, senior police officers said.

On April 11, the child's body was found under a car parked on the side of the road. Police said the initial inquiry revealed her maternal uncle had taken her to his residence on the pretext of playing with her. Instead, he allegedly raped and subsequently murdered her, police said, adding that he later disposed of the body in an attempt to conceal the crime. He then fled. Based on the police complaint filed by the child's father, an FIR was registered under sections 103(1), 238, 65(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The shootout took place after a Crime Branch-SWAT team was searching for the accused, and received information that he was seen along with a few of his friends in Teela Mod area, post which the area was barricaded and



checking was carried out. "The team spotted him and tried to stop him but he started firing at them. The team fired back, during which the accused sustained injuries. He was taken to a nearby hospital, where he was declared dead on arrival," said DCP, City Ghaziabad, Dhawal Jaiswal, adding that two constables were also injured in the gunfight and are undergoing treatment. Police said the accused was a resident of Muzaffarnagar and had prior cases registered against him. A reward of Rs 50,000 had been announced for his arrest. The development comes even as the Supreme Court, which is hearing the case, had flagged the "reluctance" of the Ghaziabad Police in lodging an FIR and conducting an investigation into the case.

Nagpur NGO head arrested after women employees allege sexual harassment, religious coercion

GNS News Agency, April 24

The police in Maharashtra's Nagpur said Monday they have arrested a man who runs an NGO in the city, after women employees lodged a complaint of sexual harassment and other offences against him. A Nagpur police inspector told The Indian Express that the alleged incidents occurred over several months, from July 2024 until the offence was registered Saturday. The man was arrested Sunday.

Four women, of whom three were victims, and one was their friend, had approached the police. Another former employee, who resigned earlier, has yet to record her statement. All the women were associated with the NGO's office. The Nagpur police said that while one woman registered the complaint, other victims would be made witnesses in the case. The police said one of the complainants alleged molestation, stating that during her birthday celebration in 2024, the accused forcibly hugged her and kissed her on the forehead after cutting the cake. She further alleged that he would repeatedly attempt physical contact, including placing his hand on her shoulder, despite her objections. Though she asked him to stop, he allegedly continued making such attempts intermittently.

The police also said that other women employees reported being subjected to religious pressure at the workplace. The accused allegedly asked them to offer prayers, observe fasts, and recite specific prayers to avoid mishaps. The women, however, did not comply, the police said. They lodged the complaint formally after the accused allegedly contacted the mother of a former employee and made de-



rogatory remarks about the character of other women working at the NGO, advising her not to send her daughter with them. Following this, the women collectively decided to approach the police. The accused, who claims to be a social worker and described himself as a prominent figure during interrogation, was produced before a Nagpur court, which sent him to police custody until April 23. Further investigation is underway. The Nagpur police have invoked multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) such as 74, 75(2), 78(2), 296, 302, 356(2) that deal with assault, sexual harassment, stalking, hurting religious sentiments, defamation and unlawful monitoring of electronic communication, along with Section 66(C) of the Information Technology Act. The police said the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has also collected preliminary information in the case as part of its routine procedure in matters that may involve a communal angle. Officers said this is a standard exercise to verify whether such a dimension exists.

6 family members drown in Cauvery river during Urus gathering in Mysuru



GNS News Agency, April 24

Six people of an extended family, including three children, drowned in the Cauvery river in Karnataka's Mysuru district Sunday afternoon while attending an Urus event (death anniversary of a Sufi saint), said the police.

The incident happened near Arkeswara Temple in K R Nagar taluk, Mysuru district. A police officer said the family of 20, including distant relatives, had gathered at Hazrat Khader Lingavali Dargah, located on the banks of the river in Hale Yedathore. One child slipped into the water around 3 pm, and others who rushed in to help were also swept away, the police said. The deceased were identified as

Fatima, 42, and Uzeir, 5, both from Udayagiri, Mysuru; newly-wed couple Mohammed Yasin, 23, and Neha Kausar, 19, from SBR Layout, Bengaluru; Emma Aiman, 13, from Kadugondanahalli, Bengaluru; and Afif Ahmed, 13, from Muslim Block, KR Nagar. The local fishers rescued three members, who are currently receiving treatment. "The rescued are Salma Banu, a resident of KR Nagar; Asiya of Mysuru and Zubeda of Bannur," the officer added. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah expressed grief over the incident on X and announced a compensation of Rs 5 lakh to the family of each victim.

"It is heartbreaking to learn that six people drowned in the Cauvery River while going for a swim near the Arkeswara Temple in K.R. Nagar, Mysuru. I pray to God that the departed souls attain eternal peace, and that the bereaved family members find the strength to bear the pain of their loss," he said. "With humanitarian concern that the lives grieving the loss of family members should not face further hardship from financial challenges, a compensation of 5 lakh rupees each will be provided to the families of the deceased. I wish that those who were rescued in the accident and are currently receiving treatment in the hospital recover swiftly and reunite their loved ones as soon as possible," Siddaramaiah added. Mysuru Superintendent of Police Mallikarjun Baladangi and K R Nagar police visited the site and launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the tragedy.

IMD issues 5-day heatwave alert for over 30 UP districts; list of affected areas



GNS News Agency, April 24

As Uttar Pradesh continued to experience intense summer conditions, the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Lucknow, Sunday issued a five-day heatwave warning for the state. Experts said temperatures are expected to remain above normal, with both daytime heat and warm nights adding to discomfort, driven by persistent dry westerly winds and stable atmospheric conditions. On Sunday, eight cities in the state ranked among the top 30 hottest places in the country, with Prayagraj topping the state charts at a blistering 44.6°C, nearly 5°C above the seasonal normal. It was followed by Varanasi (44.2°C), Sultanpur (43.8°C), and Banda, Agra and Jhansi (43.6°C each). Hamirpur (43.2°C) and Fursatganj (43.1°C) also made it to the list of the country's hottest places. The state capital Lucknow recorded 41.9°C, about 3.4°C above normal. As per IMD, Lucknow, heatwave conditions are likely to continue in parts of Uttar Pradesh, indicating a gradual intensification and wider spread across the state. IMD has indicated that no significant relief is expected during this period, with dry weather prevailing across the state. Authorities have advised people to avoid prolonged exposure to heat, stay hydrated, and take necessary precautions, especially during peak afternoon hours. Heatwave conditions

are likely at isolated places in Banda, Chitrakoot, Kaushambi, Prayagraj, Fatehpur, Pratapgarh, Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Sant Ravidas Nagar and adjoining areas. Warm night conditions are expected in Saharanpur, Shamli, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Moradabad and Rampur. The heatwave zone expands to include Banda, Chitrakoot, Kaushambi, Prayagraj, Fatehpur, Pratapgarh, Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Sant Ravidas Nagar, Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Etah, Agra, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etawah, Auraiya, Shahjahanpur, Badaun, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Jhansi, and Lalitpur. Heatwave conditions likely over a larger swathe including Banda, Chitrakoot, Kaushambi, Prayagraj, Fatehpur, Pratapgarh, Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Sant Ravidas Nagar, Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Kanpur Dehat, Kanpur Nagar, Raebareli, Kasganj, Etah, Agra, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etawah, Auraiya, Shahjahanpur, Badaun, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Jhansi, and Lalitpur. Warm night conditions to persist in western UP districts, including Saharanpur, Shamli, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Moradabad, and Rampur. Heatwave conditions are expected to cover much of southern, central and parts of western UP, including Banda, Chitrakoot, Kaushambi, Prayagraj.

Fatehpur, Pratapgarh, Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Sant Ravidas Nagar, Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Azamgarh, Mau, Ballia, Etawah, Auraiya, Kannauj, Kanpur Dehat, Kanpur Nagar, Raebareli, Amethi, Sultanpur, Unnao, Farrukhabad, Hardoi, Kasganj, Etah, Agra, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Jhansi, and Lalitpur. Heatwave conditions are likely to persist over most parts of southern and central UP, including Banda, Chitrakoot, Kaushambi, Prayagraj, Fatehpur, Pratapgarh, Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Sant Ravidas Nagar, Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Azamgarh, Mau, Ballia, Etawah, Auraiya, Kannauj, Kanpur Dehat, Kanpur Nagar, Raebareli, Amethi, Sultanpur, Unnao, Farrukhabad, Hardoi, Kasganj, Etah, Agra, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Jhansi, and Lalitpur.

UP government suspends smart meter rollout, offers relief to consumers

GNS News Agency, April 24

The move comes amid wide scale opposition against the installation of prepaid smart meters across the state. The move comes amid wide scale opposition against the installation of prepaid smart meters across the state.

The Uttar Pradesh government has temporarily halted the ongoing rollout of smart meters until a technical committee submits its report, and announced relief measures to ensure uninterrupted power supply for consumers with low or zero balance, officials said on Sunday. The move comes amid wide scale opposition against the installation of prepaid smart meters across the state. Energy Minister A K Sharma on Sunday, during a review meeting at Shakti Bhawan in Lucknow, said existing consumers of smart meters will continue to receive power supply for up to three days or until dues reach Rs 200 for loads up to 2 KW, even if their prepaid balance is exhausted. According to officials, the decision aims to address complaints and ease consumer concerns around the smart metering system. Officials informed that a four-member technical committee comprising experts from IIT Kanpur, ERDA Vadodara and UP Power Corporation has been tasked with examining the technical quality and performance of smart meters. It is likely to submit its findings within 10 days.

The government has also introduced a transition cushion for newly installed smart meters. Sharma said no disconnections will be carried out for up to 45 days — including a 15-day conversion period followed by 30 days — to allow consumers time to adapt to the prepaid system. Meanwhile, the minister informed that to improve transparency and communication, a five-stage SMS alert will be rolled out, and consumers will receive notifications



when their balance drops to 30 per cent, 10 per cent, when it is exhausted, one day prior to disconnection, and after disconnection. The minister also directed that electricity connections should not be disconnected on Sundays or public holidays, even if the balance turns negative, stressing a "humane approach" in service delivery. Officials said a consumer awareness campaign has also been launched across platforms, alongside the release of a smart prepaid meter FAQ document to address misconceptions and provide guidance. In addition to the above, for grievance redressal, the power department has strengthened its helpline services, including the toll-free number 1912, the UPPCL website, and a WhatsApp chatbot, with regional contact numbers also made available. The authorities have been instructed to monitor complaints daily and ensure prompt resolution. An official spokesperson of the government said the decisions come amid rising feedback from consumers regarding billing transparency, balance deductions and service continuity under the smart meter regime.

AI cameras to soon manage Pune traffic with automatic challans: Additional CP



GNS News Agency, April 24

Interestingly, the users who reported these violations, also paid the pending traffic challans of Rs 9.3 crores through the application. Additional CP Manoj Patil announced that Pune's AI-based ITMS will soon automate 99% of traffic challans across 500 city spots, shifting to a "certainty of punishment" model to combat the 78-lakh-vehicle congestion crisis. AI-based cameras under the Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) will soon play a central role in managing Pune's traffic, with automatic challans to be issued for violations across nearly 500 locations in the city, Additional Commissioner of Police Manoj Patil said on Sunday. Speaking at the Pune Social Impact Dialogue organised by the Software Exporters Association of Pune (SEAP), Patil said that ITMS will ensure stricter enforcement, as "certainty of punishment" will discourage people from breaking rules, with up to 99% of challans expected to be generated by the system. He explained that Pune's worsening traffic situation is the result of rapid and unplanned growth, outdated planning, and excessive reliance on private vehicles and that earlier infrastructure projects, such as flyovers, were often designed using limited or outdated data.

Citing an example, he said that a bridge planned for 19,000 vehicles is now expected to handle nearly 90,000 vehicles, leading to congestion instead of relief. To address this, authorities are now shifting towards data-driven and evidence-based planning, using real-time inputs from platforms like Google and TomTom, he said. Highlighting the scale of the issue, Patil noted that Pune has 78 lakh vehicles but only 7% road area, resulting in severe pressure on road capacity. To tackle this, the administration is implementing both short-term and long-term measures, including improving road hierarchy, focusing on 32 key roads that

handle 80% of traffic movement, reducing signals, removing encroachments, and increasing average vehicle speeds. He emphasised that even small interventions like fixing potholes, better road markings, and converting roads to one-way can significantly ease congestion. Calling public behaviour a major factor, he said that nearly 99% of traffic jams are caused by violations. Along with AI cameras strengthening enforcement, he highlighted the need for greater use of public transport, noting that only 11% of citizens currently rely on it. The event brought together corporate leaders, ESG practitioners, and changemakers on a common platform aimed at strengthening collaboration across the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) landscape. This year, it was attended by distinguished guests including Kiran D M, Global Sustainability Impact Coach and CEO of Seva Bridge Foundation; Dr Sudhir Mehta, founder and chairman of Pinnacle Industries and EKA Mobility; Satya Natarajan, CEO of Climate Troopers Foundation; Prof Rajiv Yeravdekar, provost of the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences at Symbiosis International University. The event also saw participation from NGOs such as Swadesh Foundation, 14 Tree Foundation, Harshadeep Foundation, Tarachand Hospital, Eco Circular, Animal Angel, Eco Exit, Life Lab and Swaroop Vardhini.

Sensex, Nifty turn volatile amid West Asia tensions and rising crude prices

Mumbai: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty turned volatile after rising in early trade on Monday as conflicting developments in the West Asia and rising crude oil prices made investors jittery. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 236.64 points to 78,730.18 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty went up by 66.65 points to 24,420.20. However, later the BSE benchmark traded 27.41 points lower at 78,504.91, and the Nifty quoted 11.80 points down at 24,342.40. From the 30-Sensex firms, Trent, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Asian Paints, Adani Ports and Axis Bank were the major winners. ICICI Bank traded nearly 2 per cent higher after the firm on Saturday reported a 9.28 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 14,755 crore for the March quarter, helped by a nearly 90 per cent drop in provisioning.

Char Dham Yatra 2026: Why pilgrimage begins from Yamunotri



GNS News Agency, April 24

New Delhi: The Char Dham Yatra, one of Hinduism's most revered pilgrimages, continues to draw thousands of devotees each year to the Himalayan shrines of Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath. A distinctive aspect of this spiritual journey is that it always begins from Yamunotri, a sequence rooted in both religious tradition and geographical logic. The order of the yatra is not arbitrary but follows a clockwise direction, known in Hindu customs as Parikrama. This directional movement is considered auspicious and is commonly observed in temple rituals and pilgrimages.

Beginning from Yamunotri aligns with this sacred pattern, setting the spiritual tone for the journey. Yamunotri, the source of the holy river Yamuna, holds immense religious significance.

In Hindu belief, the Yamuna is worshipped as a goddess and is regarded as the sister of Yama, the god of death. It is believed that taking a holy dip in the Yamuna helps devotees overcome the fear of death and cleanses them of sins, marking a spiritually purifying beginning to the pilgrimage. The site is also linked to the legend of sage Asit Muni, who is said to have resided in the region. According to mythology, he bathed daily in both the Ganga and Yamuna rivers. In his old age, when he could no longer travel to Gangotri, a stream of the Ganga is believed to have appeared near Yamunotri, further enhancing its sanctity. Beyond its spiritual importance, the sequence of the Char Dham Yatra also has a practical basis. Yamunotri is the westernmost shrine among the four. From there, the route progresses eastward to Gangotri, then to Kedarnath, and concludes at Badrinath. This natural progression makes the journey more manageable through the challenging Himalayan terrain. Each dham represents a distinct stage in the path of spiritual evolution.

