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## Hyderabad police warn citizens against chemically ripened mangoes

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Food Adulteration Surveillance Team (H-FAST), a special unit of Hyderabad Police to check food adulteration, is maintaining a strict vigil on the sale of chemically ripened mangoes.

Hyderabad Police Commissioner V. C. Sajjanar, who heads H-FAST, said on Friday that legal action is being initiated against those who violate the rules.

## Revanth Reddy, Chandrababu Naidu lead Good Friday messages of peace and compassion

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Governor S. Abdul Nazeer and former CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy remembered the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and highlighted his message of love, compassion and faith on Good Friday.

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, his Andhra Pradesh counterpart N. Chandrababu Naidu, and Andhra Pradesh Governor S. Abdul Nazeer remembered the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the occasion of Good Friday.

CM Reddy wished that love, grace and blessings of Lord Jesus would be bestowed upon people. The message of peace, compassion, service to mankind, kindness, and brotherhood taught by Christ will continue to inspire the entire humanity forever, he said.

He expressed hope that all Christian brothers and sisters would observe Good Friday with deep devotion, reverence, and also remember Jesus Christ's sacrifice.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu stated that for the redemption of humanity from sins, Jesus sacrificed his life. The teachings of Jesus Christ, which introduced the world to virtues such as love, sacrifice, faith, and others, remain worthy of emulation even today. His beloved life message should serve as an ideal for us, the Chief Minister said.

Andhra Pradesh Governor Abdul Nazeer said in his message that Good Friday is observed by the Christian brethren across the world in memory of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It is a pivotal event in Christianity, symbolizing Jesus Christ's ultimate sacrifice for the forgiveness of



humanity's sins and the promise of salvation.

"Jesus Christ showed great love for all of humanity, and the occasion signifies the promise of hope and salvation. On this day, His ultimate sacrifice is remembered with solemn hymns and prayers of Thanksgiving," the Governor added.

Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy stated that Christ's crucifixion stands as the ultimate example of love, compassion, and sacrifice. "On this Good Friday, let us pause to reflect, look within, and renew our values, guided by His simple yet profound teaching: to love one another as we love ourselves."

## Telangana teachers demand PRC report and DA release

Hyderabad: The Telangana Prantha Upadhyaya Sangam (TPUS) on Friday demanded that the State government immediately release the new Pay Revision Commission (PRC) report and pending DAs.

During a meeting held here, TPUS president Vodnala Rajasekhara, general secretary Telkalapalli Pentayya and organising secretary Kanuganti Hanumantha Rao expressed concern that the PRC, which was supposed to be implemented from July 1, 2023, was yet to be released.

## What is in Ajit Doval's Red File? Why PM Modi's meeting with Army officials

Hyderabad: While the entire nation was asleep, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) was operating on a war footing. Prime Minister Modi, along with Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, held a confidential meeting for nearly three hours focusing on the country's security situation. "It is believed that the 'Red File' prepared by Doval contains crucial intelligence regarding a secret understanding between the United States and Pakistan, plans for possible strikes on Iran, and attempts to drag India into a conflict. There are growing concerns that if a U.S.-Pakistan arrangement leads to tensions with Iran, Pakistan could use the situation to increase pressure on India. With these possibilities in mind, the government is maintaining a high level of alert. Government already issued NOTAMs along the borders of Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Punjab, signaling that something could happen at any time." On another front, intelligence reports suggest that around 1,500 militants are ready to infiltrate India from the PoK border. The claim is that the U.S. and Pakistan are planning to push India into a "two-front war." This is why even the Finance Minister is part of these meetings — to estimate the costs of deploying expensive weapons like BrahMos, S-400, and Rafale in case of war.



## Naidu yet again admits pressuring Centre to merge seven Telangana mandals with AP

Hyderabad: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has once again admitted that he had pressurised the Central government to merge seven mandals of Telangana into Andhra Pradesh.

"Before June 2, 2014, I got the seven mandals under Polavaram project to be merged with AP. I told the Central Government that I would take oath only after the merger of these mandals," Naidu said at a press conference in Amaravati on Friday.

This admission has again proved the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) argument that the merger of seven mandals into Andhra Pradesh was a politically motivated move. It has been a contentious issue between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh governments.

The latest assertion of Naidu about the mandal merger elicited a stinging criticism from former Minister T Harish Rao on Thursday. He charged that it was the BJP-led Central government, which merged seven mandals of Telangana into Andhra Pradesh at the instance of Naidu.AP news updates

Countering Union Minister G Kishan Reddy's statement in Rajya Sabha over merger of seven mandals, the BRS Deputy Floor Leader reminded that the Central Government had also issued an ordinance to this effect. The BRS president K Chandrashekhara Rao had opposed the move and had even called for a Telangana bandh as a mark of protest, he recalled.

During a press conference in Amaravati,



Chandrababu Naidu had even maintained that he was not against Telangana. He claimed that Telangana was his brainchild. "I will never think about any initiatives that could result in loss or injustice to Telangana," Naidu stated.

The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister's statements had evoked strong criticism from different sections in the social media. Many pointed out that even after 12 years since bifurcation, Andhra Pradesh leaders continue their outburst over Telangana.

Many recalled how Chandrababu Naidu had initially supported Telangana in an all-party meeting on December 7, 2009 and had even signed the resolution on behalf of the Telugu Desam, but within three days he went back on his words, one X user noted.

## TRS name now free, can be used by anyone, says Kavitha

Hyderabad: April 3

Telangana Jagruthi chief and former MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Friday, April 3, said that the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) name is now "free" and can be used by anyone.

Speaking at a media conference in Hyderabad, the president of Telangana Jagruthi said she would come before the people with a "new agenda under an old name." She stated that her political approach would follow the principles of Kothapalli Jayashankar and added that there is no external ideological influence on her party.

During the interaction, she raised the issue of rising school fees in the state. She said there are 39,640 government and private schools in Telangana, including 12,061 private schools, and alleged that schools affiliated with the CBSE have increased fees by 25 to 30 percent and are already collecting them.

She recalled that chief minister A Revanth Reddy had earlier spoken about bringing in a fee regulation law, but said the issue was not discussed in the Assembly. Kavitha demanded that a special Assembly session be convened to introduce a fee regulation act.



She said private school managements are increasing fees but not raising teachers' salaries. She also questioned whether the government is monitoring food quality in private colleges.

Kavitha demanded that the government act to control fee hikes by private schools and warned that protests would be held in front of schools if no action is taken. She also said that educational institutions set up in the state should provide opportunities to local people.

## Five Indians among 12 injured in Abu Dhabi missile debris incident

A missile interception by the UAE's air defence systems in Abu Dhabi's Ajban area led to falling debris that injured 12 people, including five Indians. The Ministry of Defence reported engaging dozens of missiles and UAVs launched from Iran, adding that since the start of attacks, hundreds of projectiles have been intercepted.

Abu Dhabi: As many as 12 people, including five Indian nationals, were injured on Friday due to the falling missile debris after a successful interception carried out by UAE's air defence systems in Ajban area of Abu Dhabi.

"As part of the ongoing follow-up to the previously reported incident in the Ajban area caused by falling debris following the successful interception by air defence systems, authorities confirm that the incident has resulted in minor to moderate injuries sustained by six individuals of Nepali nationality and five individuals of Indian nationality, and one major injury sustained by an individual of Nepali nationality. The public is reminded to obtain information only from official sources and to avoid spreading rumours or unverified information," Abu Dhabi Media Office posted on X.

Earlier in the day, the office said that authorities responded to an incident of falling debris in the Ajban area after a successful interception by air defence systems.

Meanwhile, UAE's Ministry of Defence said that its air defence on Friday engaged 18 ballistic missiles, four cruise missiles and 47 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) launched from Iran.

According to the statement, UAE's air defences have engaged 475 ballistic missiles, 23 cruise missiles and 2085 UAVs since the start of Iranian attacks.

"The attacks resulted in the martyrdom of two members of the armed forces while performing their national duty, in addition to the martyrdom of a Moroccan civilian contracted by the Armed Forces, as well as nine fatalities of Pakistani, Nepali, Bangladeshi, Palestinian and Indian nationalities.

"A total of 203 people were also injured, with injuries ranging from minor to moderate and severe. The injured included nationals of the UAE, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Iran, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Azerbaijan, Yemen, Uganda, Eritrea, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Comoros, Türkiye, Iraq, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Jordan, Palestine, Ghana, Indonesia, Sweden and Tunisia," read the statement.

UAE's Ministry of Defence expressed its readiness to deal with any threats and vowed to confront anything that aims to undermine the security of the UAE, in a manner that ensures the protection of its sovereignty, security and stability and safeguards its interests and national capabilities.



## Airlines must pay more in case passenger dies in transit: Govt revises compensation rules in India

NEW DELHI, APRIL 3

The government made new rules on compensation in cases of fatality while travelling, baggage loss, delay in arrival and other categories.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has revised the maxi-

will benefit.

The notification revises liability limits expressed in Special Drawing Rights (SDR) -- an international unit of account maintained by the International Monetary Fund whose value fluctuates against the Indian rupee on a daily basis. The approximate rupee conversions given below are indicative only and will vary based on the prevailing SDR-to-rupee rate on the date of any actual claim.

The guaranteed compensation limit in case of death or bodily injury to a passenger has been raised from 1,28,821 SDR to 1,51,880 SDR — an increase of approximately 17.9 per cent. At an approximate conversion rate, this translates to a rise from roughly Rs. 1.43 crore to nearly Rs. 1.69 crore per passenger.

The compensation ceiling for losses suffered by a passenger due to flight delay has been increased from 5,346 SDR to 6,303 SDR — approximately from Rs 5.95 lakh to nearly Rs 7



imum compensation that airlines are legally required to pay passengers in cases of death, injury, baggage loss, flight delay and cargo damage. The revision was notified on April 1, 2026, and updates the liability limits contained in the Third Schedule of the Carriage by Air Act, 1972.