Yamunotri symbolises emotional cleansing through water; Gangotri represents purity and the cleansing of the mind and karma; Kedarnath, dedicated to Lord Shiva, signifies devotion and liberation; while Badrinath, associated with Lord Vishnu, represents ultimate salvation or moksha. Meanwhile, the Char Dham Yatra began on Sunday with the opening of the portals of Gangotri and Yamunotri shrines in Uttarakhand on the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya after a six-month winter break. Approximately 19 lakh devotees have registered for the pilgrimage so far this year. More than 51 lakh pilgrims undertook the Char Dham Yatra last year.

RBI opens premature redemption window for sovereign gold bond 2020-21 series VII

GNS News Agency, April 24

New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India has opened a premature redemption window for holders of Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) 2020-21 Series VII, with Monday set as the exit date, offering investors returns exceeding 200 per cent on their original investment. The central bank has fixed the redemption price at Rs 15,254 per unit, calculated as the simple average of closing prices for 999-purity gold over the three preceding business days, according to the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA).

Moreover, investors who subscribed at the original issue price of Rs 5,051 per unit stand to pocket capital gains of over 200 per cent. While those who applied online at issuance and availed a Rs 50 per gram discount have seen effective returns climb to nearly 205 per cent, excluding interest. SGB holders additionally earn 2.5 per cent annual interest, disbursed semi-annually over the holding period. The tranche which was issued on October 20, 2020, became eligible for early redemption after completing five years, consistent with RBI guidelines permitting premature exit on interest payment dates post the fifth year.

The bonds carry a full maturity of eight years, though investors are not obligated to hold until final redemption. In addition, investors seeking to exit must submit their redemption request at the bank branch, SHCIL office or post office where the bonds were originally purchased. Proceeds are automatically credited to the registered bank account on the redemption date. Investors with updated personal details such as bank account, mobile number or email are



advised to notify their respective bank, post office, or Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL) ahead of the deadline to avoid settlement delays. However, capital gains treatment varies by holding period and investor category. Under post-Budget 2026 rules, gains remain tax-exempt only for original subscribers redeeming at full maturity. Early or premature redemptions attract long-term capital gains tax if held beyond 12 months or slab-rate taxation for shorter holding periods. Bonds acquired via the secondary market carry no capital gains exemption on redemption, and interest income remains taxable as per the investor's applicable income slab in all cases. Notably, no fresh SGB issuances have been announced for FY2026-27, and the government has yet to release a new issuance calendar as of April 2026, leaving the future of the scheme uncertain.

Immigration agent gets 3 years of rigorous imprisonment in Rs 19-L visa fraud case

GNS News Agency, April 24

A Mohali court has sentenced an immigration agent to three years of rigorous imprisonment in a Rs 19 lakh visa fraud case, holding her guilty of cheating and unauthorised immigration operations. (File Photo) A Mohali court has sentenced an immigration agent to three years of rigorous imprisonment in a Rs 19 lakh visa fraud case, holding her guilty of cheating and unauthorised immigration operations. A local court in Mohali has convicted an immigration agent in a visa fraud case and sentenced her to three years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 1.02 lakh to be paid as compensation to the complainant.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Anish Goyal held Chhavi Sharma, a resident of Chandigarh's Sector 48, guilty under Section 420 (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Section 24 of the Immigration Act. According to the order, "The convict has been awarded three years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 1 lakh under IPC Section 420, along with one year of imprisonment and a fine of Rs 2,000 under the Immigration Act." According to the prosecution, a case was registered at the Mataur police station on January 18, 2024, in connection with an alleged fraud of Rs 19 lakh. In November 2022, the complainant approached Star Future Education and Immigration Services in Mohali's Sector 70 to secure an Australian study visa for his daughter. The accused promised to arrange the visa within 90 days and collected nearly Rs 19 lakh in instalments. However, the visa process was neither completed within the stipulated time



nor was the money refunded. After waiting for over a year, the complainant found the university's offer letter provided by the accused to be fake, prompting him to approach the police. During the trial, the court observed that financial transactions and elements of cheating were clearly established through bank records and witness testimonies.

The evidence on record sufficiently proves the offence of cheating and unauthorised immigration activity," the court noted. However, the court also remarked that the complainant failed to independently verify the authenticity of the offer letter from the concerned university. After evaluating the evidence and hearing both sides, the court acquitted the accused of charges related to forgery and criminal conspiracy, but held her guilty of cheating and operating without proper authorisation under the Immigration Act.

ED searches residence of Kolkata Dy Police Commissioner, arrests businessman

GNS News Agency, April 24

Reacting to the ED carrying out searches at the residence of one of the top cops in Kolkata, CM Mamata Banerjee said that she is "keeping a record of everything". (File Photo) Reacting to the ED carrying out searches at the residence of one of the top cops in Kolkata, CM Mamata Banerjee said that she is "keeping a record of everything". (File Photo; enhanced using Google Gemini) The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Sunday carried out searches at the residence of Deputy Commissioner (Special Branch), Kolkata Police, Shantanu Sinha Biswas, and later arrested Kolkata-based businessman Joy Kamdar in connection with the money laundering probe in a land grabbing case, officials said. Early Sunday morning, the ED began searches at three different locations – the Ballygunj residence of Biswas, another residential building close to his residence, and the Behala residence of Kamdar. While Kamdar was arrested, sources said that Biswas was being questioned. Following his arrest, Kamdar complained of chest pain and was admitted to the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. After the ED informed the court

about its inability to produce Kamdar physically, the court sought a report on his health condition and ordered the central agency to produce him on Monday if he was in a position to be brought to the court. "The ED authority shall not make endeavour to interrogate the accused person without leave of the court at the cost of health hazards," the court ordered. The ED is investigating a housing scam, focusing on allegations of land grabbing, illegal construction, and extortion. It is alleged that Biswajit Poddar, alias Sona Pappu, and his associates ran an extortion racket under the guise of real estate promotion, and that the money collected was funneled to several influential individuals. According to the ED, the Sunday's searches at the Deputy Police Commissioner's house and the arrest of Kamdar followed the searches on April 1 at places linked to Sona Pappu. The ED had then seized cash of Rs 1.47 crore, apart from gold jewellery and silver valued at Rs 67.64 lakh and a country-made revolver from some premises that were searched. According to ED sources, they found evidence of Sona Pappu being in touch with businessmen who illegally sold disputed land using fake documents.

Youth critical after arm partially severed in sword attack in Zirakpur: police



GNS News Agency, April 24

Public servants, acting on behalf of the state, must realise that they are the sole guardians of the legal threshold, the Punjab and Haryana High Court stated. A 19-year-old's hand was partially severed in a brutal sword attack at Zirakpur's Highland Park ground on Friday; police have identified three suspects in what appears to be a violent fallout of a gang rivalry. A 19-year-old youth was critically injured when his right hand was partially severed near the elbow in a sword attack over an old rivalry between two groups at Highland Park ground in Zirakpur, local police said on Saturday. Police identified the critically injured person as Bhupinder Singh, a resident of Aastha Apartments on the Patiala road.

Bhupinder suffered multiple grievous injuries, with doc-

tors describing his condition as critical, police said. In his statement, according to police, Bhupinder said on Saturday that he received a call from his brother Ranveer Singh, who informed him that Gurpreet Singh had assaulted him. When Bhupinder reached the spot, the accused arrived shortly after, along with his six-seven associates, police said. An argument broke out and quickly escalated into a violent clash, a police officer said. "In the ensuing attack, Gurpreet struck Bhupinder with a sword. Despite attempts to defend himself, Bhupinder was repeatedly attacked, resulting in his right arm being partially severed near the elbow. He also suffered deep injuries to his chest and waist before collapsing on the ground," the officer said. "The assailants also attacked Ranveer, inflicting injuries on his head and above the eye, and fled the spot after issuing death threats to the brothers," the complaint stated. Zirakpur SHO Satinder Singh said, "Within 10 minutes of the incident, we reached the spot. The injured was immediately shifted to the Civil Hospital in Dhakoli in a PCR vehicle and later referred to Government Medical College and Hospital, Sector 32, Chandigarh. At the Sector 32 hospital, police recorded the statement of the injured. His right arm was partially severed. He is in extremely critical condition. Doctors are making every possible effort to save him. The accused will be arrested soon." Based on Bhupinder's statement, a case has been registered against Gurpreet Singh and 6-7 unidentified persons under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the Zirakpur police station, the SHO said.

'What future can we build on Rs 9,000?': The story behind plight of workers in Noida

At a garment factory in Noida, the production of a single kurta or a shirt is broken into a sequence of defined tasks, each carried out by workers who repeat the same motion for hours. Dinesh Shrivastava, 38, is part of this labour chain. Dinesh operates a sewing machine, stitching sleeves and collars. He sits hunched at his table. There is no support to rest his back or even to straighten up. A decade ago, when he was working in Gurgaon, Dinesh earned Rs 90 a day – about Rs 2,700 a month – barely enough, he recalls, to survive on the cheapest meals in cramped rented rooms, while still sending money back home to Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh.

Back then, word filtered through factory floors that factories in Noida were paying nearly four times as much. "I heard from my friends," Dinesh recalls. For workers like him, the promise of higher wages was a semblance of stability. He moved to Noida. His monthly salary rose to Rs 11,000. For a time, it felt like a turning point. "At that time, we believed it was a decision that would change our lives," he said. The expectation was simple: wages would keep rising, and life would slowly become easier. Three years later, he and his wife had a daughter. But the promise did not hold. "Even when I did overtime, incomes almost remained stagnant," he said. The extra hours did little to change. "What looked like a life-changing decision became a struggle," he said. As rent climbed, food prices rose, and even vegetables became a matter of calculation before purchase, the pressure deepened. "Now even dal is Rs 150 a kilo, and tomatoes are Rs 50 a kilo," he said. "How should I send money back home?" Eventually, the family made a difficult decision: they sent their daughter to Faridabad. "We could not afford the cost of raising a child in Noida, especially schooling," he said. She now lives with her maternal aunt and attends school there.

Today, his income stands at around Rs 16,000 a month. Even then, he said, it is not enough. "With this income, I cannot sustain," he said. Over ten years, that amounts to an average increase of roughly Rs 500 a year. "That's the reason why many labourers came onto the streets to protest for a wage hike," he said. "We are in a desperate situation. The cost of living is rising, but our incomes aren't." Dinesh did not join the protest that began on April 10 and escalated into violence on April 13. But his experience echoes a wider pattern among industrial workers in Noida, a city whose high-rise apartments and expanding real estate market tell one story of growth, while its factory floors tell another. Official data underscores the contradiction. Gautam Buddha Nagar, which includes Noida, contributed 11.05% to Uttar Pradesh's GDP in 2024-25, making it the state's largest economic contributor by district. Yet wage growth has lagged far behind the income it helps generate. Noida factory workers are grappling with stagnant wages and rising living costs, sparking protests across industrial units. (Express Photo) Noida factory workers are grappling with stagnant wages and rising living costs, sparking protests across industrial units.

According to the Annual Industry Survey, the average annual wage of a worker in Uttar Pradesh rose from Rs 1.46 lakh in FY21 to Rs 1.76 lakh in FY24. Over the same period, salaries for supervisors and managerial staff climbed from Rs 11.85 lakh to Rs 15.05 lakh. The gap is widening: modest gains for lower-paid workers, faster growth for managerial roles, and productivity increases that do not translate evenly across the workforce. "Supervisors demand work to be done on 60 pieces for Rs 40," Dinesh said. "If the people who earn in crores don't have satisfaction, how can I? If they can earn in crores, why can't they increase our salaries." Last week, the Uttar Pradesh government announced revised minimum wages. In Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad, monthly wages for unskilled workers have been raised to Rs 13,690, semi-skilled workers to Rs 15,059, and skilled workers to Rs 16,868. The decision followed pressure from industry workers.

"Workers argued that rising living costs, particularly higher rents, have made it difficult to maintain a decent livelihood and that wages need to be increased," said Dr M.K. Shanmuga Sundaram, Principal Secretary, Labour and Employment Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh. "Employers, on the other hand, said their businesses are under strain due to rising global tariffs, geopolitical tensions in West Asia, and recent labour unrest that disrupted supply chains."

Dinesh lives in Naya Gaon in Sector 83, close to prominent export factories. Here, multi-storey buildings with dozens of rooms and visible cracks house Dinesh and many others who have come from neighbouring states such as Bihar. The lanes are filled with flies, as common washrooms outside the stacked rooms remain uncleaned. A few lanes away lives a recently arrived family from Samastipur, Bihar. A loan of Rs 1 lakh forced 35-year-old Manju Devi to move with her husband and three children – aged 12, 10, and 5 – leaving behind two daughters who are still studying in high school in their village. She has come home for a 20-minute lunch break. Soon, the electricity goes off, and she holds up her phone, using its flashlight as she eats dal, rice, and mashed potatoes. Racing against time, she says she



comes home briefly each day only to check on her children, who have not been to school since they left Bihar.

"Though my 12-year-old takes care of her siblings, I'm always worried. My son is ill, and I spent a thousand rupees on his treatment. This room costs me Rs 3,500, and the ration is around Rs 12,000 a month," she says, finishing her last bite. Manju works on finished clothes, removing extra threads for Rs 12,000 a month. Her job runs from 9 am to 9 pm, and she has to stand the entire time. "I take medicines before work so that I can meet the hourly target of 60 pieces, as my legs hurt," she says. Piles of wooden sticks are stacked in a corner of the room, next to a thin sheet on which the family of five sleeps. "The cylinder got empty yesterday, and I cannot spend Rs 400 for a litre," she says. However, she remains unsure whether the government's announced wage hike will ever reach them in reality. "I don't know how much they have increased the prices. Only when we get our salary will I know," she says.

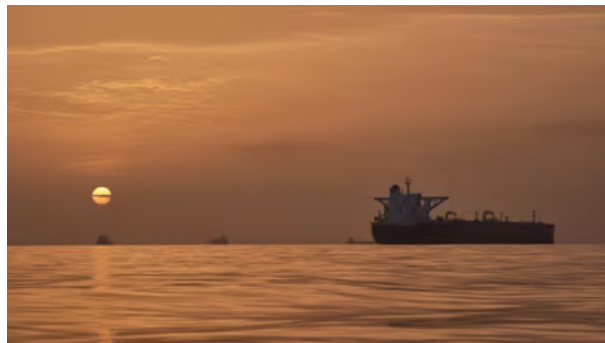
For now, each day's earnings seem to disappear as quickly as they come – into rent, food, medicine, and fuel – leaving little to save and less to repay the debt that brought her here. One of the factories that witnessed a major protest was outside Samvardhana Motherson, a global design manufacturing company with multiple units in Noida. When the protest began, a 28-year-old woman from Sultanpur was still inside the factory premises. She and her younger sister had joined the multinational firm out of financial necessity. Both come from strong academic backgrounds. The elder sister holds a B.Ed. and an M.A. degree and once aspired to become a professor. The younger has completed her M.Sc. and had been preparing for civil services examinations. Their father met with an accident four years ago while working as an electrician and has been unable to work since. "My brother drives a taxi in Mumbai, but it is not enough," the elder sister says. "That is why we both started working here." Labour Two sisters from Sultanpur, one of them UPSC aspirant, who were forced to take up jobs. Abhinav Sahai) The elder sister still works at Motherson, wiring harnesses on the factory floor. The younger sister, however, left the job two months ago. "I realised I cannot continue in such a physically demanding job," she says. "With my education and skills, I believe I can find better-paying work." The elder sister earns around Rs 9,000 a month – sometimes less than unskilled workers, she says. "On April 1, HR told us our salary would be increased by Rs 30," she recalls, a hint of disbelief in her voice. "How do you manage a cylinder that costs Rs 400 on that?" Inside the factory, the elder sister describes long hours spent standing on assembly lines. "We are on our feet the entire time – on the sub-assembly line," she says.

Tea breaks come every two hours, she says, but production targets remain high. Food is another quiet grievance among workers. "Managers get proper meals," she says. "For us, the dal is watery, and sometimes the chapatis have fungus."

Her day begins at 4:30 am, followed by punching in and a morning briefing. She says she is not given salary slips. Meanwhile, her sister, after leaving the job, is now searching for work that better matches her qualifications. "There is a committee at every plant level that decides the menu for the week... they all eat from that same canteen," a source close to the company said.

Anything that the government says we will abide by it without any delay. The organisation works paperless, and the money sent via bank accounts to both contractual and non-contractual workers are to be treated as the salary slip. We have a redressal mechanism as well," the official said. The sisters say the protest was not driven by outsiders. "When workers from one unit began questioning pay differences, tensions spread. Someone asked, 'Is your salary too high?' That's how it escalated." For both women, the stakes are deeply personal. "My mother wanted to study but couldn't because she was married young," the elder sister says. "She made sure we studied." She pauses before adding, "But what future can we build on Rs 9,000?" Back in their village, she says, neighbours still believe they are studying. "My father tells them that," she adds quietly. "Otherwise, people would question why his daughters had to go out and work." Meanwhile, some normalcy returns after the protest. Dinesh sits outside his room waiting to return to work. Last Friday marked their tenth marriage anniversary, a day they had once hoped to spend with their seven-year-old daughter. She is not with them.

Strait of Hormuz emerges as Iran's most powerful weapon amid war with US



GNS News Agency, April 24

Iran has, for decades, issued threats of closing the Strait of Hormuz over conflicts with countries in the Middle East and sanctions like those imposed by the US. The long history of tensions dates back to Iran's 1980-88 war with Iraq. Ebrahim Azizi, who chairs the Iranian Parliament's national security and foreign policy committee, said that Tehran's authority over the Strait is an "inalienable right". (AP)

Ebrahim Azizi, who chairs the Iranian Parliament's national security and foreign policy committee, said that Tehran's authority over the Strait is an "inalienable right". (AP) Iran's closure threats have never come to fruition until the February 28 joint US-Israeli strikes against the Islamic Republic prompted it to actually 'shut' the strategic waterway. Today, a US naval blockade amid the already-imposed closure by Tehran in the Strait of Hormuz raises global concerns. On one hand, the Trump administration claims its blockade is effective, while on the other, Iran says its control remains intact.

Yet, data from shipping analytics firm Kpler shows that 20 tankers transited the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday alone. Meanwhile, nine ships have so far reportedly complied with orders to turn around, including a Chinese-owned vessel called the Rich Starry. The Chinese-owned tanker failed to leave the Strait on the first day of the US naval blockade. Owned by Shanghai Xuanrun Shipping Co, the Rich Starry was sanctioned by the US for dealing with Iran. In the long run, Iran will be in a much better position in exercising authority over the Strait of Hormuz, not the United States. Iran realises its most powerful weapon is only now that the world has come to realise that the Strait of Hormuz is Iran's biggest weapon. While it has threatened to close the oil chokepoint several times in the past, it never actually took such a decision. However, the current war with the US and Israel has made the Strait an existential factor for Iran.

The US and Israel are aiming to obliterate Iran's nuclear capabilities, which Tehran has said it does not wish to achieve. But nobody saw how this conflict ended up giving Iran one of its most powerful new tools - the Strait of Hormuz. Iran has repeatedly asserted that it will not relinquish its control over the critical waterway, through which nearly one-fifth of global oil supply transits. So much so that Tehran included its sovereignty over the Strait among the demands in the peace talks with the US. If the Islamic Republic achieves its goals and retains long-term control over the Strait, it stands to benefit economically and in terms

of its stature on the global stage. From a financial standpoint, Iran's move to impose a tollbooth system in the Strait of Hormuz would yield billions of dollars if its authority persists. Reports from earlier this month suggested that Iran will charge a toll of \$1 per barrel of oil and demand the sum in cryptocurrency from shipping companies to let their oil tankers transit the Strait.

Spokesperson for Iran's Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Products Exporters' Union, Hamid Hosseini, told the Financial Times that Tehran's move came amid its need to monitor what goes in and out of the Strait to ensure the two-week ceasefire isn't used for transferring weapons. Several reports, including that from Iran International, suggested that Iran is charging up to \$2 million per vessel. Considering the normal everyday traffic in the Strait is around 150 ships, imagine the revenue Iran could generate in a month. The Strait is also a security guarantee for Iran -- a reality that became evident when its closure disrupted global energy supplies and sparked panic across the world. Tehran has ensured to show that any future military action against it would bring severe economic repercussions. Geopolitical leverage is another power in Iran's corner due to the Strait of Hormuz. This is because Tehran's control over the waterway enables it to bargain with energy-dependent states that import over 80 per cent of their oil.

For example, India imports over 85 per cent of its crude oil, the majority of which is from the Gulf region. China is also a massive importer, buying over 80 per cent of Iranian oil. Iran's warnings over Hormuz have issued several warnings regarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Strait of Hormuz. Last week, the spokesperson for the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters said that maritime security in the region must be "collective", cautioning any move against Iranian ports would have a ripple effect in the neighbouring regions. The spokesperson warned that if the security of any Iranian ports is threatened, "no port in the Persian Gulf or Gulf of Oman would remain secure". However, Tehran had earlier clarified that the Strait of Hormuz is safe for all countries that are not involved in the US-Israeli conflict. Earlier on Sunday, Iran's Revolutionary Guards Navy reportedly asked vessels not to approach the chokepoint, warning that otherwise they would be considered to be in cooperation with the "enemy". On Monday, a senior Iranian lawmaker, Ebrahim Azizi, asserted that Iran will never surrender its authority over the Strait of Hormuz, maintaining that the vital oil chokepoint would remain under the comprehensive control of the Islamic Republic. PressTV reported. Azizi, who chairs the Iranian Parliament's national security and foreign policy committee, said that Tehran's authority over the Strait is an "inalienable right".

Meanwhile, the Iranian ambassador to Moscow told a local Russian newspaper that Tehran ensures the safe passage of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz under a new legal regime. Ambassador Kazem Jalali said that the US and Israeli attacks on Iran had failed as their declared intention had been to enact regime change, and yet the Islamic Republic was more united than ever before. "Iran ensures safety of passage. Based on the security measures and the legal regime of the Strait of Hormuz, ships and vessels can pass through," Jalali said, according to Vedomosti newspaper.

British Prime Minister Starmer faces angry lawmakers over Mandelson's appointment as ambassador



GNS News Agency, April 24 London: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer will try on Monday to get a grip on a crisis that has left power slipping from his grasp. Starmer will face a tough barrage of questions in Parliament when he stands up to explain why Peter Mandelson, a scandal-tarnished politician and friend of Jeffrey Epstein, became Britain's ambassador to Washington despite failing security checks -- and seemingly without Starmer being told about the concerns.

The revelation has left furious opponents calling for Starmer to resign and uneasy allies wondering what else the nation's leader didn't know about. Starmer repeatedly told lawmakers that "due process" was followed when Mandelson was appointed. He now says he's "furious" that he wasn't informed that an intensive vetting process had recommended Mandelson not to be given security clearance. The Foreign Office, which oversees diplomatic appointments, cleared him anyway. Starmer fired the department's top civil servant, Olly Robbins, within hours of the revelation by The Guardian last week. But allies of Robbins say he would never have been able to share sensitive vetting information with the prime minister. Robbins is expected to give his own version of events to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday.

All the main opposition parties have called on Starmer to resign. Right-of-centre Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch said in the Mail on Sunday that he had "misled Parliament over Mandelson, misled the country and is tak-

ing the public for fools." Ed Davey, leader of the opposition Liberal Democrats, said Starmer had "showed catastrophic misjudgment." Senior government colleagues have defended the prime minister. Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy said that if Starmer had known about the failed security vetting, "he would never, ever have appointed him ambassador." But lawmakers in Starmer's centre-left Labour Party, already anxious about the party's dire poll ratings, are restive. Starmer has already defused one potential crisis in February, when some Labour lawmakers urged him to resign over the Mandelson appointment. He could face a new challenge is, as expected, Labour takes a hammering in local and regional elections on May 7, which give voters a chance to pass a midterm verdict on the government. Critics say the Mandelson appointment is more evidence of a failure of judgment by a prime minister who has made repeated missteps since he led Labour to a landslide election victory in July 2024. Starmer has struggled to deliver promised economic growth, repair tattered public services and ease the cost of living, and has been forced into repeated policy U-turns.

He picked Mandelson for one of Britain's most important diplomatic jobs despite being warned by his staff that Mandelson's friendship with Epstein, who died in prison in 2019, exposed the government to "reputational risk." Mandelson's business links to Russia and China also set off alarm bells. But his expertise as a former European Union trade chief and contacts among global elites were considered assets in dealing with President Donald Trump's administration. He lasted less than nine months in the job. Starmer fired Mandelson in September 2025 after evidence emerged that he had lied about the extent of his links to Epstein. A trove of Epstein-related documents released by the US Department of Justice in January included emails suggesting Mandelson had passed on sensitive, and potentially market-moving, government information to Epstein in 2009 after the global financial crisis. British police launched a criminal probe and arrested Mandelson in February on suspicion of misconduct in public office. Mandelson has previously denied wrongdoing and hasn't been charged. He does not face allegations of sexual misconduct.

Uncertainty remains ahead of expected US-Iran talks

GNS News Agency, April 24 Islamabad: As US forces have intercepted and taken custody of an Iranian-flagged cargo ship, and Iran said it has currently no decision to send a negotiating delegation for peace talks, the prospect of an expected second round of US-Iran talks remains unclear. Meanwhile, other regional countries continue their efforts to bring the two sides to the table. On Sunday, President Donald Trump said that US forces had intercepted and taken custody of an Iranian-flagged cargo ship that tried to bypass the US blockade in the Gulf of Oman. "Today, an Iranian-flagged cargo ship named TOUNKA, nearly 900 feet long and weighing almost as much as an aircraft carrier, tried to get past our Naval Blockade, and it did not go well for them," Trump wrote in a post on his social media platform, Truth Social.

In a tit-for-tat reaction, Iran has attacked US military ships in retaliation for the US seizure of its vessel, according to the latest news reports. Ahead of the skirmish over the Strait of Hormuz, Trump on Sunday also announced that US negotiators will travel to the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, on Monday for possible talks with Iran, but he didn't detail who will head the team. However, the Iranian side denied the potential talks in Islamabad.

Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency said Sunday that Iran currently has no decision to send a negotiating delegation for peace talks with the United States. The Iranian team has stressed that as long as the US "anti-Iran" naval blockade remains in place, there will be no negotiation with Washington, according to the report. Iran's official news agency IRNA said on Sunday that the country has rejected taking part in the second round of peace talks with the United States. Iran's absence from the second round of talks "stems from what it called Washington's excessive demands, unrealistic expectations, constant shifts in stance, repeated contradictions, and the ongoing naval blockade, which it considers a breach of the ceasefire," the agency said in a post on its English account on social media platform X. Trump stressed that the US naval blockade on Iran would remain in full force until Washington's transaction with Tehran is "100 per cent complete." The Strait of Hormuz is one of the obstacles ahead.

According to statements from both sides and media reports, the nuclear issue is another major point of divergence. Trump said on Friday that the United States would work with Iran to remove its enriched uranium. CNN, citing informed sources, reported that Washington is prepared to unfreeze 20 billion US dollars in Iranian assets in exchange for Tehran's handing over its stockpile, a proposal rejected by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh as "impossible." Disagreement also persists over Iran's right to enrich uranium. Trump said that Iran had agreed to suspend its nuclear program indefinitely, a claim denied by an anonymous senior Iranian official in an interview with CNN



the following day. US sources familiar with previous talks said Washington had proposed a 20-year suspension of Iran's enrichment activities. Tehran countered with a five-year pause -- a proposal the United States did not accept.

Despite differences between Iran and the US, regional countries are intensifying efforts to restart talks between the two adversaries after their first round of negotiation in Islamabad. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday had a phone conversation with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. During the 45-minute phone call, Sharif apprised the Iranian leader about his recent engagements with regional leaders, including those of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, stressing that such interactions were crucial for building consensus and bringing lasting peace to the war-ravaged region. Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar also held a separate phone conversation with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi.

Also on Sunday, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty and his Pakistani counterpart Dar voiced hope for a new round of US-Iran talks during a phone call, affirming that negotiation and dialogue are the only way to resolve the dispute. Both parties agreed to maintain joint coordination and consultation on relevant developments to support regional security and stability. To prepare for the possible talks, Pakistan has placed its capital, Islamabad, and the neighbouring garrison city of Rawalpindi on high security alert. According to police sources, some 20,000 police personnel, supported by hundreds of elite commandos, including snipers, have been deployed on security duty across the twin cities. Similar arrangements were made before the first round of peace talks. Authorities have also suspended all public and goods transport in Rawalpindi and Islamabad as part of the security plan, while most entry points to the Red Zone have been sealed. Major hotels, including Serena Hotel and Marriott Hotel, have asked guests to vacate after the government requisitioned the properties for the talks. Hostels and guest houses in the capital were also directed to close until further notice.

Shamar Elkins chilling 'demons' conversation with mom, stepdad before Louisiana shooting; 'Wanted to take his own life'

GNS News Agency, April 24

Shamar Elkins, the disturbed Army veteran who tragically took the lives of his seven children and their cousin, admitted to being overwhelmed by "dark thoughts". He informed his stepfather that certain individuals "do not return from their demons" just weeks prior to the horrific killing, the New York Times reported.

Elkins, aged 31, killed eight children -- including five girls and three boys aged between 3 and 11 -- and inflicted serious injuries on two women, believed to be his wife and girlfriend, during a shooting spree in Shreveport following a dispute with his spouse at approximately 6 a.m. on Sunday. On Easter Sunday, Elkins reached out to his mother, Mahelia Elkins, and his stepfather, Marcus Jackson, and ominously expressed that he was overwhelmed by "dark thoughts," wished to take his own life, and mentioned that his wife, Shaniequa Pugh (Elkins), was seeking a divorce, as per the New York Times. "I told him, 'You can beat stuff, man. I don't care what you're going through, you can beat it.'" Elkins stepfather told the publication. "Then I remember him telling me: 'Some people don't come back from their demons.'"