The rules have been made effective retrospectively from December 28, 2024. Anyone who has suffered under any category of liability on or after December 2024

lakh. For checked-in or cabin baggage that is lost, damaged, or delayed, the compensation limit has been raised from 1,288 SDR to 1,519 SDR — approximately from Rs. 1.43 lakh to around Rs. 1.69 lakh per passenger.

The compensation limit for air cargo has been raised from 22 SDR to 26 SDR per kilogram of goods lost or damaged.

# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## On the U.S. and NATO alliance

The U.S. appears poised to break with 77 years of partnership with Western European nations under the security umbrella of NATO, especially after its President Donald Trump has said that he is "absolutely" considering withdrawing from the alliance, which in his view is a "paper tiger". This and similar remarks by Mr. Trump have followed White House's apparent frustration that European and other allies did not expediently send military assets into West Asia to assist the U.S. and Israel in their war campaign against Iran, particularly to secure safe passage for oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, currently under Tehran's control. Mr. Trump has frequently complained about getting less from NATO than Washington was putting into it, saying recently to the media, "... it's a one-way street". He has further hinted that NATO may have become an ineffectual global force when he recently observed that Russian President Vladimir Putin also knows "that NATO lacks teeth to defend its members — a comment that gains additional salience in the context of Moscow's military aggression against Ukraine and its likely further military adventurism in the Baltic states region. At the heart of the heightened tension in the U.S.-NATO relationship is Washington's constant refrain that defence spending by its European partners has fallen short of expectations — even if the immediate trigger for talk of withdrawing from NATO is the Iran war context. A prior question of legality remains unanswered too: under section 250A of the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act, signed into force by former President Joe Biden, no U.S. President may unilaterally withdraw from NATO; rather they would require either a two-thirds Senate supermajority or an act of Congress towards this end. In the longer arc of history spanning the two Trump terms, a split with NATO, a security alliance, might not be of the same order as the viscerating institutions of global governance and cooperation.

# A New Chapter At SV School With International Education System



"Indian Chronicle. Jade Srinivas. April, 03." "A New Chapter in Modern Education has begun at SV English Medium School in Rebbena. The school Principal, Deekonda Sanjeev Kumar, stated that their goal is to make



learning easy to understand for every student and to prepare them to excel anywhere in the country. Speaking at the program Ayojeeth to introduce new educational methods, he announced that from the upcoming academic year, the school will implement the globally recognized "Hipath Curriculum," based on the Lucknow education model. He explained that this system enables students to learn the logic behind mathematics and languages on their own, without stress. "He further stated that the curriculum is designed to accelerate learning while ensuring clarity for every student. With this method, students can reach a level of self-learning without the need for additional tuition. The decision to implement this updated, 21st-century-oriented Hipath education system reflects the school's commitment to Quality Education." On this occasion, TRSMA State Working President Peddapalli Kishan Rao attended as the chief guest and inaugurated the books. Trainers from CMS, Lucknow—Pragya Mishra and Bushra Rasheed Khan—provided training to teachers on modern teaching methodologies. The event was attended by TRSMA District General Secretary Tirupati, Ganesh Biswas, Omprakash, along with school management, teachers, students, and parents.

# Change is needed... Revanth must go Delay in filling nominated posts is to remove me



Decision according to fans' thoughts Former Minister Jeevan Reddy's sensational comments on Congress' Jagtial Correspondent, "April 3 (Indian Chronicle): Former Minister Tatiparthi Jeevan Reddy made key comments, saying that if people demanded change after 10 years saying "Change is needed... KCR must go", now after just 2 years, the sentiment in the state is that change is needed and Revanth must go." "After leaving Congress, Jeevan Reddy's comments on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy are causing a stir in Telangana. He criticized Revanth Reddy's negligence in project matters. He said it's clear that the delay in filling government nominated posts is to trouble him and remove him." "Speaking to reporters in Jagtial on Friday, Jeevan Reddy strongly criticized the Congress leadership, saying that they are filling nominated posts because he is no longer in Congress. He expressed sorrow over not being able to appoint his associate Mara Gangareddy as Jagtial Market Committee Chairman despite CM approval." "Jeevan Reddy said Kaleshwaram project is not just for North Telangana but for the entire state, criticizing the government's negligence in water utilization. He faulted the CM's stance on not even designing to utilize Pranahita river waters and allocating just ₹152 crores in the budget." "He said it's surprising that Union Water Resources Minister Patil mentioned in Parliament that Kaleshwaram project lost ₹1 lakh crore, stating that Medigadda, Annaram, and Sundilla barrages are just a part of it, and restoring the three barrages would cost around ₹500 crores." "Jeevan Reddy lashed out at the CM for not taking action to restore Medigadda despite the National Safety Authority submitting a report a year ago. He said it's unfortunate that Union Minister Kishan Reddy criticizes instead of thinking constructively about water utilization." "Jeevan Reddy said Telangana society won't forgive the government if it doesn't constructively handle barrage restoration. He said he'll decide which party to join based on his fans' thoughts and thanked BJP and BRS leaders for their affection." "BRS to welcome Jeevan Reddy?" "Given Jeevan Reddy's criticism of the government's handling of project restoration and Medigadda's collapse, there are indications he might join BRS. Discussions are ripping in Jagtial that Jeevan Reddy will hold an open meeting in Jagtial in a week or 10 days and join BRS with thousands of fans in KCR's presence." "Around 2,000 people resigned from Congress along with Jeevan Reddy on March 25. Speculations are that he's waiting for the right time and platform after discussing with workers and fans about which party to join.

# Development Gains Momentum in Ramanthapur – 60 Lakh Sanctioned for Trunk Line Works

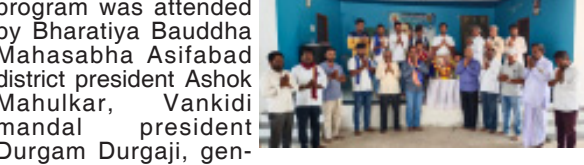
---Milk Abhishekam performed to CM Revanth Reddy's portrait under the leadership of Division Congress President Mohammed Rafeeq. "KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 3 (Indian Chronicle): "A major step has been taken towards resolving the long-pending drainage trunk line issue in Indra Nagar, Ramanthapur Division, which has troubled residents for several years. Locals expressed heartfelt gratitude to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for promptly recognizing the issue and responding with immediate action. "An amount of ₹60 lakh has been sanctioned for the trunk line works from Satyanarayana Swamy Temple to Markandeya Swamy Temple in Indra Nagar, bringing much-needed relief to the area." "On this occasion, Congress party workers of Ramanthapur Division and residents of Indra Nagar, under the leadership of Division President Mohammed Rafeeq, performed a milk abhishekam to the



portrait of CM Revanth Reddy and distributed sweets to celebrate the development. "The locals also extended special thanks to Uppal Congress Party In-charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy for taking the initiative to bring the issue to the Chief Minister's attention and ensuring the sanction of funds. "TPCC representative Mohammed Tofeeq, Medchal-Malkajgiri District General Secretary Jaleel Pasha, Uppendur Reddy, Division Working President Vallapu Srikanth Yadav, Poosa Sattaiah, Satyanarayana, Bokka Suresh, Bhaskar, Adinarayana Goud, Mogli Lingam, Shag Sridhar, Muthyala Jangaiah, Samuel, Laghu Sani Srinivas Goud, Narasimha, Sandhyarani, Gayatri Goud, Ambika, Monga Shobha, Tulasi, Asma Begum, Varalakshmi, Sunitha, Cable Ashok, Muthyala Babu, MD Shakeel, MD Mateen, MD Nayeem, Poosa Mallikarjun, Poosa Balaraj, Chintu Gautham, Kashamalla Shankar, Chintu, Suri, Icon Swami, Madhu and others participated in the program.

# Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Death Anniversary Observed at Jetwan Buddha Vihar

"Indian Chronicle. Jade Srinivas. April, 03." "The 346th death anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was observed with reverence on Friday at Jetwan Buddha Vihar in Vankidi mandal headquarters. On this occasion, floral tributes were paid to the portrait of Shivaji Maharaj. "Following this, Trisharan, Panchsheel, and Buddha Vandana were recited by the participants. Speakers on the occasion praised Shivaji Maharaj as a ??? leader who ruled beyond caste and religious barriers and stood for justice and self-respect. "They highlighted his courageous struggle for the protection of the nation and the dignity of its people, describing his legacy as inspiring and unforgettable. "The program was attended by Bharatiya Bauddha Mahasabha Asifabad district president Ashok Mahulkar, Vankidi mandal president Durgam Durgaji, general secretary Vijay Upre, Ambedkar Sangham vice president Durgam Sunil Kumar, along with Durgam Dondaji Shyam Rao, Pratap Rantenke, Mot Maharaj Shyam Rao, Lahuki Durge, Rajeshwar Upre, Buddhist followers Panduji, leaders Balwant and Prakash, and Samata Sainik Dal youth members Swagat, Prashanth, Tirupati, Suresh, Praveen, Palakrao, and Prasad Vekati, among others."



# Two youths killed as car rams parked lorry on Karimnagar bypass



Speeding vehicle crashes into roadside truck near Bommakal flyover; two injured, one critical. Khaja Sikander

Mohiuddin Staff Reporter, Indian Chronicle Karimnagar, April 03: Two youths were killed and two others sustained injuries after the car they were travelling in ramed into a stationary lorry on the Karimnagar bypass road near Bommakal flyover late on Thursday night. The deceased were identified as Syed Abdul Rahman (19) and Athiyab Hussain (21), who died on the spot due to the impact of the collision. The injured include Md. Adnan, who sustained grievous injuries and is stated to be in a critical condition, and Md. Abrar, who reportedly jumped out of the vehicle and suffered minor injuries.