Mahelia Elkins expressed uncertainty regarding the issues her son and his wife were facing, according to the Times. They were married in 2024 and had four children together. However, a relative of one of the injured women said that the couple was undergoing separation proceedings and was scheduled to appear in court on Monday. According to Crystal Brown, who spoke to the Associated Press, they had been in a dispute about the dissolution of their relationship when Elkins -- who was subse-



quently shot by police -- began firing. The father, who was identified as the shooter, was employed at UPS and had served in the Louisiana Army National Guard from August 2013 to August 2020, holding the positions of signal support system specialist and fire support specialist, as stated by the Times. A coworker from UPS described Elkins as a committed father, but noted that he frequently appeared stressed and would pull out his hair, resulting in a noticeable bald spot, according to the publication.

The majority of the victims were shot in the head while they were asleep. Shreveport Police Department spokesman Christopher Bordelon told According to police, one child was fatally shot on the roof while attempting to flee. Elkins, who was subsequently killed by police during an attempted carjacking, also shot and injured two women -- the mothers of his children and his reported girlfriend -- amid his violent rampage.

and introduction of different cluster bomb warheads can meet the operational demand of the Korean People's Army in a more satisfactory and effective way," the report added. The leader also encouraged science research groups responsible for weapons development, expressing hope that they would continue their "important undertakings to acquire and update various ultra-modern technologies necessary for the combat preparedness of our army." Attending the test launch alongside Kim were Kim Jong-sik, a member of the Central Military Commission; Jang Chang-ha, chief of the Missile Administration; and front-line military unit commanders. Sunday's launch followed the North's test-firing of multiple short-range ballistic missiles on April 8. State media said at the time the country test-fired a tactical ballistic missile tipped with a cluster bomb warhead, claiming it could "reduce to ashes" targeted areas with the highest-density power. South Korea's Office of National Security has condemned the latest North Korean missile launch as a violation of UN Security Council resolutions and called for an immediate halt to the North's missile provocations. A cluster bomb releases dozens to hundreds of submunitions, allowing it to strike multiple targets over a wide area.

North Korea tests cluster bombs in latest ballistic missile launch

Seoul: North Korea has tested cluster bombs in its latest launch of surface-to-surface ballistic missiles, supervised by leader Kim Jong-un, state media reported Monday. The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) published the report of the launch of the Hwasong-11 Ra tactical ballistic missile a day after South Korea's military detected multiple short-range ballistic missiles launched toward the East Sea at around 6:10 a.m. from North Korea's Sinpho area.

The KCNA said the purpose of the test-launch was to evaluate the power of the "cluster bomb warhead and fragmentation mine warhead" fitted to the weapon system. Five missiles struck a target area near an island measuring about 13 hectares some 136 kilometres away with "very high density," fully demonstrating their combat capability, the KCNA report said. Photos released showed Kim's daughter Ju-ae, who is believed to be being groomed as his successor, accompanying him at Sunday's weapon test. Kim expressed "great satisfaction" over the test-launch, saying, "It is of weighty significance ... to boost the high-density striking capability to quell a specific target area, as well as the high-precision striking capability." "The development

Person detained in Tucson? New claim sparks buzz; Sheriff Chris Nanos responds

GNS News Agency, April 24

New information is being reported in the ongoing Nancy Guthrie case after claims surfaced that an individual was detained in connection with the investigation. According to Nancy Grace's report on Crime Stories, citing unverified reports, a suspect was allegedly apprehended overnight on April 16 for questioning. The report, which quickly gained traction on social media, framed the development as a potential "breakthrough" in the case, raising questions about whether investigators are closing in on key suspects. Investigative reporter Dave Mack of Crime Stories cited Hoda Koth's interruption of an Anne Hathaway interview that Savannah was ready to do on Today as proof that Savannah was called away to obtain new information. On her podcast, Nancy questions Mack about the area (South of Tucson) in which the person was allegedly detained on Thursday. She said, "Isn't that the same general area where someone was detained several weeks ago, nearly at the get-go, and everyone was happy that

maybe the case had been resolved?"

Mack speculates that it is a recurrence of the identical situation that occurred a few weeks prior, when a suspect was detained and subsequently released. He said, "It appears that we are right back in the same general area as we had been before." He further alleged, "There is a possible suspect. There is possibly new information. But Pima County is not providing us with a lot of information." He further refers to the new DNA information that has emerged in the case, which would be of help. "We will have to wait and see what happens next." According to a report by NewsNation, Sheriff Chris Nanos has denied the rumors of any new arrest in the case. Michael Ruiz, an investigative reporter for Fox News Digital, revealed on X on Friday that Nanos responded to the chatter with a single word, "Nope." Publicly available details about the Nancy Guthrie case remain limited, with investigators maintaining a low profile regarding key developments. However, in an attempt to locate Nancy's kidnapper, the FBI was using cutting-edge technology to analyze

An agricultural belt plagued by unfair trade practices at DPCs, lack of storage facilities



culture, echoes these issues and adds that there should be permanent storage warehouses to safely store the produce. During the monsoon, there is a need to have mechanical grain dryers for the crops, he adds. A view of Vaikunda Perumal Temple in Uthiramerur village on Sunday. The temple is known for the inscriptions indicating the democratic practices of electing representatives for the village bodies during the regime of Parantaka Chola (907–955 CE). Since agriculture is the backbone here, the government should make future plans to increase groundwater levels and also implement the long-term plan to link Palar and Thenpennai rivers, he adds. "The government should seriously consider adding check dams every five kilometres for the Palar River," he adds. The area also witnesses high sugarcane cultivation. "Nearly 25 percent of the sugarcane cultivated here goes to sugar mills. But one of our major concerns is that wild boars are damaging all the sugarcane crops hiding behind them. The government should take some steps to resolve this issue," he adds. Another key concern for residents here is to commute from the villages to Uthiramerur town. Not only is the bus terminus at the town is small and unable to accommodate as many buses, but there exists a dire need to improve bus connectivity.

For instance, Mr Dhanapal says, to travel to Uthiramerur from Sathananchery, there aren't enough buses. "It is easier to reach Chengalpet than to travel to Uthiramerur. We need to take a bus to Chengalpet to reach Uthiramerur. This is a long detour. Be it to go to a taluk office or the agriculture department, we have to travel often to Uthiramerur, and it has been inconvenient," he adds. Some of the families in this constituency have also been struggling without a patta for a few years now. Saroja R, an 85-year-old resident of Sathananchery, says, "The government gave us the land in 2022, but we have been trying to get a patta for the last three years. Without this, we won't get an electricity connection. Currently, left with no choice, with the help of a neighbour, we receive power from a line from a nearby temple. He pays the bill for us, in a bid to help, as we are all poor. Though we have submitted several petitions to the government, we haven't been able to receive patta yet." Ms Saroja says, some of the labourers here forego their daily wages and travel to the Uthiramerur taluk office requesting a patta, yet it is frustrating that they haven't got it after so many attempts for years now. DMK MLA K. Sundar says action will soon be taken to provide these residents with patta, and also says he is cognisant of some of the issues of the farmers and assured to take steps as well. "Only a handful of families are yet to receive patta, and they will get it in June. But hundreds of families in this constituency have already got them," he adds. Be it new buildings for schools, measures to build bridges, mini stadium, storm water drains, Industrial Training Institutes, bus stops, community halls or road development work, Mr Sundar says, many initiatives have been taken.

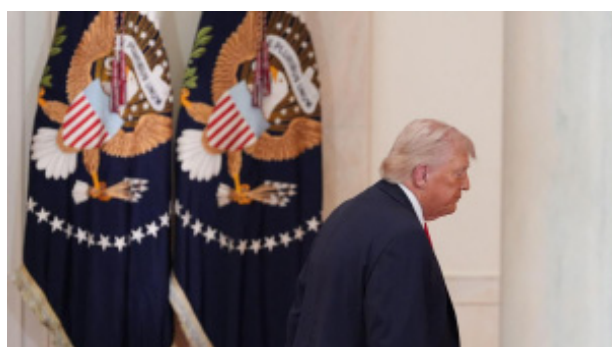
India's complex democratic system, which held its first general election 75 years ago, has gradually matured and evolved over the past decades while striving to maintain its federal balance. Meanwhile, there was a small town in Tamil Nadu that had its own electoral system, bearing similarities to the present-day democracy, dating back to the 10th century. The Kudavolai system in Uthiramerur, despite its flaws, seems to be perhaps one of the first experiments to establish local governance.

This constituency, with an electorate of 2.43 lakh, comprises predominantly farmers, agricultural workers and labourers. Early on, the constituency, which stood as a stronghold of AIADMK during the first three terms, then saw a constant shift in power between DMK and AIADMK until 2016. Uthiramerur has been a DMK bastion for the past two Assembly elections. The constituency covers a vast area including Palayaseevaram, Sathananchery, Thirumukkudal, Salavakkam, Arumbuliur, Marudham, Thirupulivanam, Melpakkam and Athiyur. From issues related to unfair trade practices at direct procurement centres to a lack of adequate facilities to store their produce, farmers of this constituency have been grappling with several issues.

G. Thirunavukkarasu, farmer in Maruthuvambadi panchayat, says, there are 73 panchayats in Uthiramerur witnessing high paddy cultivation that is almost on a par with the delta region. Through Direct Procurement Centres, the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation is procuring the paddy. However, he alleged, middlemen involved in paddy procurement indulge in unfair trade practices. "This way, they are denying us fair prices for our produce," he adds. Further, he demanded that the Public Works Department desist the water channels that branch off from Thirupulivanam and Uthiramerur lakes, which are being fed by the River Cheyyar. Farmers here feel that this will ensure sufficient water for irrigation. Many benefits and schemes have been rolled out by the government, but it is unfortunate that it doesn't reach farmers, he adds.

A Dhanapal, president of Tamizhaga Sugarcane Farmers Association, secretary of Foundation for Organic Agri-

Iran may be losing the battles, but it might still win the war



President Donald Trump's address to the nation on the war with Iran on April 1 was brief and offered little that was new. There was anticipation that he might announce either a major escalation — such as a ground war — or declare victory and a ceasefire. Neither happened. Instead, he justified the U.S. strikes as aimed at eliminating Iran's ability to acquire nuclear weapons and project power beyond its borders. He also stated that regime change was not his goal. He claimed that Iran's capabilities were mostly destroyed and that he would target Iran's industrial and power infrastructure. Along with regime change he has now abandoned the freeing of the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran remains resilient. Contrary to Mr. Trump's claims, it is clear that Iran is neither on the verge of collapse nor prepared to concede. On the contrary, Tehran has demonstrated that it retains multiple instruments of retaliation, and the capacity to escalate horizontally — striking back against U.S. bases and its regional adversaries while blocking 25% of the global supply of oil and gas.

From the outset, this writer has argued, in the global media, that the U.S. and Israel will most certainly secure tactical victories. They will be able to degrade Iran's military capabilities and its industrial capacity, and even kill many Iranians, but they would struggle to achieve their broader strategic objectives. These goals — particularly regime change — are unattainable without a large-scale ground invasion that could cause huge American casualties. Several respected voices reinforce this assessment. Sir Alex Younger, former head of MI6, Ross Harrison of the Middle East Institute, and former Central Intelligence Agency Director John Brennan have all warned that while the U.S. may achieve tactical successes, there is no clear pathway to strategic victory.

Four key factors help explain why Tehran is outperforming expectations in this conflict. The first is regime resilience and strategic consolidation. The Iranian regime has demonstrated a level of resilience that was significantly underestimated by Israeli and American planners. It has been reported that Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had persuaded Mr. Trump that the regime was very weak and that a massive decapitating attack would trigger a popular uprising and topple it within weeks. Yet, the Iranian regime is surviving, and its most powerful element, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which functions as both the sword and the shield of the Islamic Republic, has consolidated its hold over Iran's political and military apparatus. By hiding military assets and delegating operational authority down the chain of command, Iran has survived the decapitating strategy. Moreover, by assassinating leaders such as Ali Larjani, Israel has sidelined moderates and empowered hardliners such as Mojtaba Khamenei.

The second is horizontal escalation and economic leverage. Iran has demonstrated the ability to expand the conflict horizontally. Tehran's response to the attack has been to regionalise the war by targeting U.S.-aligned Arab states. Key civilian energy infrastructure has been damaged, tourism has suffered, and their sense of safety has been shaken. By choking the traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, Iran has constrained the global supply of oil and gas. trig-

gering inflationary pressures across the global economy. If these conditions continue to prevail, several Asian economies that depend on the Gulf for energy will face severe economic hardship.

The third is strategic miscalculation in Washington. The growing confusion about the purpose and conduct of the war in Washington is also why Iran is enjoying the upper hand. By privileging Mr. Netanyahu's exhortations over the net assessments of America's own intelligence agencies, Mr. Trump overestimated the effectiveness of air power and underestimated Iran's capacity to endure sustained pressure. It is becoming apparent that pre-war Israeli intelligence was wrong. A recently reported tense phone call between U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance and Mr. Netanyahu underscores this point, revealing internal U.S. frustration and a growing recognition within the Trump administration that it was manipulated by Israel into this war.

The fourth is allied reluctance and regional blowback. The U.S. is increasingly isolated, with both its allies and regional partners refusing to join its war effort. America's North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies have largely treated this as solely Washington's war. Meanwhile, the U.S.'s partners in the Gulf are deeply uneasy. Having allowed American forces to operate from their territory, they now find themselves exposed to Iranian retaliation. Iran's ability to exert pressure through threats to energy flows and regional stability has given Tehran significant leverage and strategic confidence. Regional states are also signalling declining confidence in the U.S. and exploring alternative pathways such as the Islamabad quadrilateral dialogue (Pakistan, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and Egypt) to end war.

Tactical losses, strategic advantage. The superior military power of the U.S. and Israel will continue to deliver tactical victories and inflict damage on Iran and its people. However, Iran continues to resist and retaliate. The longer the conflict endures, the more economic strain, global instability, and declining domestic support will weigh on Washington. Iran is simultaneously regaining economic breathing space through oil exports and earning strategic respect across parts of the Global South. If negotiations actually happen, Tehran is likely to enter them with greater confidence and leverage. If the Iranian regime survives, even a battered and weakened Iran would declare victory — because Mr. Trump's stated goal was unconditional surrender and regime change, and that appears increasingly unlikely. Muqtadar Khan is Professor of International Relations at the University of Delaware, a Senior Non-Resident Fellow at the Middle East Policy Council, and the host of the YouTube channel, 'Khanversations', on global affairs

Sangareddy MLA distributes Rs 33.49 lakh CMRF cheques to 127 beneficiaries

Sangareddy: Sangareddy MLA Chintha Prabhakar presented Rs 33.49 lakh worth Chief Minister Relief Fund (CMRF) cheques to 127 beneficiaries from Sangareddy, Kandi and Kondapur mandals at his camp office on Saturday. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA asked the beneficiaries to immediately deposit the cheques in their respective bank accounts.

UN Security Council delays vote on authorising force to protect shipping in the Strait of Hormuz



The reason given was that the United Nations observes Good Friday as a public holiday, according to diplomatic sources -- despite this fact being known when the vote was first announced. No new date has been given for voting on the draft. Iran has placed a stranglehold on the key shipping lane -- threatening fuel supplies and roiling the global economy -- in retaliation for U.S.-Israeli strikes that triggered the month-old war in West Asia. "We cannot accept economic terrorism affecting our region and the world, the whole world is being affected by the developments," Bahrain's United Nations ambassador Jamal Alrowaiei said this week.

He said the text, which has gone through several amendments and is supported by the United States, "comes at a critical juncture." President Donald Trump on Wednesday (April 1) called for countries struggling with fuel shortages to "go get your own oil" in the Strait of Hormuz, adding that U.S. forces would not help them. A sixth and final draft, seen by AFP, greenlights member states -- either unilaterally or as "voluntary multinational naval partnerships" -- to use "all defensive means necessary and commensurate with the circumstances." It applies to the strait and adjacent waters to "secure transit passage and to deter attempts to close, obstruct or otherwise interfere with international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz." The measure would last for a period of at least six months. The draft resolution

has been molded in a bid to rally several countries that have appeared skeptical, including Russia, China and France. Revised wording no longer explicitly invokes Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which allows the Security Council to authorise armed force to restore peace. The latest version, which was scheduled to be voted on at 11:00 a.m. (1500 GMT) Friday before the postponement, also emphasizes the defensive nature of any intervention -- a stipulation that seems to have alleviated French concerns. Jerome Bonnafont, France's UN ambassador, said on Thursday that "it is up to the Council to quickly devise the necessary defensive response" after members voted in March to condemn Iran's blocking of the Strait of Hormuz. President Emmanuel Macron earlier said a military operation to free the waterway is "unrealistic."

Russia and China's veto powers is not certain that Russia and China -- who both wield veto powers -- will back the draft resolution. "Authorizing member states to use force would amount to legitimizing the unlawful and indiscriminate use of force, which would inevitably lead to further escalation of the situation and lead to serious consequences," said Chinese ambassador Fu Cong. Russia, a long-time ally of Tehran, has denounced what it calls one-sided measures. Considering the possible Russian and Chinese vetoes, the text "faces tall odds to make it through the Security Council," Daniel Forti, an analyst at International Crisis Group, told AFP. "It is hard to see them supporting a resolution that treats stability in the strait exclusively as a security issue, instead of one that also grapples with the need for a durable political end to the hostilities," he said. Normally, around a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas passes through the Strait of Hormuz. Its near-total closure is impacting global supplies of important commodities including oil, liquefied natural gas and fertilizer and leading to sharp rises in energy prices. Security Council mandates authorising member states to use force are relatively rare. During the Gulf War, a 1990 vote allowed a U.S.-led coalition to intervene in Iraq, while in 2011 a similar vote permitted NATO's intervention in Libya.

What is bioluminescence?

Do you know that Nature has its own glow at night? If you switch off all the lights at night and walk in the garden, you might just see tiny flashes of light from insects called fireflies! Many animals, especially those in the deep ocean, can create their own light to attract prey or a mate, defend themselves or for camouflage. This is called bioluminescence. 1. Most animals that display bioluminescence rely on the dance of two unique chemicals. Luciferase, an enzyme, enables luciferin to react with oxygen and release energy in the form of light.

2. About 76% of all marine animals are bioluminescent but not freshwater animals. Only the freshwater snail (*Latia neritoides*) found in the streams of New Zealand releases a glowing slime when bothered.

3. In September, the beaches of Goa or Maharashtra offer a spectacular show by marine microorganisms called dinoflagellates. Millions of dinoflagellates create a beautiful shimmering effect when the ocean water moves and strikes the rocks and sandy beach at night. Movement stimulates them, so if you run your hand in the water, it will look like it's glowing!

4. Some animals like the angler fish and squid do not use luciferase and luciferin. Instead, they grow bioluminescent bacteria in special organs. In this symbiotic relationship, the bacteria provide light while the marine animal provides them nutrition and protection. Tiny bioluminescent glowworms hang from the cave's ceiling resembling the night sky down under. Tiny bioluminescent glowworms hang from the cave's ceiling resembling the night sky down under. | Photo Credit: The Hindu Archives

5. Bioluminescence is a "cold light", which means that the light generated does not produce heat.

6. Some insects, such as the larvae of the railroad



worm, a North American beetle, display a multicoloured glow. The head glows red and its body glows green; just like a traffic signal.

7. The vampire squid has a peculiar defence mechanism. When threatened, it squirts a cloud of glowing mucus into its attacker's face and then swims away!

8. In the dense forests of the Western Ghats, a type of fungi called *Mycena* lights up the forest floor and tree trunks with what is called "foxfire". It is thought that these fungi glow to attract insects to spread their spores or to warn away predators.

9. During World War I, soldiers used glow worms to read important messages or maps in the dark without giving their position away.

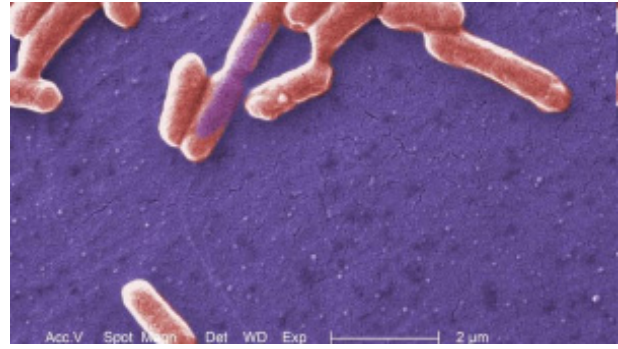
10. Today, a new phenomenon called "light pollution" is disrupting Nature's glow. With the development of LED, solar, and bright street lights, our nights are getting brighter. Most animals that produce bioluminescence rely on the cycle of day and night and do not display bioluminescence without complete darkness.

Photobiology: speeding up enzyme reactions in microbes using light

We know photosynthesis is a feature of plants which absorb sunlight and use the energy to convert atmospheric CO₂ into glucose. While sunlight peaks in the 400-700 nm region (of wavelengths), scientists have shone ultraviolet radiation (well below 400 nm) on plants and found that this opens new avenues in enzyme engineering and drugs through photocatalysis — the process of using light to jumpstart chemical reactions. Light-activated enzymes turn light energy into chemical action. In some cases, light triggers lightning-fast shape changes that turn on the enzyme. These movements can now be tracked in real-time on a scale of trillionths of a second using ultra-fast imaging.

Researchers at Nanjing University, China, have used visible light to trigger inherent enzymes as catalysts, paving the way for manufacturing useful products and drugs. This technology, called 'photobiocatalysis', repurposes natural enzymes to produce novel products of medicinal value (*Organic Chemistry Frontiers*, 12 (16), April 2025, pages). Photobiocatalysis pairs the energy of light with the precision engineering of enzymes, allowing scientists to assemble very complex structures.

Some plants have been found to contain an alkaloid called securinine. The genes that make this alkaloid resemble bacterial genes and have been borrowed from bacteria that invade plants. This discovery has allowed scientists to look for more such repurposed genes in plants and find new paths for drug discovery. These use the molecules offered by microbes in order to produce new defence molecules that are toxic. Taking a cue from this transfer of genes seen in nature, scientists have engineered the yeast *Pichia pastoris*, which is found in the soil, to help produce two plant-derived anti-cancer drugs called vinblastine and vincristine (*Nature Synthesis*, 2, 231-242, 2023). These alkaloids, found in the periwinkle plant, are very complex molecules that are put together by the coordinated action of 30 enzymes. There is also increasing use of intact organisms like mice or zebrafish, and even the bacterial workhorse *Escherichia coli* to produce novel chemicals of use in agriculture or medicine. Ibrahim Incir and Özlem Kaplan from the genetics and bioengineering faculty of Antaya University, Türkiye, have shown that *E. coli* is a versatile cell factory, which has been used to produce novel and useful products such as insulin and other cost-effective proteins of medical interest. Scientists at Kobe University, Japan have similarly used *E. coli* to produce pyridine dicarboxylate, a degradable plastic (Na-



Some plants have been found to contain an alkaloid called securinine. The genes that make this alkaloid resemble bacterial genes and have been borrowed from bacteria that invade plants.

Chemical Biology 21, 1171–1181 (2025)). And researchers from DuPont, Wilmington, Delaware have used *E. coli* to convert glucose to an industrial styrene polymer (*Metabolic Engineering* vol. 9, issue 3, May 2007). Likewise, Ajikumar et al. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the U.S. have used *E. coli* to synthesise the precursor of the anti-cancer drug Taxol.

The most recent application of combining photobiocatalysis with a microbial 'bioreactor' has come from the group of Huimin Zhao at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, who have engineered *E. coli* to produce non-natural olefins and reductases directly from glucose using enzymes activated by blue light. Using *E. coli* allows scientists to scale the process up for large scale production, where they combine biosynthesis with photobiotechnology (*Nature Catalysis* vol. 9, January 2026, pages 62-72). They also point out that this approach has the potential for large-scale chemical production where reactions driven by light are integrated into cellular metabolism.

Bai Hirabai Trust row: Tata Trusts to remove restrictive eligibility clauses, bring norms in line with group values



Bai Hirabai Tata Charitable Institution, Mehli Mistry, Tata Sons, Ratan Tata, Pakistan, Pakistan mediating Iran war, west Asia war, Iran war, Israel-US-Iran war, Iran conflict, Women's Reservation Bill, Delimitation 2026, Lok Sabha seat increase, Article 82 amendment, 2011 Census delimitation, new Parliament building capacity, Indian federalism, North-South political divide, seat allocation formula, Constitutional 131st Amendment Bill, Indian express news, current affairs Mistry was voted out of Tata Trusts by other trustees in October 2025. In a bid to resolve the ongoing controversy over the trusteeship of the Bai Hirabai Jamsetji Tata Navsari Charitable Institution (Bai Hirabai Trust), the board of trustees has decided to remove restrictive eligibility clauses and bring them in line with those followed by other Tata group trusts. "In order to correct anomalies in the Trust Deed and to align it with the values that the Tata Trusts have always epitomised, the trustees have decided to adopt proceedings before the appropriate authority for alteration of restrictive clauses in respect of eligibility of Trustees," Tata Trusts said. Mehli Mistry, former trustee of Tata Trusts, had formally challenged the appointment and continuation of two trustees — Venu Srinivasan and former Defence Secretary Vijay Singh — of Bai Hirabai Trust before the Maharashtra Charity Commissioner. Mistry contended that

the trust mandates trustees to maintain permanent residence in Mumbai and belong to the Parsi Zoroastrian faith. While Srinivasan obliged and resigned, Vijay Singh declined.

Mistry claimed that both of them do not satisfy these criteria. He has sought regulatory intervention, including a formal inquiry and sworn declarations from all trustees confirming their eligibility. "The trustees, while reviewing the activities of the Bai Hirabai Trust, deliberated on the recent statements appearing in sections of the press relating to the Trust," Tata Trusts said. They were categorical in emphasising that the Tata ethos has always been inclusive, secular and all-encompassing and focused on philanthropy and service to the nation. "Non-Zoroastrians have been continuously appointed to the Trust since the year 2000, following a legal opinion obtained from a former Chief Justice of India. The Trustees noted that Bai Hirabai is a non-shareholding Trust with a minimal asset base and limited activities," it said. The Bai Hirabai Trust was created under the 1916 Codicil to the Will of Sir Ratan Tata who died in 1918. "The Codicil did not provide for any restrictions in respect of Trustees on grounds of ethnicity, race or religion. The Codicil further provided that the Trustees of the Will of Sir Ratan Tata, who were also Trustees of the Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT) — a Trust created by his Will — would also be Trustees of the Bai Hirabai Trust," it said.

In the year 2015, the objects of the Bai Hirabai Trust were enlarged to also cover the general public as beneficiaries of the activities of the Trust. There are no such restrictions as to qualifications for trusteeship of SRTT nor of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT) nor of any other Tata Trust, it said. "Nonetheless, it is a fact that the Trust Deed made in 1923 by the then Trustees, contained restrictive clauses that, among other things, prohibited non-Zoroastrians from being Trustees of the Bai Hirabai Trust. These provisions had imposed restrictions not provided for by Sir Ratan Tata's Codicil," Tata Trusts said.

Time to allow greater freedom to banks, raise sector's FDI limits: Deepak Parekh



The government should allow banks greater freedom to choose where to lend and remove the limits on foreign direct investment (FDI) in the sector, Deepak Parekh, former chairman of the erstwhile Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) said on Saturday. These changes, Parekh said, would help Indian banks grow in terms of asset size and make them attractive for foreign players — key for India's economic growth. "I think it is time to allow banks greater freedom in choosing where they lend. Priority sector rules, as they stand today, belong to an era gone by. There is merit in completely opening up the foreign direct investment limits for private sector banks, and increasing FDI limits for public-sector banks from 29% currently to 49% at least," Parekh said at the London Business School's India Conclave held in Mumbai.

"There are enough checks and balances through caps on voting rights and ownership limits. So, the RBI and the government should not be worried about opening up the sector," Parekh further said, adding that this should be the next logical step after the recent regulatory changes by the Indian central bank which had allowed Japanese financial services major Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation to enter the Indian banking sector. Currently, India allows foreign shareholding of 20% for public sector banks and 74% for private banks. According to reports, the government is mulling raising the foreign ownership limit for state-owned banks to 49%. Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of India's norms mandate that 40% of banks' so-called adjusted net bank credit should go to sectors classified as priority, which includes agriculture, education, housing, and renewable energy, among others. In recent months, Indian lenders have seen a spate of deals involving foreign companies. In December, Shriram Finance — India's second-largest non-

bank excluding housing finance companies — approved the sale of 20% stake to Japan's MUFG Bank for around \$4.4 billion, the biggest overseas investment into the Indian financial sector. The transaction was completed earlier this month. Before that, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation bought a 24.2% stake in Yes Bank, while Mizuho Securities bought more than 60% in Aventus Capital.

"Over the next few decades, I hope India will have a few large banks rather than many small banks. As India aspires to be the third largest economy globally, one hopes to have an Indian bank at least amongst the top 20 banks globally in terms of asset size," Parekh said on Saturday. The Indian government wants PSBs to become globally competitive and is hoping at least 1-2 of them rank in the top-20 of the world by 2047. Currently, at 43rd, State Bank of India is the only state-owned bank in the top-100 in the world in terms of assets. In her 2026-27 Union Budget speech, Financial Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced that a high-level committee on banking for Viksit Bharat would be set up to comprehensively review the financial sector and align it with India's next phase of growth, while safeguarding financial stability, inclusion and consumer protection.

Parekh also said the government needs to open up FDI limits for sectors other than banking to attract foreign capital and make India an attractive investment destination. "For instance, HDFC had the largest foreign holding. We had 78% of foreign holding at one stage when there was no limits on non-banks. Today, foreign holding in Indian equity has come down to 17%. And we have to increase this because we need more foreign exchange for things like crude, defence, energy. We need to open up and incentivise people." As per latest data, January saw net FDI outflows for the sixth month in a row, while gross FDI inflows fell to an 11-month low of \$5.67 billion. For the first 10 months of 2025-26 as a whole, while gross FDI inflow amounted to \$79.32 billion, up 15% year-on-year, net FDI inflows were down 24% at \$1.66 billion. Foreign investors have also pulled out money from Indian financial markets to the tune of \$16.59 billion in 2025-26 and \$6.25 billion so far in April amid global geopolitical tensions, exerting pressure on the Indian rupee, which tumbled past the 90- and 91-per-dollar mark in December amid a delay in the finalisation of a trade agreement with the US and then fell below 92-, 93-, 94-, and 95-per-dollar in quick succession in March due to risk aversion caused by the war in West Asia.