According to the police, the car, allegedly travelling at high speed, crashed into a lorry that had been parked along the roadside. The force of the impact left the vehicle severely mangled, trapping the occupants inside. Local residents alerted the authorities and helped shift the injured to a nearby hospital. A case has been registered, and an investigation is under way to ascertain the exact circumstances leading to the accident, including possible negligence in parking the heavy vehicle without adequate warning signs. The incident has once again raised concerns over road safety on the Karimnagar bypass, where improper parking of heavy vehicles continues to pose a serious hazard to motorists."

# MLA Medipally Satyam Unveils Poster for Babu Jagjivan Ram Jayanti Celebrations Appeals for participation beyond political affiliations.

Khaja Sikander Mohiuddin Staff Reporter, Indian Chronicle Karimnagar, April 03: Choppadandi MLA and Karimnagar DCC president Medipally Satyam on Friday unveiled the poster for the 119th birth anniversary celebrations of former Deputy Prime Minister Babu Jagjivan Ram at the R&B Guest House in Karimnagar. The programme was attended by the Additional Collector, Police Commissioner, Revenue Divisional Officer, and several Dalit leaders.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Satyam urged leaders and members of Dalit organizations, along with people from all sections of society, to participate in large numbers in the official celebrations to be held on April 5 at Jagjivan Ram Chowrasta near the Civil Hospital. The event is being organised under the aegis of the Telangana government.

He said the celebrations would commence at 9 a.m. and are expected to be attended by Members of Parliament, Ministers, MLAs, MLCs, and public representatives from various political parties. Emphasising inclusivity, he appealed for participation beyond political affiliations. Among



those present were organising committee members, including executive president Gantala Renuka and chairman Kyadasi Prabhakar, along with several Dalit leaders. [16:18, 3/4/2026] +91 93907 69610: End

# Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge Parameshwar Reddy Inspects Renovation Works of Mallela Maisamma Temple

MPR announces temple reopening likely next week. "KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 3 (Indian Chronicle): "With the renovation works of the Mallela Maisamma Temple in Lakshminarayana Colony, Ramanthapur nearing completion, final beautification and finishing touches are currently underway. "Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Parameshwar Reddy stated that the temple is likely to be reopened next week. On Friday, he visited and inspected the ongoing reconstruction works being carried out by the residents of Lakshminarayana Colony, who have taken up the project with great dedication. "During his visit, Parameshwar Reddy closely reviewed the progress of the work within the temple premises as well as the surrounding development activities. He interacted with colony association members to understand the current status of the works. As the reconstruction is almost complete, he, along with local residents, examined the remaining pending works. He also spoke with the artisans present at the site to assess what tasks are yet to be finished and the time required for their completion. He offered several suggestions to ensure the temple is completed in an aesthetically pleasing and well-structured manner. "Colony President Lucas, along with members Nageswara Rao, Madhu Babu, Ramulu, Misala Surender Reddy, Pratibha, Srinu, Sudhakar Nagaraju, Brahmachari, RTC Kumar, Bhaskar, Achi Reddy, Srihari, Chari, and Keshava Reddy, participated in the program.



# CMRF is a Boon for Poor and Middle-Class People— Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 3 (Indian Chronicle): "Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, In-charge of Uppal Constituency, stated that the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) has become a great support for poor and middle-class people. He said that under the Congress government, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is ensuring that medical bills under CMRF are cleared on time for all eligible beneficiaries. "On Friday, Parameshwar Reddy distributed CMRF cheques to beneficiaries from the Uppal constituency. On this occasion, cheques were handed over as follows: "Satyam – ₹1,30,000, Rajendra Prasad – ₹60,000, Afreena Sultana – ₹20,000, "Diravath Balaji – ₹39,000, Shalini – ₹35,000, "Sonti Reddy Gaal Reddy – ₹32,000, "Satvik Reddy – ₹40,000, Choudarpalli Padma – ₹23,000. Senior Congress leaders including Akkati Agam Reddy, Bazar Jagannath Goud, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Venkat Reddy, Gaddam Yadagiri, Vittal Naik, Prakash Reddy, Pasiganti Nagaraju, Sharifuddin, Uma, Manchala Raghu, Ratna Reddy, Rangula Shekhar, and other leaders participated in the program.

## S.B.I.T. Attahasanga Arohan in Lo - 26“Students making noise with games“D.R.D.O. was present as the chief guest. D.G.Yam. Ramaswami“



Khammam Y.B.I.T. Arohan - 2026, which was organized in the Autonomous College, was a grand celebration of the students. On this occasion, students presented more than 40 projects in the college and fully explained their performance. First Arohan program was organized by DRDO. Ramaswamy Soundaryarajan, D.G.M., Deputy General Manager, Bharat Dynamics Limited, was present as the chief guest and started the event. " On this occasion, Ramaswamy said in the program that started with a welcome dance, he said that in the current era of artificial intelligence, the right answer to artificial intelligence is human intelligence in the context of job security and concern about jobs. He said that if new inventions are made using human intelligence, the student will have a bright future. Similarly,

in the current era, drone technology serves multiple purposes. Students are advised to focus on this topic and make new innovations. " Chairman of the college Gundala Krishna who presided over the program said that keeping the future of the students in mind, the college has set up an innovation cell for new innovations. He said that the students are participating in national level competitions like Hyakadhan and Ideadhan and achieving the best results. He said that the reason for this is that they provide training in accordance with the technology that is changing day by day. " College Secretary and Correspondent Dr. G. Dhatri said that it is a matter of pride for the college to present the project expo on the occasion of Arohan 2026 with the students coming up with their own ideas and new ideas that will be useful for the future generations. Vice-Chairman K. Sri Chaitanya said that organizing this Arohan Inaugural Festival in Robotics will showcase the technological prowess of the college. " College Principal Dr. G. Rajkumar said that around 70 students from other colleges participated in the Arohan 2026 Technical Fest and showed their competitive spirit. He revealed that the prize was given to the students who won this competition. "Impressive Project Expo:"40 projects showcased by students impressed the guests during Arohan 2026 Technical Expo. On this occasion, the guests appreciated the details like what kind of technical approach was adopted by the students in their explanation from the beginning. "Later, the students participated in the technical competitions held in various engineering departments such as Code Debugging, Circuitry, Quiz, Young Manager, Power Point Presentation. Mementos and certificates were given to the winning students in these competitions.

"Cultural events entertained:"Khammam, S.B.I.T. On the occasion of the Arohan Technical Fest organized in the college on Friday, the games performed by the students impressed many. They mesmerized the audience by performing classical, Western, break and other dances. Similarly, students were entertained with group dances. All in all, the Arohan 2026 program ended with a bang and a happy ending for the students. " In this program, academic directors of the college, Gundala Praveen Kumar, Gandham Srinivasa Rao, Dr. A.V.V. Shiva Prasad, heads of various departments, teachers, students and others participated.

## Grand Felicitation to Newly Elected Uppal Media Club Committee"— BRS leaders Pilli Nagaraju Mudiraj and Jitender Reddy extend congratulations“



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 3 (Indian Chronicle):"The newly elected committee of the Uppal Media Club (Print & Electronic Media), which stands as a symbol of media unity in the Uppal region, was grandly felicitated on Friday under the leadership of President Vaddepalli Kishore. The event was held at the office of senior BRS leader Pilli Nagaraju Mudiraj. "Speaking on the occasion, BRS leaders Pilli Nagaraju Mudiraj and Pudoori Jitender Reddy emphasized that the media plays a crucial role in society. They stated that the responsibility of bringing public issues to light lies with the media, and added that stronger unity among media professionals would ensure greater justice for the people. They congratulated the newly appointed committee members and advised them to uphold honesty in delivering news and contribute to the development of society."Uppal Media Club President Vaddepalli Kishore and General Secretary Anand Narasimha Reddy also spoke at the event. They highlighted that the strength of the organization lies in unity and collective effort. They



expressed confidence that by working together, members can provide more effective services to the public. They further stated that initiatives would be undertaken in the future to enhance the reputation of the media. "Several media representatives and local leaders participated in the program.

## Center and State Governments Fail to Implement Crop Insurance Scheme““Implement Crop Insurance Scheme in the State, says CPI National Executive Member Chada Venkat Reddy““

BC Association Leaders Submit Petition to Venkat Reddy, Demand Compensation for Crop Loss" Jagithyal Correspondent , April 3 (Indian Chronicle): "CPI National Executive Member and former MLA Chada Venkat Reddy has urged the government to provide compensation to farmers who have suffered crop losses due to unseasonal rains in 98 mandals of North Telangana, affecting 42,824 acres of crops. "On Friday, when Venkat Reddy visited Jagithyal, BC Association leaders submitted a petition to him, led by state secretary Musipatla Laxminarayana. "Venkat Reddy stated that the sudden rains have caused significant losses to farmers, and the state government should conduct surveys and provide ₹25,000 per acre as compensation. The BC Association demands that the government take immediate action to implement the crop insurance scheme and support the affected farmers. "The crops affected include mango, paddy, maize, sesame, turmeric, and vegetables. The paddy stored in IKP centers has also been damaged, leaving farmers in distress. Venkat Reddy urged Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to take immediate action to support the farmers. "Those who submitted the petition include



Laxminarayana, TV Satyam, Sankoji Venkatramana, Are Shankar, Hrishikesh, Salwer Rajesham, Pindere Shraavan, Papanka Srinivas, Dhatrika Srinivas, Raparthi Ravi, and Bandela Mallayya.

## BRS State Leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj Participates in Good Friday Special Prayers



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 3 (Indian Chronicle):"On the occasion of Good Friday, special prayer celebrations were organized by Pastor Tejomai at Srinagar Colony in Beerappa Gadda Division. BRS State Leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj attended the event as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, Praveen Mudiraj said that Good Friday marks the day when Jesus Christ was crucified under the orders of Roman governor Pontius Pilate after being persecuted by Jewish rulers. He described it as a spiritual day to express gratitude for the sacrifice of Jesus



Christ. He added that Christians observe this day with great devotion, remembering the crucifixion of Jesus, and that it falls on the Friday before Easter Sunday as a symbol of his sacrifice for the redemption of humanity's sins. Marking the occasion, he joined church members in cutting a cake and extended advance Easter greetings to everyone, wishing that the blessings of Lord Jesus be upon all people. BRS senior leaders Kokonda Jagan, Balakrishna Goud, Muddam Srinivas Yadav, Shyam, Banti Goud, Balu, Chinna, Pastor Tejomai, Set Track, church servants, and others participated in the program.

## Corruption leeches in the Warangal Registration Office

---Raids conducted in the registration office under the supervision of Warangal ACB DSP Sambayya "----₹24.16 lakh in cash, 819.500 grams of gold ornaments, 2.6 kg of silver, Kapil Chits fixed deposits worth ₹30.10 lakh seized "Devulapalli Srinivas, Warangal Bureau, April 3 (Indian Chronicle): A massive corruption scandal has come to light during surprise raids conducted by the ACB on the Warangal Sub-Registrar Office (SRO) and the residences of officials. After inspections at the office on Thursday, officials carried out searches at the homes of the officers on Friday. During these searches, ₹24 lakh in cash, large quantities of gold and silver were seized. Savings certificates worth ₹30 lakh were also confiscated. "Officials analyzing WhatsApp messages from brokers (document writers) found evidence that approximately ₹42.03 lakh had been transferred to sub-registrars via PhonePe over the past year. Based on these details, simultaneous raids were conducted at the officials' residences and assets were seized. "Only document writers wield unofficial authority. These officials themselves encouraged their involvement. When one thinks of a registration office, document writers immediately come to mind. Due to the entrenched system of document writers, it has become impossible for ordinary citizens to get work done without paying bribes. The recent ACB raids in Warangal revealed shocking facts. "During the raids led by Warangal ACB DSP Sambayya, it was found that corruption was rampant. By seizing the mobile phones of some document writers and examining WhatsApp chats, the role of registration officials was exposed. It was revealed that both Sub-Registrar 1 and 2 in the Warangal office were collecting bribes through these intermediaries. SROs Jamalapuram Ramanarasimha Rao and Davuluri Anand were found to have collected up to ₹42 lakh in bribes in a year through document writers-cum-agents. The SROs instructed agents via WhatsApp on how much money to collect for property registration transactions. The agents collected the money accordingly and handed it over to the officials. "Additionally, around 20 document writers were identified in the registration office. Even after registration was completed, officials were withholding documents instead of issuing them. In fact, the document writer system had been abolished earlier, yet it continues to dominate the office unofficially. Only files routed through them are processed, while citizens are unable to access services directly for property transactions.



It is noteworthy that ACB received complaints that work in the Warangal registration office proceeds smoothly only if it comes through document writers. The practice of them signing documents still continues. Concerns are being raised that if these unofficially dominant document writers are not controlled, arbitrary collections will continue. "ACB officials identified 204 documents during the raids that were allegedly held back on the pretext that bribes were not paid. Meanwhile, special ACB teams conducted searches at the houses of both SROs. At Anand's residence, ₹24.16 lakh in cash, 819.500 grams of gold ornaments, 2.6 kg of silver, and Kapil Chits fixed deposits worth ₹30.10 lakh were seized. It is reported that a comprehensive report by the investigating officials will be submitted to the government.

## BJP Leaders Burn Effigy of Uppal MLA Condemning Inappropriate Remarks



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 3 (Indian Chronicle):"Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders staged a protest by burning the effigy of Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, strongly condemning his alleged inappropriate remarks regarding the Uppal-Narapally Elevated Corridor. "Under the leadership of Ramanthapur Division President Vangala Santosh Gupta, BJP leaders organized a rally on the main road near Ramanthapur Public School and carried out the effigy burning as a mark of protest. Speaking on the occasion, the leaders questioned the legitimacy of the MLA's victory, alleging that it was achieved by misleading voters through the distribution of money. They asserted that former MLA Prabhakar had consistently stood by the people and played a key role in bringing the Uppal-Narapally Elevated Corridor project. "They challenged Bandari Lakshma Reddy to resign from his post and face re-election, stating that the BJP would demonstrate its strength in a fair contest. The leaders demanded that he immediately withdraw his remarks and issue an apology to former MLA Prabhakar. "They also strongly objected to naming the elevated corridor after individuals who, according to them, had no connection to the project. Instead, they urged the government to name the Uppal-Narapally Elevated Corridor after former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. "Several BJP leaders and party members participated in the protest, including former corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkat Rao, Burra Rajeshwar, Mutthineni Jagadish, Thalla Balakrishna Goud, Vemula Somashekar Goud, Bandi Padma, Gaddam Sai Kiran, Kompalli Upender, Ravinder Reddy, Raghupathi Goud, Geetha Sadineni, Darshanala Sudhakar, Sankuri Kumaraswamy, Ellachari, Chintakinda Praveen, Vemula

Venkanna Goud, Narayanadasu, Thammali Ravi, Palugula Anjaiah Patel, Maheshwar Reddy, Konderu Sravanthi, Suvarna Shinde, Elitam Narasimha Reddy, Haribabu, Ramesh, Parvathalu, Shiva, Jetta Dheeraj, Suresh, Ramulu, and others.

## Congress Leader Irshad Khan Participates in Good Friday Prayers at Calvary Baptist Church



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 3 (Indian Chronicle):"On the occasion of the holy Good Friday, senior Congress leader Irshad Khan (Uppal Khan) participated in a special prayer program held at Calvary Baptist Church in Srinagar Colony, Beerappagadda Division. "During the occasion, he joined Christian brothers and sisters in prayers, remembering the sacrifice of Lord Jesus Christ. In his address, he stated that Good Friday reminds us of the great values of love, sacrifice, forgiveness, and service to humanity. He also extended Good Friday wishes to the women who attended the church and distributed gifts to them. Later, he received blessings from Church Pastor Rev. Manohar Janu and prayed for peace, harmony, and development in society. "Others who participated in the program included Illuri Prasad, Raju Badithi, Arun Janu, Shashank Samuel, Shraavan, and Joshi.

# Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Dr. P. Sreeja stated that everyone should take inspiration from the life ideals of Doddhi Komuraiah.



“Arvapalli Nagesh Khammam Bureau April 3, (Indian Chronicle):”“On Friday, she participated in the birth anniversary celebrations of Doddhi Komuraiah organized by the District Backward Classes Development Department at Lakarum Tank Bund. On the occasion, she paid floral tributes to the statue of Doddhi Komuraiah. “Speaking at the event, Dr. Sreeja said that Doddhi Komuraiah holds a permanent place in history as the first martyr of the Telangana Armed Struggle. She ??????? that his courage, sacrifice, and fight for social justice continue to inspire people. She added that he fought against political and social injustices

and made unforgettable sacrifices for the rights of farmers and the welfare of the poor. District BC Welfare Officer G. Jyothi, Telangana District Gouda Association President Katti Nehru Goud, BC leaders Kurakula Nagabhushanam, Kuruma Association District President Mayara Gangayya, Honorary Advisor Chavalla Nageswara Rao, Kodi Lingayya, Chittaru Indumathi, Goode Mallayya, Bhukya Shobha Naik, Koripalli Srinivas, Pelluri Vijay Kumar, Sadiq Ali, Mekala Suguna Rao, Chavala Nagaraju, Moodumuntala Gangaraju, Tammarapu Brahmaiah, officials, and others participated in the program.”

# Gram Sabha under the "99 Days Praja Palana Pragathi Plan" Initiative by the Bhadradi Kothagudem District Medical and Health Department.



“Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Bhadradi Kothagudem Staff Reporter, April 03, Indian Chronicle: Dr. Tukaram Rathod, the District Medical and Health Officer (DM&HO) of Bhadradi Kothagudem, participated today in a Gram Sabha (village assembly) held under the "99 Days Praja Palana Pragathi Plan" initiative at the Old RDO Office in Palvancha town. Speaking to the attendees at the Gram Sabha on this occasion, Dr. Tukaram Rathod provided com-

prehensive awareness regarding public health. He emphasized, in particular, the absolute necessity of strictly adhering to both personal hygiene and environmental cleanliness. Furthermore, he detailed the precautionary measures that need to be taken to prevent seasonal fevers and infectious diseases. Similarly, he suggested that adopting a healthy lifestyle could help prevent numerous ailments. He also educated the public about the various health programs being implemented by the Telangana government for the health and welfare of its citizens. He advised the public to pay special attention to key areas such as the prevention of mosquito-borne diseases, the consumption of clean drinking water, and maintaining a clean environment. The event was attended by Dr. T. Pratap, Program Officer (CHI); Dr. Devender Rajput, Medical Officer at PHC Ulvanuru; and other relevant health department staff. The Gram Sabha was conducted successfully, marked by the active participation of the public. Through this initiative, vital health-related messages were effectively conveyed to the community.