Rupee gains 13 paise in early trade as crude prices fall amid easing geopolitical tensions



Mumbai: The rupee appreciated 13 paise to 92.78 against the US dollar in early trade on Monday, following a sharp drop in crude oil prices amid hopes of easing geopolitical tension and the impact of the Reserve Bank's measures.

Forex traders, however, said the currency is likely to stay range-bound with the situation in West Asia remaining volatile after Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz for shipping. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 92.73 and moved up to 92.70 level before trading at 92.78 against the greenback in early deals, up 13 paise from the previous closing level. The rupee strengthened 28 paise to settle at 92.91 against the US dollar on Friday, a day after gaining 19 paise in the preceding session on Thursday. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose by 0.22 per cent at 98.11. Brent crude, the global oil

benchmark, was trading 5.34 per cent down at USD 95.21 per barrel in futures trade. Analysts said the crude price bounced back from below the USD 90-a-barrel level reached on Friday, as the geopolitical situation turned volatile after a fresh standoff between the US and Iran prevented ships from crossing the Strait of Hormuz. Domestic equity markets remained choppy in morning trade, with the 30-share Sensex trading 63.11 points or 0.08 per cent up at 78,556.65 in early trade, while the Nifty slipped 3.10 points or 0.01 per cent to 24,367.55. Foreign Institutional Investors bought equities worth Rs 683.20 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

Crude oil prices near \$100 as Iran tightens Hormuz control, ceasefire doubts rise

Mumbai: Global crude oil prices rebounded on Monday towards the \$100 per barrel mark amid fresh escalations in the West Asia conflict. The international benchmark Brent crude futures rose as much as 7.18 per cent to hit an intraday high of \$96.87 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude traded at \$91.20, up 8.76 per cent from the previous close. On the domestic front, crude on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) traded at Rs 8,289, an increase of 6.72 per cent from the previous close.

'He was clearly single': When Kareena Kapoor said she has never met Saif Ali Khan's former wife Amrita Singh; expert on raising children in blended families

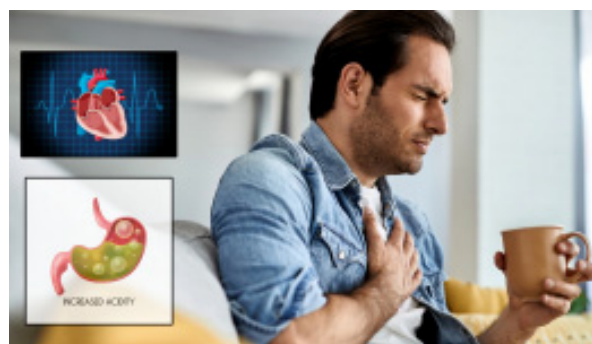


When families grow and change, dynamics can become layered, especially after divorce, remarriage, and blended households. In the finale episode of *Koffee With Karan* Season 6, Kareena Kapoor Khan spoke about her relationship timeline with her husband, Saif Ali Khan, clarifying that she had no overlap with his past. The host Karan Johar asked, "You keep the balance with Amrita as well? Do you, kind of, talk to each other at all?" To which Kareena replied, "No, but I have utmost respect and regard for her... we've never met. Also, I met Saif, which was, you know, many years after he got divorced, so it was not on anyone's time, he was clearly single," she said. So, in blended families, is it necessary or beneficial for a current spouse to meet or build a relationship with their partner's former spouse, especially when children are involved? Counselling psychologist Athul Raj tells indianexpress.com, "It isn't always necessary, but when children are involved, even the smallest gestures matter. Children carry the weight of how adults behave around each other. If the current and former spouse can share a room without visible tension, it takes away the silent burden children often feel of keeping the

peace." That doesn't mean forcing a friendship — authenticity is more important than performance. Sometimes civility is enough. When there are no children in the picture, there is rarely a need to initiate contact at all. The guiding question should be: Does this make family life calmer, or does it stir up conflict?

Some healthy boundaries couples can maintain when it comes to acknowledging or not engaging with ex-partners Raj mentions that boundaries work best when they are clearly spoken, not left to assumption. Couples can agree on what kind of contact feels respectful—whether it's limited to logistical parenting updates, or occasional conversations when needed. Transparency with each other prevents suspicion. At the same time, he adds that boundaries also mean not dragging the past into the present: avoiding comparisons, not revisiting old stories, and refusing to let the ex become an invisible third person in the marriage. "Seeing the ex as part of a larger family system, rather than a rival, helps keep perspective. Boundaries, ultimately, are about protecting the intimacy of the relationship you are building now." For children of divorced parents, how does the relationship (or lack thereof) between their parent's new spouse and their other parent affect their emotional stability? Children pick up an atmosphere more than words. Raj says, "Hostility, avoidance, or even a cold silence between adults creates pressure—they may feel guilty, as if their affection for one parent betrays the other. On the other hand, even small acts of civility, like sharing space during milestones or offering a simple greeting, are profoundly reassuring. They signal that love does not have to be divided." "A close friendship between adults is not necessary, but visible disrespect is deeply unsettling. Children feel most stable when they are free to love both parents without fear of judgment or loyalty conflicts," concludes the expert.

'How can I tell if my chest pain is due to gas or a heart problem?'



Chest pain can be confusing and, at times, alarming. Many people often find themselves in a state of panic as soon as they feel the pain. One such concerned internet user took to the online forum Quora seeking answers. Their query read: "How can I tell if my chest pain is due to gas or a heart problem?" While many people immediately fear a heart attack, not all chest discomfort is cardiac in nature. Common issues like gas or acidity can also cause similar sensations, making it difficult to tell the difference without understanding the warning signs. But how can you tell the difference?

Gas pain vs heart pain: What feels different?

"Gas pain is usually sharp and burning. It might get better after you burp, pass gas, or move around. It often happens after you eat," explains Dr Akhil Kumar Rustagi, Senior Director and HOD – Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery (CTVS), Cardiac Sciences, ShardaCare-Healthcity. On the other hand, heart pain feels like "pressure or tightness" in your chest. "It might spread to your arm, jaw or back. It doesn't go away easily. You might also feel sweaty, out of breath or nauseous," the surgeon adds. Chest pain in case of heart-related chest pains, a person may experience sweating, out of breath or nauseous. Red flags that could point to a heart problem: Certain symp-

toms may indicate that chest pain is heart-related and require immediate attention. Dr Rustagi points out the following warning signs: A squeezing or heavy feeling in your chest Pain that spreads to your arm, jaw, neck or back Shortness of breath Sweating Dizziness Nausea "The pain might last than a few minutes. It might go. If it happens when you are active or stressed and gets better with rest it could be a heart issue."

Because of overlapping symptoms, it's not uncommon for people to confuse digestive discomfort with something more serious. Dr Rustagi also confirms that acidity and gas can sometimes feel like a heart attack. "They can cause chest discomfort, burning and pain that spreads upward. Many people get confused especially if they have problems.. It's not a good idea to assume it's just gas. If your symptoms seem severe or don't go away it's safer to check if it's a heart problem."

When should you seek immediate help?

Knowing when to act can be life-saving, especially in cases where symptoms point toward a possible cardiac event. One should seek immediate help if:

- Your chest pain is severe
- It lasts than a few minutes
- You feel short of breath
- You are sweating
- You faint
- You feel nauseous
- The pain spreads to your arm or jaw

"Don't ignore unusual chest pain. This is especially important if you are older or have health issues, like diabetes or high blood pressure," Dr Rustagi further warns. To put it simple, chest pain may sometimes be harmless, but it's not something to ignore or self-diagnose. When symptoms are unclear or persistent, seeking medical evaluation is always the safer choice.

Does marriage prevent cancer? Who benefits most?

Marriage, it turns out, may come with a side-effect no one puts in the vows: people who have been married seem less likely to develop cancer than those who have never married at all. That is the provocative finding from a large new study that has raised interesting questions about what really keeps us healthy over a lifetime. If marriage shows up in the data as "protective", is it love that matters, the piece of paper, or something much bigger hiding in the background? In this analysis, researchers looked at cancer diagnoses in more than 4 million adults across 12 US states, representing a population of over 100 million people. They focused on cancers diagnosed after the age of 30 between 2015 and 2022, a modern snapshot taken in an era when same-sex marriage is legal nationwide, so marriage includes more people than ever. Everyone was divided into two camps: those who were or had ever been married, including divorced and widowed people, and those who had never married at all. Around one in five adults landed in this never-married group, a sizeable minority whose health has often been overlooked in traditional family-centred research.

When the researchers compared the numbers, the gap was impossible to ignore. Men who had never married were about 70 per cent more likely to develop cancer than men who had married at some point, while women who had never married were about 85 per cent more likely to develop cancer than women who had been married. More advantages to women

That last figure is especially notable because many earlier studies suggested that men gained more from marriage than women. Here, women appear to gain at least as much, if not more. And the differences grew wider with age, especially after 50, when the consequences of decades of habits "smoking, diet, exercise, medical check-ups, or the lack of them finally rise to the surface. The gap was not the same for every cancer, which is where the story becomes more revealing. For anal cancer in men and cervical cancer in women "two diseases closely linked to infection with the sexually transmitted human papillomavirus (HPV)" the differences were enormous. Never-married men had around five times the rate of anal cancer compared with men who had married. Never-married women had nearly three times the rate of cervical cancer. These are precisely the cancers where preventive tools already exist: HPV vaccination and regular screening to catch pre-cancerous changes

early. The study's authors suggest that being married may increase the chances that someone is nudged into attending those appointments or into having more stable healthcare and insurance.

Elsewhere, the pattern echoed long-known biological themes. Cancers such as endometrial and ovarian cancer were more common in never-married women, which may reflect lower rates of childbearing, since pregnancy and childbirth alter hormone exposure in ways that can reduce risk, as research my team has undertaken shows. By contrast, for cancers strongly influenced by organised screening "breast, prostate, thyroid" the differences by marital status were smaller. Screening levels the playing field, regardless of whether someone has a spouse reminding them about their appointments. Even race played an unexpected part. Black men who had never married had the highest overall cancer rates in the study, yet married black men actually had lower cancer rates than married white men, hinting that marriage might be especially protective in some groups. So does this mean marriage itself somehow protects people from cancer? The researchers are careful to say no. Their study shows a pattern, not proof, that marriage is the cause. The real question is whether marriage makes people healthier, or whether healthier, wealthier and better-supported people are simply more likely to get married in the first place. People facing serious mental illness, addiction, chronic illness or deep poverty may be less likely to marry, and those same struggles are also linked to a higher risk of cancer. In that sense, marriage may be less a cause than a sign of other advantages that begin long before anyone walks down the aisle. There are other reasons to be cautious, too. The "ever married" group bundles together happily married people with those who are divorced or widowed, despite the fact that those experiences can look very different in practice. Meanwhile, the "never married" group includes people in long-term relationships who may receive much of the same support as married couples. The researchers also cannot fully account for differences in income, education or access to healthcare all of which strongly shape cancer risk in their own right. Even so, the study points to something important. People who are or have been married are more likely to have someone encouraging them to see a doctor, to share financial resources and health insurance, and to be less likely to smoke heavily or avoid medical care

Arya, Connolly six-hitting spree keeps Punjab Kings unbeaten streak intact as Lucknow Super Giants thrashed



GNS News Agency, April 24

SYNOPSIS: Punjab Kings' power-packed batting unit comes up with an electrifying performance to bury Lucknow Super Giants and remain unbeaten. It was quite a statement to make but said much about the confidence levels at which Punjab Kings have been operating since captain Shreyas and head coach Ricky Ponting came together.

Much has been said about how the defending champions Royals Challengers Bengaluru have grown from strength to strength this season. The same holds true for Punjab, last season's beaten finalists. So far this season, they have chased 200-plus totals effortlessly twice, and a target of 196 with 21 deliveries to spare. In that context, there was a crucial question. How will Punjab's batting respond to chase, setting a target brings its own share of challenges. From figuring out a par score to maintaining tempo throughout in pursuit of it and playing high-risk cricket without having to worry about what happens if they falter... there are endless situations that franchises confront. But try telling this to Punjab, who posted 254/7 and closed out the game with the ball.

Against a Lucknow team that has been amongst the best bowling units, it promised an exciting match-up. Initial signs were that Punjab were taking time to warm up – Mohammed Shami sent Prabhshimran Singh packing first ball and Cooper Connolly wasn't finding momentum; yet Priyansh Arya was doing what he knows best. With his quick hands, anything that was in his arc flew. Still the explosive starts that Punjab are known for was missing, and it was only in the sixth over that they managed to take their scoring rate to above 10 runs an over. From there on, they hardly looked back. Arya Cooper Connolly of Punjab Kings and Priyansh Arya of Punjab Kings during Match 29 of the TATA Indian Premier League 2026. (Photo by Pankaj Nangia / CREIMAS for IPL) With incredible batting depth, which their batting coach Brad Haddin said allows them to bat exclusively in top gear, the wheels came off Lucknow. 22 deliveries, 78 runs

The carnage that started in the sixth over, reached its peak in the middle overs. Though Punjab had taken the run rate to 11, on a flat deck where dew was an unlikely opponent, Lucknow still had time to hit back. But as has been the case through the season, when the game appeared to be on an even keel, Punjab have found the extra gear which has taken them a level up. That phase started in the middle of the 10th over and ended in the 13th. It began with a stunning effort from Arya, who casually slapped a short delivery from Prince Yadav over cover for a six. In the next over of Shami, whose slower deliveries have been hard to get away this season, Connolly send them the distance over the leg-side. Then came Avesh Khan, who delivered three full tosses in his first four deliveries. Arya sent two of them in different directions, using his rubber wrists before Connolly scooped one behind the wicketkeeper. A desperate Rishabh Pant turned to Aiden Markram, an off-spinner. Connolly hit the first ball over cover. The next two, he just swung through the line, hitting them over long-on before a single brought Arya to the strike. Like Connolly, he didn't hesitate to hit through the line as two more sixes meant 32 came off that over. Starting with the six off Prince, Punjab made 78 runs off 22 deliveries. In the first 13 overs, they had 16 sixes. Connolly and Arya didn't last long afterwards, departing within four deliveries of each other. The worst was over for Lucknow, but with their firepower, Punjab still ended up with a huge score. During that phase when Arya and Connolly faced 22 deliveries between them, they hit 10 sixes.

Losing the way Dew or no dew, for Lucknow to surpass Punjab needed a monumental effort. For a batting unit that had shown plenty of spark this season, it was a different story this time. A line-up that boasts of Mitchell Marsh, Markram, Pant and Nicholas Pooran should be a nightmare for most teams. But none have looked totally in command this season, blowing hot and cold. It has meant their batting order hasn't looked settled. For starters, opening with a new combination – Ayush Badoni joining Mitch Marsh – they did well to stay in the game, almost mirroring Punjab's innings at the start. Even after Badoni departed, Pant provided impetus and with Pooran and Markram to come, their plan seemed simple. Keep pace with Punjab and find a phase where they could find those 22 deliveries in return. Instead, around the same period what Lucknow received were the hammer blows thanks to some fine execution – including another under-rated performance from Yuzvendra Chahal, who removed Marsh. In the next three overs, Punjab would take control of the game as Arshdeep Singh managed to end Pant's 23-ball 42 with a faint edge. Once Pooran's struggles continued on the night, when he managed 9 off 9 before Marco Jansen's slower delivery undid him, Lucknow's hopes also vanished. There was time for Markram to narrow the margin of defeat, but the contest was long over.