# Census Operations in the District Must Be Conducted Comprehensively—Collector Ankit.

“Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Bhadradi Kothagudem Staff Reporter, April 03, Indian Chronicle: District Collector Ankit instructed officials to conduct the national census program in the district in a comprehensive and meticulous manner. He emphasized that the census process must cover every household, ensuring the collection of accurate data without any errors. As part of the national census program, a three-day training workshop for field trainers was conducted at the District IDOC office from April 1st to 3rd. Presided over by the collector, this training program provided the staff working at the field level with a comprehensive understanding of all necessary aspects of the census operations. Serving as Master Trainers during the session, N. Sivaramakrishna and Dr. P. Susmitha Rajini provided detailed training to a total of 34 field trainees on various topics, including census methodology, house listing procedures, precautions to be observed during data collection, and the utilization of digital tools. As part of the training cur-

riculum, a practical demonstration was conducted on the third day in the Palakoya Thanda area. The field trainees were taken to the field to observe a live demonstration of the door-to-door data collection process. On this occasion, the house listing exercise for the very first household was conducted in the presence of Collector Ankit (IAS). This demonstration provided the field trainees with valuable hands-on experience. Speaking on the occasion, the collector remarked that the information collected during the census is crucial for the formulation of government policies. Therefore, he advised that every detail be recorded meticulously and that duties be discharged responsibly, without any negligence. He directed that data collection be undertaken while interacting courteously with the public and providing them with the necessary information. Census district officials, CPO Sanjeeva Rao, and other concerned officers participated in this program. Subsequently, the training session continued.”

# The Graduation Day celebrations were held in a grand manner at Triveni School in Khammam city, said Dr. Gollapudi Veerendra Choudary, Director of Triveni Educational Institutions.

Avnreddy Khammam Town Reporter April 3, (Indian Chronicle):”“The event was organized for primary school students who successfully completed their education, and the management congratulated all graduating students. “Dr. S. Rambabu, Assistant Professor of Physics at SR & BGNR Government Degree College, attended the 5th-grade graduation ceremony as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, he said that young children have very sensitive minds, and education should be imparted in a joyful, stress-free environment without causing mental pressure. “He emphasized that parents should spend quality time with their children and instill human values and moral principles from an early age.

He noted that both teachers and parents share the responsibility of shaping a child’s character. He also encouraged students to develop a scientific approach to learning. Dr. Rambabu highlighted the crucial role of teachers in a child’s growth and appreciated their contribution in guiding students to complete their foundational education. “The cultural performances presented by the children captivated the audience. Later, graduation certificates were distributed to the students. “The program was attended by Krishna Veni, Director of Triveni Educational Institutions,



Yarlagadda Venkateswara Rao, School Principal Rajendra Prasad, CRO Katragadda Muralikrishna, Vice Principal Swapna, Mustafa, Campus In-charge Charles, Transport In-charge Sandeep, along with teachers, students, and parents.

# Doddi Komuraiah 99th Birth Anniversary Celebrated by Venkat Reddy Nagar Kuruma Sangham



Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President Aakarapu Arun Patel Participates”“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 3 (Indian Chronicle):”“The 99th birth anniversary of Doddhi Komuraiah, the first martyr of the Telangana Armed Peasant Struggle, was celebrated grandly under the leadership of the Venkat Reddy Nagar

Kuruma Sangham. Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President Aakarapu Arun Patel participated in the event. “Speaking on the occasion, Arun Patel said that Doddhi Komuraiah was a courageous leader who ignited the spirit of revolution on Telangana soil and sacrificed his life fighting against the oppressive rule of the Nizam. He stated that the drops of blood shed by Komuraiah have today become a symbol of awareness and inspiration across Telangana. He paid rich tributes to the great leader on his birth anniversary and said, “At a time when people were forced to live in submission, he inspired them to rise, resist, and stand against injustice. His sacrifice will remain a lasting inspiration.” The program was attended by President Gotike Sattaiah Kuruma, General Secretary Siddala Suresh Kuruma, Treasurer Bodapatla Ellayya, former President Allam Komaraiah, Gudu Guntha Venkatesh, Chevella Balayya Babu, Chevella Krishna, Kemidi Narasimha, Gutika Siddiraju, Palla Balayya, Jangaiah, Lulu, Oggu Siddulu, Gummula Bhanu, Gummula Ashok, Gaddam Suresh, Gaddam Mahesh, Gaddam Ramesh, Chetkuri Dinesh, Vaira Seenu, Bhaskar, Sandeep, Naveen, Meka Praveen, Gudu Guntha Mallesh, Gaddam Naresh, Ramakrishna, Bhaskar, and others.

# The birth anniversary of Telangana peasant struggle hero and martyr Doddhi Komuraiah was observed with great reverence under the leadership of the Khammam city BRS party.



“Arvapalli Nagesh Khammam Bureau April 3, (Indian Chronicle):”“On this occasion, party leaders and members paid floral tributes to his statue at Lakarum Tank Bund in Khammam city. “Speaking to the media after the program, Khammam city BRS President Pagadala Nagaraju, Corporation Floor Leader Karnati Krishna, former DCCB Chairman Kurakula Nagabhushanam, and former District Library Chairman Khamar said that Doddhi Komuraiah was a ?????????? (great personality) who dedicated his life to the Telangana farmers’ struggle. They praised him as a brave warrior who sacrificed his life fighting against an oppressive regime for the rights of farmers. They emphasized that everyone should remember the ideals of Doddhi Komuraiah, who fought for farmers, workers, and the poor in Telangana. They called upon the youth to follow his path and stand against injustice in society.



The leaders also criticized the government, stating that it has completely failed in addressing public issues in Telangana. They alleged that farmers, unemployed youth, and poor people are facing numerous hardships, but the government is not responding adequately. They stressed that leaders should have the courage to fight for the people, taking inspiration from Komuraiah’s sacrifices. They further stated that the TRS party continues to stand by the people and strives to resolve their problems. “Several leaders and party members, including Advocate JAC leader Bichchala Tirumala, Khammam city BC Cell President Mekala Suguna Rao, Mathuru Lakshminarayana, City Publicity Secretary Shakeena, Bojjedla Ram Mohan, BRTU leaders MD Pasha, Chinna Mallesham, Kuruma Arampula Veerabhadram, Sattar Miya, Usman Nemali Kishore, Kudurupaka Narsaiah, Rafi, Asif, Mote Kumar, Phani Krishna, Pidathala Rammurthy, Thodeti Lingaraju, Madhavi, Pole Ponga Venkat, Pittala Tirumal, Sajid, Kompalli Nagaraju, Swami, and others participated in the program.

## 48-hour shifts, harassment claims: Resident doctors flag crisis in Maharashtra colleges



GNS News Agency, April 3

Resident doctors across Maharashtra have raised alarm over what they describe as a deepening crisis in government medical colleges, citing extreme working hours, delayed stipends, harassment, and inadequate infrastructure that they say is pushing many to the brink in a letter to the Medical Education and Drugs Department, the Maharashtra Senior Resident Doctor Association (MSRDA) has flagged a series of systemic failures affecting senior resident doctors across Government Medical Colleges in the state.

"Senior resident doctors form the backbone of tertiary patient care in Government Medical Colleges and Hospitals, working relentlessly in OPDs, wards, ICUs and emergency services. Despite this, several administrative shortcomings are severely affecting their professional and personal well-being," the letter states. Dr Atharva Shinde, National Executive, FAIMA (Federation of All India Medical Association); President of Rajiv Gandhi Medical College, Thane; and spokesperson, Central MARD, said the scale of the crisis is far larger than is publicly acknowledged. "In Maharashtra, there are around 7,500 resident doctors in government medical colleges, about 2,200 in semi-government institutions, and around 1,200 in deemed colleges. Nearly 65% of resident doctors are experiencing mental harassment, largely driven by excessive working hours. In most government medical colleges, on-call shifts stretch up to 48 hours or even 56 hours at a stretch, without a break. This can happen once, twice, or even three times a week

depending on patient load," he said.

One of the allegations raised by resident doctors relates to coercion during thesis completion. "Doctors on anonymity have alleged that some Heads of Department (HODs), who act as thesis guides, misuse their authority. "They threaten residents with withholding signatures required for thesis completion. Without that, the candidate cannot appear for exams or receive their degree," said one of the resident doctors from Latur. In some cases, doctors alleged, residents are forced to perform personal tasks. "We are asked to do personal chores such as bringing laundry, handling school-related work, even picking up and dropping children," the doctor from Latur said. There are also allegations of monetary demands ranging from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 3 lakh being made for approvals, along with additional payments for postings or academic clearances.

Alongside workload and harassment, infrastructure remains a major concern. "Hospitals are heavily overcrowded and infrastructure is underdeveloped. Hostel facilities are inadequate. Rooms meant for two residents often house six to seven. For someone who has worked 38 to 46 hours at a stretch, coming back to a room where they cannot even sleep creates tremendous mental pressure. The crisis is also reflected in extreme outcomes. In Maharashtra, on average, there are 15 to 20 suicides of resident doctors every year," Dr Shinde said. To address the culture of fear, resident doctors have proposed the creation of an anonymous grievance redressal system. "We suggested an 'Abhay Portal' where residents can file complaints anonymously.

A committee including representatives from resident associations can verify and act on these complaints. The proposal was discussed with the Joint Director of DMER but has not yet been implemented," Dr Shinde said. According to MSRDA, stipend payments for senior resident doctors are also delayed across multiple government medical colleges. Beyond financial concerns, doctors have raised alarm over the absence of a standardised leave policy. Currently, there are no clear, statewide guidelines on casual or special leave for senior resident doctors. The association has demanded the implementation of minimum leave provisions, 12 casual leaves per year and 20 special leaves per year.

## 'Report child pregnancies or face action': Karnataka issues stern mandate for all hospitals to initiate Pocso cases

GNS News Agency, April 3

Karnataka has issued guidelines for all hospitals to report cases of pregnancy among girls below the age of 18 to facilitate the initiation of criminal proceedings under Pocso Act. Karnataka has issued guidelines for all hospitals to report cases of pregnancy among girls below the age of 18 to facilitate the initiation of criminal proceedings under Pocso Act. The Karnataka Government has issued guidelines for all hospitals in the state to report cases of pregnancy among girls below the age of 18 to facilitate the initiation of criminal proceedings under the Protection of Children against Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act, 2012. According to the guidelines issued by the director of the state Health and Family Welfare Department on April 1, if any case of child pregnancy is registered in a private hospital, it is mandatory for the concerned doctor to immediately inform the nearest Special Juvenile Justice Police Unit or local police station.

"Legal action will be taken against doctors and private hospitals who fail to report cases," stated the guidelines that will come into effect immediately. The failure to report incidents of child pregnancies would result in imprisonment for a term of up to one year and a fine, said the guidelines issued to state hospitals and the Indian Medical Association (IMA). Under the Pocso Act, cases of pregnancy in girls below the age of 18 are serious cases that must be legally reported. Section 19(1) of the Act stipulates that any per-



son who is aware that a crime has been committed under the Act should provide details to the special juvenile police unit or the local police. On obtaining knowledge of child pregnancies, "the child helpline number 1098 should be called immediately, and information should be provided," which "will enable necessary protective and rehabilitation measures to be taken," say the guidelines. All hospitals in the state have been directed to record details of Pocso cases, to ensure proper storage of medical records for legal purposes, maintain patient confidentiality, and cooperate with investigations. "All private hospitals should create awareness among their doctors and staff about the provisions of the Pocso Act. Steps should be taken to ensure that these instructions are strictly followed," the guidelines stated.

## From Yale to pop singer: Chandigarh artist Ipsitaa challenges inequality through song



GNS News Agency, April 3

Chandigarh-born singer-songwriter Ipsitaa has made a powerful statement with her feminist pop anthem Burn It Down. Released around International Women's Day, the track has already drawn more than 2.6 million views in just three weeks, resonating with audiences for its bold mix of music, dance, and protest. Ipsitaa describes the project as a tribute to "the quiet survivors: the women who carry entire worlds on their backs without a headline to their name."

The lyrics speak of cages, walls, and expectations imposed on women, culminating in the defiant hook, "Now watch me burn it down," a declaration of resistance and reclamation. The music video unfolds as a story of revolt: a young girl reaching for safety, a woman led toward execution, and a collective uprising that transforms dance into protest. Through these images, womanhood is portrayed not as fragility but as endurance, memory, labour, and fire. In the song, Ipsitaa, who holds a Yale degree in Economics and Psychology and an MSc in Behavioural Science from the London School of Economics, highlights the project's deeper concern with how patriarchal systems shape behaviour and normalise inequality. The video closes with stark global statistics on violence against women, girls' education, and unpaid care work, grounding its symbolism in lived reality.

Before turning to music and acting full-time, she worked as a behavioural scientist with Common Thread, a global social and behaviour change (SBC) organisation, contributing to projects in partnership with Unicef and the Gates Foundation. She also worked with the World Bank, where she led efforts to apply behavioural science to

education, using storytelling and entertainment as tools for public engagement and behaviour change. Musically, Burn It Down blends pop energy with cinematic storytelling, positioning Ipsitaa not just as a performer but as an artist using her voice to challenge norms and spark change. It is both a protest song and an anthem of reclamation, showing how art can confront systems of inequality and inspire collective resistance. Ipsitaa's earlier release, Honey & Thunder, released in 2025, was an extended play exploring themes of love, longing, and personal relationships.

## Hyderabad Police warn against chemically ripened mangoes in city markets

GNS News Agency, April 3

Hyderabad: With mangoes flooding city markets this summer, Hyderabad Police have issued a public advisory cautioning consumers against chemically ripened fruits that pose serious health risks. Taking to social media on Friday, City Police Commissioner V. C. Sajjanar said some traders were illegally using substances like calcium carbide to artificially ripen mangoes for quick profits. "Such fruits often appear uniformly bright and attractive but may be unsafe for consumption," he said. The commissioner noted that naturally ripened mangoes usually have uneven colouring, while chemically treated ones tend to look overly glossy, yellowish on the outside and unripe inside.

Medical experts warn that consuming such fruits can cause throat irritation, stomach disorders, vomiting and diarrhoea, besides long-term health complications affecting the nervous and respiratory systems.

The city police, along with food safety teams, are conducting inspections under the H-Fast initiative and initiating legal action against violators. Citizens have been advised to remain vigilant and avoid fruits with unnatural colour, chemical odour or unusual taste. Report suspected cases of adulteration by dialling 100 or contacting the H-Fast helpline at 8712661212.

## 'Found only Rs 81.20 in Chandigarh MC account when Rs 95.78 cr was to be credited'



GNS News Agency, April 3

When Rs 95.78 crore was supposed to be credited from Chandigarh Smart City Limited (CSCL), only Rs 81.20 was found in Chandigarh Municipal Corporation's (MC's) account, the UT Police told the court on Thursday. The statement made in the remand application of Chandigarh Police places former CFO (chief finance officer) Nalini Malik of the Smart City Project at the centre of the alleged financial fraud. Malik was produced before the court on Thursday evening, where police have argued that custodial interrogation of Malik is essential to uncover the full conspiracy, trace the siphoned funds, and identify other officials involved. The court on Thursday granted four days of police remand to Malik against six days sought by the police.

As per the remand papers filed by Chandigarh Police, the CSCL was merged with the MC, Chandigarh, on March 28, 2025, and Malik was nominated as a member of the team responsible for handing over the relevant records of CSCL to the civic body. On the same day, a fresh account (99988877765) was opened in IDFC First Bank in the name of Municipal Corporation, Chandigarh. However, at the time of handing over/taking over the charge on March 28, 2025, only Rs 81.20 was found in the account, whereas Rs 95.78 crore was supposed to be credited into it from CSCL. It is further alleged that Malik, in connivance with Anubhav Mishra, accountant in the MC office, Chandigarh, and other

officials of Chandigarh Smart City Limited, Municipal Corporation Chandigarh, and bank officials of IDFC First Bank, managed to create 11 false and fabricated Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDRs) amounting to Rs 116.84 crore in favour of the Municipal Commissioner, Chandigarh.

It is further alleged that the former CFO of Smart City Project was well aware of all transactions credited from the CSCL's IDFC First Bank account to various shell company accounts of co-accused persons. Further, the UT Police claimed that Malik had also received a sum of Rs 2 lakh from a shell company named Swastik Desh Project in her YES Bank account. Also, police said that during the interrogation of Malik it was found that she, along with other officials of the MC had received more than Rs 50 crore in cash from the siphoned funds of CSCL. It is further alleged that approximately Rs 116 crore of CSCL and the civic body funds have been siphoned off by the accused persons.

As per the remand papers, in a disclosure, co-accused and former bank manager Rishav Rishi allegedly stated during interrogation that he had created fake and forged FDRs amounting to around Rs 116 crore with the involvement of municipal officials. His statement, as recorded in the remand papers, further claims that shell firms were created "with the connivance" of Malik and Narender Pal Sharma (chief executive manager of Smart City project) and Municipal Corporation officials. The remand papers further quote that these shell entities included firms such as CAPCO Fintech, R S Traders, and Swastik Desh Project. The disclosure indicates that funds were allegedly diverted into these entities accounts and also withdrawn in cash. Police have also pointed to the role of Anubhav Mishra, an outsourced accountant, who was handling key financial records during the transition of CSCL funds. The remand note states that Mishra has been missing since February 24 and has not been attending office, with his phone switched off. Police further told the court that Nalini Malik was not only aware of the transactions but was allegedly a central figure in coordinating the financial movement during the closure of the Smart City project.

## Punjab protesters issue ultimatum: Act on Himachal entry tax or face shutdown of Kiratpur-Manali NH

GNS News Agency, April 3

Tensions are set to escalate along the Punjab-Himachal Pradesh border as transporters and farmer groups have announced an indefinite blockade starting Saturday morning to protest the vehicle entry tax imposed by Himachal Pradesh. The protest is likely to disrupt traffic on the crucial Kiratpur Sahib-Manali National Highway. Issuing a strong ultimatum, the protesting groups said that unless the Punjab government implements a reciprocal tax by Friday evening, or the Himachal Pradesh government exempts vehicles from bordering Punjab districts—Rupnagar, Mohali, Hoshiarpur and Pathankot—from the levy, the highway will be completely blocked from 9 am Saturday.

The agitation comes amid rising friction at nearly 33 entry points along the interstate border, where protesters allege "heavy and unjustified taxes" are being collected. The situation has led to frequent confrontations and tense scenes at toll plazas. The cash-crunched Sukhwinder Singh Sukhlu-led Himachal government hiked the entry tax for vehicles into the state from April 1, a decision widely criticised by bordering states. Transporters and farmer groups in Punjab had called for an indefinite road block protest on Wednesday, but called it off following an assurance from Himachal Pradesh officials that talks would be held in 10 days. Gaurav Rana, president of the social organisation Punjab Morcha,



said that representatives of all protesting bodies have now decided to sort out this matter as soon as possible. Earlier on Thursday, representatives of the agitating groups met Punjab minister Harjot Singh Bains in Sri Anandpur Sahib and pressed for immediate intervention. They demanded that the state either ensure withdrawal of the tax through dialogue with Himachal Pradesh or impose a matching levy to safeguard local transporters. Responding to the concerns, Bains termed the entry tax "unjustified" and said the Punjab government is committed to protecting the state's interests. He assured that a decision in Punjab's favour would be taken soon.

## 60 years of she-revolution behind Karnataka's first Koraga community doctor



GNS News Agency, April 3

When Dr Sneha K A completed her MD from the University College of Medical Sciences last year, Karnataka celebrated her as the first doctor from the Koraga community — one of the state's most marginalised tribal groups. Sneha, however, was reluctant to take the credit. "If someone has to be really appreciated, it has to be my parents," she said. To understand why, you have to go back 60 years, as the seed to today's success was sown by her grandmother, who never went to school. Hailing from the Koraga community that was plunged in illiteracy, malnutrition, social inequality, and untouchability for centuries, Radha Bai, Dr Sneha's grandmother, had the resolve to place her children in a better position. Now in her 90s, Radha Bai faced stiff discrimination in her younger days while working as a maid. Yet she was determined to give her children a good education — a distant dream back then. Raising five children, including one boy and five girls, became even more challenging for Radha Bai amidst an abusive husband, Ranga, a teacher and an artist, who was a drunkard.