Ashwin puzzled by Riyan Parag's move to not bowl Ravindra Jadeja in death overs

GNS News Agency, April 24

Rajasthan Royals' captain Riyan Parag, right, talks with Sunrisers Hyderabad's captain Ishan Kishan during the toss before the start of the Indian Premier League cricket match between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Rajasthan Royals in Hyderabad, India, Monday, April 13, 2026. (AP Photo) Rajasthan Royals' captain Riyan Parag, right, talks with Sunrisers Hyderabad's captain Ishan Kishan during the toss before the start of the Indian Premier League cricket match between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Rajasthan Royals in Hyderabad, India, Monday, April 13, 2026. (AP Photo) After Rajasthan Royals lost by four wickets to Kolkata Knight Riders, Ravichandran Ashwin was critical of Royals captain Riyan Parag's decisions in the second innings. In particular, Ashwin was stunned by Parag not handing the ball to Ravindra Jadeja in crunch situations at the death, despite the ace all-rounder conceding just eight runs in his three overs.

Parag had made some bold choices with the ball, like handing himself an over and then tossing the ball to Brijesh Sharma in the 18th and 20th overs for the first time in the IPL. "If you can give the 18th and 20th over to Brijesh Sharma for the first time in an IPL, then of course you can give the ball to Ravindra Jadeja!" Ashwin said on his Hindi YouTube channel Ash ki Baat. "What should I say about Riyan Parag's decisions? The game was on the line, Ravindra Jadeja managed to get a false shot off Rinku Singh's bat. If Nandre Burger had held on to that chance, the game was over right then! My question is, when you have two left-handers batting, Rinku and Anukul Roy, I want to understand the mindset. I'm not saying that Riyan Parag or Ayush Badoni are not good bowlers. You have a world-class left-arm spinner. Sure, numbers and data can tell you something, but he



has conceded only eight runs in three overs and taken two wickets.

"When Rinku Singh tried to hit, he was so close to getting out, but you thought, 'I am an off-spinner; I can put pressure on these two left-handers, but Jaddu won't be able to.' Ravi Bishnoi can bowl to them, but you felt Jaddu won't be able to? It is possible that Jaddu bowls and the batter hits two sixes, but by not bowling him, you are not showing trust in your bowling unit in the long term," Ashwin said in the video. "If a left-arm spinner knows that he will not bowl against a left-hander, he will stop trying!" In contrast, Ashwin praised Ishan Kishan's calls as a captain in SRH's previous game, particularly the call to give youngster Praful Hinge the ball in the final over of the game versus Chennai Super Kings. After a dream debut where he picked up three wickets in his first over against Rajasthan Royals, Hinge had a bad start to his second game, conceding 54 runs in his three overs. CSK needed 18 runs to win off the final over, and at that stage, Kishan handed the ball to Hinge.

T20s shouldn't be called cricket: Mark Taylor on 'essence of batting' changing

GNS News Agency, April 24

Taylor said that the essence of batting when he was growing up was to put value on your wicket and spend time in the middle before harvesting runs. (Express Photo by Kamleshwar Singh) Taylor said that the essence of batting when he was growing up was to put value on your wicket and spend time in the middle before harvesting runs. So different is the basics fundamentals that players have in their approach towards batting in T20 cricket compared to the other forms now that former Australia captain Mark Taylor feels that the shortest format can even be called a different sport altogether. Taylor, who was as famous for being hard to dismiss as he was for being prolific at the top of the order for a number of years, said that he may have grown up as a different player had he come up in the T20 era.

"I'd love to say yes," said Taylor on the on the Turn it Up! show on Channel Nine's Wide World of Sports Youtube page when asked about if he would've been able to adjust to the shortest format. "Look, I think if that had been the game I was brought up on, I would've had to. There is a certain amount of skill, different skills nowadays, it is more about hitting skills. If that was the game I had to play as I was developing as a cricket, sure, I would have tried to whack the ball over midwicket. The game I learnt in New South Wales was about staying in. Don't get out and then you might be able to score some runs."

Batters have generally accepted maximising runs off every ball in T20 cricket over the past couple of years especially. India had won the 2024 T20 World Cup with that approach and they only took it to another extreme on their way to a second consecutive title this year. In the IPL, nine



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of the top 10 run scorers thus far have strike rates above 150, three of them are above 200. Taylor said that the essence of batting when he was growing up was to put value on your wicket and spend time in the middle before harvesting runs. Whereas in T20s, the onus is on hitting right from the beginning.

"T20 cricket, it's the same amount of players (but) it's a different game. It almost shouldn't be called cricket because it's a different game. It's the same amount of players, it's still 10 dismissals and you have to bowl a side out but you've only got 20 overs to bat. You are taking out the accountability of getting out, which was the essence of batting when I was a kid," he said.

Guardiola turns Gaffer: Once polar opposites, Pep, like Alex Ferguson, is now totem pole of adapting systems to players



GNS News Agency, April 24

Manchester City's head coach Pep Guardiola applauds supporters at the end of the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Arsenal, in Manchester, England, Sunday, April 19, 2026. (AP Photo) Manchester City's head coach Pep Guardiola applauds supporters at the end of the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Arsenal, in Manchester, England. The shadow of Alex Ferguson spread imperiously over Pep Guardiola when he arrived at the Etihad. In the unveiling ceremony in 2016, the Manchester City chairman Khaldoon al-Mubarak, said he wished Guardiola built a dynasty like Ferguson at Manchester United. Nearly a decade later, he has built a seigniorial empire in the EPL era after Ferguson. But more fascinating is how the shadows of the two managers have converged and how they resemble each other in their methods than ever before.

Guardiola was the ideologue, the system's man, the team's structure and playing patterns stripped to detail. His football was chess in hurry, every move pre-arranged with forensic precision. He found men for the system he adhered to. Ferguson was a person's manager; who flexed systems to the strengths of his men. He was a stickler for discipline but with emphasis on creative output, individual dazzle within a well-knit framework, football as an expression and reflection of personality rather than an ideology.

But in his last phase as City's manager, Guardiola's fixation with systems rather than individuals has relaxed. The heist artists of 2026 capture his shifting convictions, the weird pleasure of rebelling his own ideas and embracing the ones that he had once smirked at. Perhaps, it was the circumstances. He couldn't discover a midfield talisman of Kevin de Bruyne's playmaking silk; Phil Foden has slipped and Rodri, post injury, has not been the impenetrable force he was once; the backline is more fragile than a China pot. He had no time to find the perfect player for the perfect system. Rather, like Ferguson throughout his career, found systems and ways that suited his men most. He built a team around them. He has exemplary wingers, the pace-burning throwbacks that dribbled, cut in and crossed. In tight, man-marking defence, they make the difference. He relied on control, still does, but not with headmaster-like rigour. He lets players indulge, if they could produce the end results. Like the impish Rayan Cherki. He is the Guardiola-antithesis. He clings too long to the ball; unlocks his over-elaborate artistry. He dribbles and slaloms. He doesn't conform to the routine passing patterns. He moves into unusual spaces that distorts the team's shapes. But

Guardiola understands that Cherki's dancing feet could unlock the meanest defences. As he did against Arsenal with a goal that was half-dream, half-illusion. To breach the William Saliba—Gabriel human boulder, City required the spontaneous ingenuity of the Frenchman.

Guardiola did not have the control-providing midfield conductors of the past. So he resorted to an idea that Ferguson tried and succeeded towards the end of his career. United faced an acute shortage of elite midfielders, especially after Owen Hargreaves's run in with injuries. He coveted Luka Modric, but failed to sign him. So he stacked his team with a variety of forwards who could create as well as score goals. The versatile Wayne Rooney dropped back from the front line to act as an auxiliary midfielder. The treble winning team of Ferguson was indistinguishable from his double winners of 2008. The fulcrum of 1999 was his midfield quartet; the soul of 2008 was his forward trident. Eras change, players and tactics alter, but great managers sense this twist of tides more than most and change accordingly. "We adapt to the quality of the players that we have," Guardiola would say. Both have won titles with vastly different sides. Paul Scholes and Ryan Giggs were only links between the two Champions League. Only four of those in the 2008 squad lasted till his last season. Kyle Walker, Ederson and Kevin De Bruyne were the only regulars in Guardiola's first and the most recent title-winning teams.

Deep into his Premier League sojourn, Ferguson's directness waned, in reaction to the world around him changing. The game was getting tactically complex. False nines and inverted wingers were in vogue; full-backs began to underlap and became hybrid midfielders. Guardiola was the new manager-saint. Paradoxically, Guardiola has wedded directness. Flanks are his heartbeat. Jeremy Doku and Antoine Semenyo can smoothly shift from narrow or wide the pitch. They could function as the traditional wingers as well as No 10s, drifting to central space and cook passes for Erling Haaland, a true blue No 9, as opposed to false one Guardiola had fetishised for much of his career.

Cherki is not the pass-spitting David Silva or De Bruyne, but a half-playmaker, half second striker. Guardiola seldom had so many tricksters together. Behind him are Rodri and Bernardo, the men that restore order to the chaos upfront. There is a vintage Ferguson-team feel to City 2026, not so much structurally as in spirit. City's backline was depleted. So he converted two midfielders into full-backs. Like Ferguson used to employ centre backs as midfielders or winger as full-backs. Matheus Nunes and Nico O'Reilly have been the unsung heroes of City this season. Both had remarkable persuasive powers to convince them to adopt different positions. Both have built, stripped down, rebuilt and then did it all again. Ferguson did it for 27 and a half years. Guardiola is in his tenth year. It's impossible for Guardiola to replicate Ferguson's longevity, but he has constructed an infallible a legacy as the Scot. In his EPL journey, that began with Ferguson as the polar opposites, their shadows are overlapping now, more than ever before. Maybe, it is how shadows of great men are meant to be.

Arya, Connolly six-hitting spree keeps Punjab Kings unbeaten streak intact as Lucknow Super Giants thrashed

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Against a Lucknow team that has been amongst the best bowling units, it promised an exciting match-up. Initial signs were that Punjab were taking time to warm up – Mohammed Shami sent Prabhshimran Singh packing first ball and Cooper Connolly wasn't finding momentum; yet Priyansh Arya was doing what he knows best. With his quick hands, anything that was in his arc flew. Still the explosive starts that Punjab are known for was missing, and it was only in the sixth over that they managed to take their scoring rate to above 10 runs an over. From there on, they hardly looked back. Arya Cooper Connolly of Punjab Kings and Priyansh Arya of Punjab Kings during Match 29 of the TATA Indian Premier League 2026. With incredible batting depth, which their batting coach Brad Haddin said allows them to bat exclusively in top gear, the wheels came off Lucknow. 22 deliveries, 78 runs. The carnage that started in the sixth over, reached its peak in the middle overs. Though Punjab had taken the run rate to 11, on a flat deck where dew was an unlikely opponent, Lucknow still had time to hit back. But as has been the case through the season, when the game appeared to be on an even keel, Punjab have found the extra gear which has taken them a level up.

That phase started in the middle of the 10th over and ended in the 13th. It began with a stunning effort from Arya, who casually slapped a short delivery from Prince Yadav over cover for a six. In the next over of Shami, whose slower deliveries have been hard to get away this season, Connolly send them the distance over the leg-side. Then came Avesh Khan, who delivered three full tosses in his first four deliveries. Arya sent two of them in different directions, using his rubber wrists before Connolly scooped one behind the wicketkeeper. A desperate Rishabh Pant turned to Aiden Markram, an off-spinner. Connolly hit the first ball over cover. The next two, he just swung through the line, hitting them over long-on before a single brought Arya to the strike. Like Connolly, he didn't hesitate to hit through the line as two more sixes meant 32 came off that over.

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Dew or no dew, for Lucknow to surpass Punjab needed a monumental effort. For a batting unit that had shown plenty of spark this season, it was a different story this time. A line-up that boasts of Mitchell Marsh, Markram, Pant and Nicholas Pooran should be a nightmare for most teams. But none have looked totally in command this season, blowing hot and cold. It has meant their batting order hasn't looked settled.

For starters, opening with a new combination – Ayush Badoni joining Mitch Marsh – they did well to stay in the game, almost mirroring Punjab's innings at the start. Even after Badoni departed, Pant provided impetus and with Pooran and Markram to come, their plan seemed simple. Keep pace with Punjab and find a phase where they could find those 22 deliveries in return. Instead, around the same period what Lucknow received were the hammer blows thanks to some fine execution – including another under-rated performance from Yuzvendra Chahal, who removed Marsh. In the next three overs, Punjab would take control of the game as Arshdeep Singh managed to end Pant's 23-ball 42 with a faint edge. Once Pooran's struggles continued on the night, when he managed 9 off 9 before Marco Jansen's slower delivery undid him, Lucknow's hopes also vanished. There was time for Markram to narrow the margin of defeat, but the contest was long over.

Rajasthan Royals let slip winnable game, Parag admits errors

Kolkata: Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag admitted that his side let a winnable game slip through their fingers, pointing to fielding lapses and execution errors as key reasons behind their defeat to Kolkata Knight Riders in Sunday's IPL 2026 clash at Eden Gardens. Reflecting on the first innings, Parag felt his team fell short with the bat despite reading the conditions well early on. "I think like the first four or five overs we assessed, the was a 170-run wicket, so we were 10 under par for starters. And then I think the way we clawed back, the effort the bowlers put in, I'll say, and it was our game. No excuses there. We can't be dropping catches, we can't be bowling lines that help the batters. So, silly errors from our side. But this was our game," he said after the game. Despite being slightly under par, Rajasthan's bowlers brought them back into contention, particularly through spin, a tactical call Parag stood by.

Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh announce second pregnancy with a cute photo



are expecting their second child. Ranveer and Deepika shared the news with a cryptic post on Instagram, featuring a picture of their daughter, Dua Padukone Singh, holding a positive pregnancy test. The post was captioned with a series of evil eye emojis. Following the announcement, several celebrities, including Kiara Advani, Parineeti Chopra, Sunil Grover, Bhumi Pednekar and Samantha Ruth Prabhu, took to the comments section of the post to congratulate the couple.

Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh tied the knot in Lake Como, Italy in 2018 after dating for almost six years. They welcomed their first child, Dua, on September 8, 2024. Deepika Padukone, who has Shah Rukh Khan's King and Allu Arjun-starrer Raaka in her kitty, has been advocating for less strenuous film schedules as a new mother. She reportedly walked out of upcoming tentpoles, Sandeep Reddy Vanga's action thriller Spirit and Nag Ashwin's dystopian sci-fi epic Kalki 2898 AD Part 2, after the respective producers did not meet her primary condition of an eight-hour shift. Meanwhile, Ranveer Singh is at the peak of his career. In the past four months, he's delivered two blockbusters with the two instalments of Aditya Dhar's spy thriller franchise Dhurandhar. While the first part earned over Rs 890 crore in India and around Rs 1300 crore worldwide, the sequel Dhurandhar The Revenge has become the highest-grossing Hindi film ever in India, amassing over Rs 1300 crore net, and the third-highest-grossing Indian film ever worldwide, amassing over Rs 1748 crore.

Bollywood actors Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh took to Instagram on Sunday to announce that they

While Jana Nayagan remained in limbo, Tamil cinema found its real winners elsewhere in Q1 of 2026

The most talked-about Tamil film of Q1 2026 never actually played in any cinema during the period. That single fact says more about how Tamil cinema's first three months unfolded than almost anything else. Jana Nayagan, directed by H. Vinoth and widely described as 'Thalapathy' Vijay's final screen appearance before he commits to full-time politics, was supposed to release on January 9. Its trailer, released on January 3, crossed five million views within five minutes of going live. Exhibitors had blocked screens, distributors had locked territories, and the season's entire release calendar had been mapped around it.

Two days before it was due to hit screens, KVN Productions issued a statement confirming the film would not release as planned. The sequence of events behind that decision had been building for weeks. The production house had submitted the film to the CBFC on December 18, 2025. An examining committee recommended a U/A 16+ certificate with minor modifications, which the producers accepted. Then on January 5, four days before the release, the board notified the makers that the film was being referred to a revising committee, citing a complaint about content involving religious sentiments and the portrayal of the armed forces. KVN Productions filed a writ petition in the Madras High Court on January 6, arguing the certification was being unreasonably withheld. The court reserved its judgment to January 9, the exact day of the planned release.

On January 9, a division bench of Madras HC stayed a single judge's order, issued earlier in the day, directing the CBFC to immediately grant a censor certificate to Jana Nayagan. On January 12, KVN Productions appealed to the Supreme Court against the division bench order. On January 15, the SC declined to entertain the producers' plea and directed them instead to seek relief from the Madras High Court division bench. However, after the back and forth in court, KVN Productions opted to step back entirely. On February 10, the Madras HC permitted the production company to withdraw their plea challenging the certification process, after their legal counsel submitted a letter expressing their intention to pursue the review process with the CBFC directly. The situation continued to deteriorate. On April 9, the entire film leaked online in full HD format. By the end of Q1, no new release date had been confirmed, and Jana Nayagan had become the defining Kollywood story of the quarter without a single frame being shown in any theatre.

With Vijay's film disappearing from the Pongal window, the calendar was suddenly open and, within a week, crowded. Sivakarthikeyan's Parasakthi, directed by Sudha Kongara and produced by Aakash Baskaran under Dawn Pictures, stepped up as the season's main event. A period political drama set against the 1965 anti-Hindi agitation in Tamil Nadu, it stars Sivakarthikeyan alongside Atharva and Sreeleela, with Jayam Ravi playing the antagonist. G.V. Prakash Kumar composed the music, marking his 100th film as a music director. The film had its own last-minute CBFC complications, receiving its certificate just one day before its January 10 release after agreeing to modifications from the board.

The Pongal holidays gave it a brief lift on Day 6, with Rs 5.5 crore that day taking the six-day India net to Rs 36.25 crore. As per Sacnilk's final data, the film closed at Rs 52.46 crore India net, against a reported Rs 150 crore budget. For Sudha Kongara, coming off the celebrated Soorai Potru, it was a difficult result. For Sivakarthikeyan, whose previous release Madharaasi had also underperformed, it deepened an already uncomfortable run. On the sidelines, Vaa Vaathiyaar, directed by Nalan Kumarasamy and starring Karthi alongside Krithi Shetty and Sathyaraj, released on January 14. The film follows a man raised to idolise MGR who grows up to challenge those very ideals, a concept that read well on paper. According to Sacnilk, it earned Rs 8.59 crore India net, ending as a disaster. Amid all the noise around the bigger releases, Thalaivar Thambi Thalamaiyil arrived on January 15. A political satire directed by Nithish Sahadev and starring Jiiva, produced on a reported Rs 10 crore budget, the film opened at Rs 1.5 crore India net on Day. The film closed at ₹30.13 crore India net, reported Sacnilk.

Two films in February changed the conversation around what Tamil cinema could commercially be in 2026. With Love, a teen romantic comedy directed by debut filmmaker Madhan and starring Abishan Jeevinth and Anaswara Rajan, hit screens on February 6. Produced under Soundarya Rajinikanth's Zion Films banner alongside MRP Entertainment, it ended its run earning approximately Rs 40 crore worldwide. Thaa Kizhavi arrived on February 27 and confirmed the pattern beyond any doubt. Directed by Sivakumar Murugesan in his debut and produced by Sivakarthikeyan's production house alongside Sudhan Sundaram under Passion Studios, the rural family comedy



stars Radhika Sarathkumar as Pavunuthaayi, a feared elderly moneylender in a Madurai village. The film's final run closed at Rs 62.46 crore India net, with Rs 10.35 crore from overseas, bringing the worldwide gross to Rs 81.86 crore. Made on a Rs 9 crore budget, it delivered returns of well over 500%.

An extended victory lap in March As Thaa Kizhavi sustained a strong run through its third and fourth weeks across Tamil Nadu, Ken Karunas' Youth released on March 19 coinciding with the Ugadi holiday. A coming-of-age comedy drama about a 15-year-old navigating love and adolescence in a Matriculation school, it closed at Rs 52.01 crore India net (Rs 59.65 crore India gross) with Rs 11.40 crore from overseas, bringing the worldwide total to Rs 71.05 crore, per Sacnilk's final tracking. Made on a reported budget of around Rs 6 crore, the film has emerged as the third-highest-grossing Tamil release of 2026 by worldwide gross and a standout ROI success, recovering nearly nine times its production cost. The digital rights were acquired by Netflix, which premiered the film on April 16. Ken Karunas, son of actor Karunas and previously known for his role in Asuran (2019), made a striking debut behind the camera. Tamil cinema Youth, directed by Ken Karunas, stars Ken Karunas, Anishma Anilkumar, Suraj Venjaramoodu, and Devadarshini. Happy Raj, directed by Maria Raja Elanchezian and starring G.V. Prakash Kumar alongside Sri Gouri Priya, Prathana Nathan, George Maryan, and Abbas, released on March 27, the final week of Q1. As per Sacnilk, it opened at Rs 0.7 crore India net on Day 1, reached Rs 3.87 crore in five days, and closed at approximately Rs 4.32 crore India net.

What's coming next?

The rest of 2026 gives Kollywood several opportunities to correct the first quarter's narrative, though the release calendar comes with its own complications. The most immediate question is still Jana Nayagan. Given the scale of the film, the controversy around it, and Vijay's political timeline with Tamil Nadu Assembly elections approaching, whenever Jana Nayagan eventually releases it will be one of the most scrutinised Tamil openings in years.

Whether a film that has already been seen widely through piracy can still deliver meaningful box office numbers is a question the trade is watching nervously. Rajinikanth's Jailer 2, directed by Nelson Dillipkumar, is another major Tamil release in the pipeline, though a firm date has not been confirmed. Later in the year, the Sivakarthikeyan-Sivakumar Murugesan reunion Seyon, produced by Kamal Haasan's Raaj Kamal Films International, is targeting an October 2026 release.

Namita Thapar slams trolls after facing hate for namaz health benefits video



Namita Thapar, Shark Tank India judge, entrepreneur, and Executive Director of Emcure Pharmaceuticals, became the target of trolls after she posted a video talking about the health benefits of namaz. The post resulted in Namita and her mother being called names online, as they faced brutal criticism and trolling. Now, the entrepreneur has blasted trolls and argued how no one had a problem when she spoke about the benefits of Surya Namaskar.

She said, "Peeche teen hafte se mujhe log r****i bula rahe hain non stop aur meri darling mom ko bhi gande gande naam de rahe hain for what? For making a reel on health benefits of namaz? I am a healthcare professional. Maine itne saare Hindu religions par reel banayi hai, unke health benefits par... har Yoga day pe asanas, specially Surya Namaskar ke reels banati hoon, tab toh kisi ne kuch nahi kaha (For the past three weeks, people have been calling

me a prostitute non-stop, and even my dear mother has been subjected to abusive name-calling. For what? For making a reel about the health benefits of namaz? I am a healthcare professional. I've made several reels on Hindu rituals and their health benefits as well... every Yoga Day, I share videos on asanas, especially Surya Namaskar, and no one said anything then.")

She added, "Mujhe sikhaya gaya hai R for Religion means R for respect, and this is how you respect? Especially to women? Reservation bill pass nahi hua toh sab bol rahe hai lekin jab women ki aisi disrespect hoti hai toh fir silence kyun? I have learnt long back, aap ke liye koi nahi hain, you have to speak up for yourself. So, for all my trolls, please continue, but remember Hinduism has a concept called Karma, and I am a proud Hindu (I've been taught that 'R for Religion' means 'R for Respect'—is this what respect looks like, especially towards women? When the reservation bill didn't pass, everyone spoke up, but when women are disrespected like this, why the silence? I learnt long ago that no one will stand up for you; you have to speak up for yourself. So to all my trolls, please continue, but remember, Hinduism has a concept called karma, and I am a proud Hindu.)" She concluded, "Continue at your own discretion because god's watching you all. And for all proud, educated Hindus who believe religion means respect, especially for women, negative reels meri bahut viral hogyi, ab yeh waali viral karke dikhaao (Many of my negative reels got viral, now make this go viral)." On March 25, Namita posted a video in which she talked about celebrating Eid with her friends, who told her about the health benefits of Namaz and how it is a 'full body exercise'. It helps with body flexibility, supports knees and joints, aids digestion, and is also good for mental health. While many praised Namita for being inclusive, others trolled her, and she was even subjected to personal attacks.

Pati Patni Aur Woh Do teaser: Ayushmann Khurrana enters 'pativerse', caught between three women

After Kartik Aaryan was seen caught between the love of two women in the 2019 film Pati Patni Aur Woh, its sequel Pati Patni Aur Woh Do takes things up a notch. This time, the film's lead actor Ayushmann Khurrana is caught between not two but three women — Sara Ali Khan, Wamiqa Gabbi, and Rakul Preet Singh. The makers shared a glimpse of this madness on Monday as they released the film's teaser.

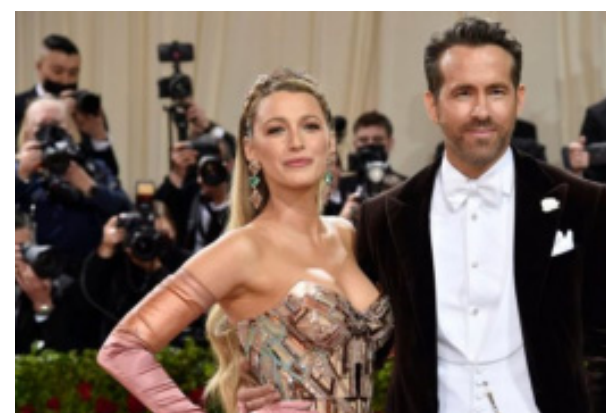
The film revisits the classic drama of the 'pati-patni-aur-woh' dynamic into the universe of "patis", a.k.a. the "pativerse", where the key character of husbands remains unchanged. The teaser shows Ayushmann as Prajapati Pandey working in his office when a knock on the door diverts his attention, and he is told that a woman is here to meet him. The actor is then seen amazed as the lady enters through the door. This is followed by glimpses of Ayushmann romancing Sara Ali Khan, Wamiqa Gabbi, and Rakul Preet Singh. We then see Vijay Raaz enter the frame as a cop, and he questions Ayushmann if all three women are his 'friends' or something else. This leads to confusion snowballing into an all-out comedy of errors.

Ayushmann shared the teaser and wrote, "Samay sab kuch badal deta hai... par patiyon ki fitrat uske bhi bas mein nahi ?? Aa rahe hain Prajapati Pandey... is baar apni Patni aur Woh Do ke saath! ?? #PatiPatniAurWohDo Teaser Out Now - Link in bio In cinemas on 15th May 2026!" Pati Patni Aur Woh Do is directed by Mudassar Aziz and bankrolled by producers Bhushan Kumar, Renu Ravi Chopra, and Krishan Kumar, and creatively produced by Juno Chopra. The film is set to release on the big screen on May 15. Pati Patni Aur Woh Do marks Ayushmann's return to the big



screen after last year's Thamma, which had also starred Rashmika Mandanna. The film was a moderate success at the box office. Sara Ali Khan, on the other hand, was seen in last year's Metro... In Dino. The film was also a moderate success at the box office.

Ryan Reynolds backs Blake Lively after setback in harassment case against Justin Baldoni



Two weeks after a judge dismissed most of Blake Lively's claims in her lawsuit against co-star Justin Baldoni, actor Ryan Reynolds has come out in support of his wife. During the Today's Sunday Sitdown Live series shared on Sunday, he spoke about managing a healthy family life amid the ongoing legal battle. He declared that he is 'proud' of his wife. He said, "You really see the illusion behind so much of this stuff, digital life versus real life." He added, "Really, without getting into too much, I have never in my life been more proud of my wife. People have no idea what is really going on. I've never been more proud of someone in my life, with that level of integrity that they bring with them in everything they do."

Reynolds, 49, and Lively, 38, married in 2012, and the couple are parents to daughters James, 11, Inez, 9, and Betty, 6, and son Olin, 3. Reynolds' comments have come just after a week of Blake asking him to serve as a witness as her legal battle with Baldoni heads to trial next month. On April 2, Blake's case suffered a setback after a US District Judge dismissed 10 of her 13 claims against Baldoni. These included those relating to sexual harassment. However, her claim against Baldoni for a retaliatory smear campaign will move forward to trial next month.

Blake has reacted to the setback on her Instagram Story. She wrote, "The last thing I wanted in my life was a lawsuit, but I brought this case because of the pervasive RETALIATION I faced, and continue to, for privately and professionally asking for a safe working environment for

myself and others," she wrote. "I hope the Court's decision shows others that, as unfathomably painful as it is, you can speak up." Lively and Baldoni starred in the film It Ends With Us. Following this, in late 2024, Lively filed a California complaint alleging sexual harassment and a smear campaign against her by Baldoni and producer Jamey Heath. She accused them of harassment by commenting on her weight and looks. However, he denied all the allegations and counter-sued Lively.

Atlee, Priya Atlee blessed with a baby girl!

Chennai: Ace director Atlee and his wife Priya Atlee on Monday announced that they had now been blessed with a baby girl. The couple already have a son called Meer.

Taking to his social media timelines to share the happy news, Atlee said, "Feeling blessed" and shared a poster that contained a drawing of their son Meer, which read, "Yay! I've got a baby sister!" The poster also said, "We, Priya and Atlee are blessed with a baby girl. April 20th, 2026."

On the work front, Atlee is now working on his next film 'Raaka', featuring Allu Arjun and Deepika Padukone in the lead. On Allu Arjun's 44th birthday recently, the makers had revealed the first look of the actor in the film. The first look featured an intense close-up of a bald Allu Arjun's rugged face. His face is partially hidden by what appears to be a wolf's claw. The entire picture adds a primal, warrior-like aesthetic. Sun Pictures, which is producing the film, had, while formally announcing this project last year had made it clear that the project would have world class experts working on it. The production house, while making the announcement shared a video clip that had a number of world-class technicians who are to work on the film, sharing their thoughts about the script. Well known VFX supervisor James Madigan, who is known for having worked in films like 'Iron Man 2' and 'Transformers: Rise of the Beasts', was seen saying, "I just got done reading the script and I got to say, my head is still spinning."