A tribe with a population of over 16,000, the Koraga community was considered among the original inhabitants of the coastal region, and was categorised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). However, the community faced social and economic exploitation for centuries. "Though she did not attend formal schooling, she was reading weekly magazines like Sudha and Balamangala every week, and it was the seed for us to take up the reading habit during childhood," recalls Jayashree, Dr Sneha's mother. Jayashree grew up in Sanikkatta, located near Gokarna in Karnataka's Uttara Kannada district. Although the small village held historic significance for producing traditional, unrefined brown salt for over 300 years, untouchability was practised vehemently. "As a child, there were days when we slept hungry. We had accepted that we were untouchables, as there was less exposure. There were days when we used to walk to Gokarna in the night, 3 kilometres away, to get food from temples or festivities," Jayashree recalls. In those days, Jayashree says, she and her siblings got food at the mercy of her grandmother Durgi,

who worked as 'Pourakarmika', cleaning the streets of Gokarna. "People recognised my grandmother. After serving food to the devotees, the leftovers were served to us, and we used to sit in a corner and eat. We were not allowed inside the temple to even collect it," Jayashree, who was the first in the family to complete graduation, recalls.

Jayashree, who holds a BEd degree, says her mother was particular that all her children go to school and study. "I was not someone who was going out much because I did not want to be ill-treated due to my caste. Most of the time, I stayed to myself, read books, and magazines. Some people felt uncomfortable as I was able to finish my graduation and secure a government job as a primary school teacher," she says. However, Jayashree says that most of them "consoled" themselves, spreading rumours that she ended up as an Anganawadi worker. Jayashree's father had studied till Class 8, while her brothers and sisters had managed to get jobs even before they stepped into undergraduate courses. At 29, Jayashree had another battle when she fell in love with Ganesh V, whom she later married against opposition from both families. "Ganesh did not have a job, and he was not earning. What I really liked about him was that he always helped people and never cheated anyone. It was enough for me to marry him," Jayashree, who is all set to retire in the next three months, says with a smile. Sneha was the first child of Jayashree-Ganesh couple. "I always wished for a girl child. I was very particular, just like my mother, that I would provide her with a better education and make her financially independent. I did not want her to experience the inequality and untouchability. We lived in Ankola since her childhood, and got her enrolled in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (Udupi) from where she completed her Class 10. All I have done is invest in her education and nothing else," Jayashree says. Sneha then went on to join Alva's PU College and came out with flying colours, securing 96 per cent marks in PUC examination — a feat which helped her obtain a medical seat. Alva's education society has committed to providing free education for those who come from the Koraga community.

"This was the first time I was exposed to the caste dynamics. That was when I figured out that it was not just my marks, but it was my tribal caste which worked in my favour," Sneha remarks. Sneha says that she was not passionate about any career but chose MBBS as she got the seat. For someone who had until then completed all her education for free, MBBS admission put Sneha's life at a crucial juncture as her family, for the first time, had to find ways to arrange money for her education. Sneha studied at AJ Medical College in Mangaluru and served as the medical officer at the Community Health Centre in Kota, Kundapura. She managed to secure an MD seat at University College of Medical Sciences in New Delhi and came out with flying colours.

## Techie dies by suicide in Hyderabad months after marriage; husband booked over dowry torture

GNS News Agency, April 3

PuneA 26-year-old software engineer allegedly died by suicide in Hyderabad following dowry harassment by her husband, who is now in police custody. A 26-year-old newly married software engineer allegedly died by suicide at her apartment in the Miyapur area of Hyderabad after being reportedly harassed by her husband for dowry.

Based on a complaint by her parents, a First Information Report (FIR) was registered at the Miyapur Police Station, and Ishita Yadav's husband, Neeraj Bansal, was booked for allegedly harassing her for additional dowry. The

complaint said Bansal had been harassing Yadav for money and her family to invest in the start-up he was considering, and she was fed up with the constant harassment. The police have taken Bansal, who hails from Madhya Pradesh, into custody and are interrogating him. The police said that Yadav and Bansal had been in a relationship for nearly 5 years after meeting on social media. They said Yadav, who was from Bihar, and Bansal got married this February while working in Pune. They moved to Hyderabad recently and were living in a flat in Miyapur. On Thursday, Bansal called the police, saying that he had found his wife dead at their flat.

## Mann govt raises milk procurement prices, 2.5 lakh farmers to benefit

GNS News Agency, April 3

CM Bhagwant MannThe Punjab government Thursday announced an increase in milk procurement prices for farmers associated with Milkfed Punjab (Verka), a move aimed at boosting farmers' income and strengthening the rural economy. According to an official statement, the revised rates have come into effect from April 1, 2026, and will increase procurement prices by Rs 10 to Rs 15 per kg of fat. The Chief Minister's Office said the decision has been taken under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann to ensure better remuneration for dairy farmers and to reinforce the cooperative dairy structure in the state. Around 2.5 lakh dairy farmers associated with Milkfed are expected to benefit directly from the hike. The government said the move will improve the economic viability of dairy farming and is likely to benefit nearly 30 lakh milk producers across Punjab.



operative dairy structure in the state. Around 2.5 lakh dairy farmers associated with Milkfed are expected to benefit directly from the hike. The government said the move will improve the economic viability of dairy farming and is likely to benefit nearly 30 lakh milk producers across Punjab. It added that other milk procurement agencies and private players may also raise their prices in line with Milkfed, leading to a broader increase in rates across the sector. Milkfed Punjab, a leading dairy cooperative in north India with a major share in packaged milk and milk products, is expected to trigger an additional infusion of around Rs 100 crore per month into the state's rural economy due to the price hike, the statement said.

## HC seeks response on uneven sports quota in Chandigarh admn jobs



GNS News Agency, April 3

The bench reportedly noted that several factors weighed against the award of capital punishment. The Punjab and Haryana High Court issued notices to the Centre and Chandigarh Administration regarding uniform job reservation rules for meritorious sportspersons. (The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Thursday issued notices to the Union of India and the Chandigarh Administration on a petition seeking uniform application of rules that provide reservation and age relaxation to meritorious sportspersons in government jobs. A bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sanjiv Berry heard the matter and posted it for April 30. Appearing for the petitioner, Simrat Kaur, assisted by

Gursharan Singh, sought issuance of notice.

The petition has been filed by Shivdeep Singh Sidhu, 33, a resident of Sector 38-D, Chandigarh, a state-level gold medalist in 10m air rifle shooting who has also represented Chandigarh at the national level. He has sought directions to ensure that all departments of the Chandigarh Administration follow central government rules that allow up to 5 per cent reservation in certain posts for meritorious sportspersons and provide age relaxation of up to five years, with a higher limit for SC and ST candidates. He has also sought a department-wise report on compliance. The petition says Chandigarh employees are governed by central service rules and that the administration had adopted these provisions in the past. Despite this, it alleges, most departments have not applied the sports quota or age relaxation in recruitment advertisements. It points out that only the Chandigarh Police included the quota in its 2023 constable recruitment. Advertisements issued by departments such as the Chandigarh Housing Board, Urban Planning, and the Child and Women Development Corporation did not mention any such provision. Sidhu, currently working in a Group A post with Milkfed Punjab, has said he does not stand to gain personally from the case. He had earlier filed an RTI and sent a representation to the Chief Secretary on July 27, 2025, but received no response, following which he approached the high court.

## State has enough resources, subsidies to continue: Cheema



Hours after policy experts blamed subsidies for the receding water table, Punjab Finance minister Harpal Cheema Thursday said that subsidies will continue uninterrupted and the state has enough resources.

GNS News Agency, April 3

Hours after policy experts blamed subsidies for the receding water table, Punjab Finance minister Harpal Cheema Thursday said that subsidies will continue uninterrupted and the state has enough resources. Speaking to mediapersons at his residence, Cheema said, "There will be no rationalisation. Punjab is a welfare state. We want the last person in the line to be benefitted. We will enhance our collections in such a way that these would not pinch. Look at the GST and excise growth. We have recorded an increase of 100 per cent under every head. It has been unprecedented."

He said the government was planning to provide solar pumps to small farmers who were not beneficiaries of free power as they did not have tubewells. He said the state had fared much better than the previous governments in finances. Cheema said that the treasury was never closed

during the AAP government, while it was closed twice during the Akali-BJP government. He said that the e-Deposit Management System (EDMS) has been implemented to prevent fraud in the banking sector.

He said that the government has achieved all its targets in four years. He said that net Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections for the financial year 2025-26 have increased significantly by 12.52 per cent till March. He said that GST collections have increased from Rs 1,913.82 crore in March 2025 to Rs 2,231.93 crore, which implies a net profit of Rs 1,913.82 crore in 2025-26. 318.11 crore, a growth of 16.6 per cent, and a robust 18 per cent growth in SGST cash collections in March, compared to the national growth rate of around 7 per cent, placing Punjab among the best-performing large states in the country. Responding to criticism from opposition parties regarding Punjab's economic condition, the Finance Minister challenged former Finance Ministers to debate the state of Punjab's finances. Cheema claimed that Punjab has taken several initiatives in financial reforms in the country, resulting in the state receiving a grant of Rs 400 crore in the recently concluded financial year. Registration for the Maa-Beti Satkar Yojana, which provides Rs 1,000 to women in the general category and Rs 1,500 to women from the Scheduled Castes, will begin on April 13. He said that income tax payers, wives of government employees, MPs, MLAs, are excluded from the scheme, while Anganwadi workers, mid-day meal workers, and women in private jobs will benefit from the scheme. Responding to a question about disbursing DA instalments to government employees, he said that Rs 14,191 crore pending during the previous Congress government has already been disbursed, and the government is considering disbursing DA and the old pension scheme during its tenure. Regarding the Chief Minister's comments about not repaying the debt, Cheema said that other states are also continuously borrowing. The central government's debt in 2014 was Rs 55 lakh crore, which has now increased to Rs 212 lakh crore. Similarly, other states are also continuously borrowing. Cheema said that when the AAP government came to power, the Consolidated Sinking Fund had Rs 2980 crore, and now this fund has increased to Rs 10738 crore. He said that a Consolidated Sinking Fund has been created to borrow up to Rs 6,000 crore at a rate 2 per cent below the repo rate.

## Autism must be understood beyond the clinic with focus on inclusion, compassion: Experts



GNS News Agency, April 3

The Department of Pediatrics, PGIMER Chandigarh, marked World Autism Awareness Day with an inclusive programme, reaffirming the global message "Autism and Humanity – Every Life Has Value". Dr Sanjay Jain, dean, PGIMER Chandigarh, emphasised the need for early identification, inclusive education, and strengthening support systems for children with autism and their families. The event brought together a multidisciplinary team, highlighting the importance of collaborative care in addressing autism.

A key highlight of the programme was the Voices of Autism Parent & Caregiver Story Circle, where mothers and caregivers shared their lived experiences. Their narratives reflected the realities of navigating multiple therapies, making continuous educational accommodations, and accessing specialised healthcare services. The discussions brought attention to the significant parental stress, often compounded by complex caregiving demands, financial strain,

and persistent social stigma. In a particularly inspiring moment, a young adult with autism, born at PGIMER, shared his journey and achievements. He now runs a YouTube channel, "Cricket Ki Awaaz," and expressed his willingness to connect, answer queries, and build friendships, symbolising hope, ability, and inclusion.

Experts emphasised that autism must be understood beyond the clinic, with a focus on inclusive classrooms, supportive families, and compassionate communities that celebrate differences rather than stigmatise them. Dr Anmol Sidhu, consultant-pediatrician at Livasa, says that autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition affecting an increasing number of children in India. It is characterised by challenges in social communication and interaction, along with restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior. The term 'spectrum' reflects the wide variation in symptoms and severity, with each child experiencing autism differently. She added that recent estimates suggest that 1 in 68 to 1 in 100 children in India are affected by ASD, accounting for approximately 1.12 per cent to 1.5 per cent of children aged 2-9 years, with a higher prevalence in boys. Sidhu also emphasised that early signs are often subtle and may present as the absence of expected developmental milestones, rather than obvious abnormalities. These are most commonly identified in the second year of life, when social and communication demands increase. Dr Vibha Goel, consultant-psychiatry said, "Key early warning signs include, poor response to name by 1 year, no meaningful words by 18 months, limited or inappropriate play, reduced interaction with peers, repetitive behaviors or unusual movements, echolalia (repeating words), hyperactivity and toe walking".

## Singapore seeks bigger stake in UP: 'Investment roadmap being made'

GNS News Agency, April 3

Singapore seeks bigger stake in UP, High Commissioner of Singapore to India, Simon Wong, Yogi Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh Singapore ties, Lucknow news, Uttar Pradesh news, Indian express, Current affairs Chief Minister? Adityanath said Singapore's tech expertise and UP's potential would drive mutually beneficial cooperation, setting new benchmarks in sustainable development, innovation, and employment generation.

The High Commissioner of Singapore to India, Simon Wong, met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday, exploring ways to boost ties between Uttar Pradesh and Singapore, an official said. The meeting, which was held at the chief minister's residence in Lucknow, centred on investment, skill development, infrastructure, and cultural collaboration. The official also said that a comprehensive investment roadmap is being prepared for regions including Noida, Greater Noida, Jhansi, and Varanasi, among others, to boost balanced development in Uttar Pradesh. Wong praised CM Adityanath's February visit to Singapore, saying it showcased UP's potential to global industrialists, the official added.

"The global industrial community now sees Uttar Pradesh as a center of new opportunities and possibilities, which will play an important role in taking India-Singapore relations to greater heights," Wong said, adding that Singapore companies are keen to invest more. He noted that companies from Singapore, already operating in Uttar Pradesh, have described the investment climate as favourable and are actively planning to expand their investments. According to the official, Wong informed that a large industrial delegation from Singapore will soon visit UP to explore investment opportunities across the state and



work towards converting proposals into concrete investments. "Singapore is exploring possibilities of cooperation in skill development for the youth of the state, which would create new employment opportunities," Wong said.

Additionally, Wong praised UP's strides in law and order, infrastructure, and industry under CM? Adityanath's nine-year leadership. Chief Minister Adityanath, according to the official, described Singapore as a world-class economic and technological partner and said, "The state government is ready for long-term and result-oriented cooperation with Singapore in areas such as industrial investment, urban development, logistics, skill development, and tourism." He expressed confidence that the Singapore delegation's visit would open new avenues of investment and partnership between the two sides. Chief Minister? Adityanath said Singapore's tech expertise and UP's potential would drive mutually beneficial cooperation, setting new benchmarks in sustainable development, innovation, and employment generation.

## Relief likely for UP madrasa teachers hit by scheme withdrawal



GNS News Agency, April 3 Relief likely for UP madrasa teachers, UP madrasa teachers, UP madrasa teachers hit by scheme withdrawal, Madrasa Modernisation Scheme, Lucknow news, Uttar Pradesh news, Indian express, Current affairs There are around 16,000 madrasas in the state. The state government is exploring ways to adjust around 22,000 teachers who were rendered jobless after the Madrasa Modernisation Scheme was discontinued by the Centre and the state two years back, minority affairs minister Danish Azad Ansari said. These teachers, engaged in imparting modern and technical education at madrasas under the scheme, used to get an honorarium ranging from

Rs 6,000 to Rs 12,000. The in-principal approval to adjust them was decided in a recent review meeting with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, sources said, adding that the minority affairs department will have to make a detailed action plan to chalk out ways for their adjustment.

"It was a Central government scheme for madrasa modernisation, where teachers were hired to impart modern education like Maths, Computer Science, Science to the students. The teachers used to receive an honorarium for their work. It was a centrally-funded scheme but the state government used to give some additional funds. However, the scheme was discontinued in 2022-23 by the Centre and later by the Uttar Pradesh government," Ansari said. "Along the lines of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision, the state government is considering adjusting these teachers. It is preliminary right now and the minority affairs department will soon prepare an action plan to chalk out ways for their adjustment," he added. The Madrasa Modernisation Scheme was launched by Centre in 1993 and was later renamed "Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrasa" in 2008. The scheme was initially fully funded by the Central government but later the UP government decided to give some additional funds, officials said.

## Will camp in Bengal for 15 days... people waiting for parivartan, says Shah

GNS News Agency, April 3

Before leading a roadshow in Kolkata in support of BJP candidates, including Suwendu? Adhikari who is contesting against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Bhabanipur, Shah said, "I will stay in West Bengal for 15 days. I will get a lot of time to speak to you all. I have come today for the nomination of four candidates, especially for Suwendu Adhikari". Leader of Opposition in? Assembly Suwendu Adhikari, and three other BJP candidates — Shatorupa, who is contesting from Ballygunge; Swapan Dasgupta, who is contesting from Rashbehari; and Santosh Pathak from Chowranghee accompanied Shah at the roadshow. Hitting out at the TMC government in the state, Shah said, "Before elections, I have toured Bengal. Across the corners of the state, everywhere there was one voice... 'say bye bye to Mamata Banerjee government". Today the people of West Bengal are tired of the TMC goons, infiltration, unemployment, record breaking corruption... security of women is also in question. The people of Bengal are demanding that there should be parivartan under the leadership of Prime

Minister Narendra Modi".

"Once BJP comes to power, the borders of Bengal would be sealed and each and every infiltrator will be identified and removed. We will make Sonar Bangla. West Bengal is waiting for change," he added. Making an appeal to the voters of Bhabanipur, the Union Minister said: "I appeal to the brothers and sisters of Bhabanipur... the entire Bengal is ready to bid farewell to Mamata Banerjee, but the responsibility of bringing change in the whole state lies in your hands. The matter is simple — seat by seat we will win, we will reach 170 seats, and then change will happen, right? But I have a shortcut: If Bhabanipur voters ensure victory in just one seat, then change will happen automatically." According to Shah, Adhikari only wanted to contest from Nandigram but it was he who asked the former TMC leader to contest in Bhabanipur also and "defeat Mamata in her own constituency". According to Shah the "only way out to make West Bengal free of corruption, syndicate raj and infiltration is if the BJP comes to power".

## Myanmar junta chief Min Aung Hlaing elected President by pro-military parliament



GNS News Agency, April 3

Myanmar junta chief Min Aung Hlaing won a parliamentary vote on Friday (April 3, 2026) to become the country's President, formalising his grip on political power in the war-torn nation five years after he ousted an elected government. The 69-year-old general orchestrated a 2021 coup against the administration of Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi and placed her under arrest, sparking widespread protests that morphed into nationwide armed resistance against the junta. The transition from top general to civilian president follows a lopsided election in December and January that was won in a landslide by an army-backed party and derided by critics and Western governments as a sham to perpetuate military rule behind a veneer of democracy.

In a live broadcast of the vote count in a parliament dominated by the election-winning Union Solidarity and Development Party and the military's quota of appointed armed forces legislators, former commander-in-chief Min Aung Hlaing comfortably passed the threshold required to win the presidential vote. Dreams becoming reality Min Aung Hlaing's ascent to the presidency — a position that analysts say he has long sought — followed a major reshuffle

in the leadership of Myanmar's armed forces, which he had led since 2011. On Monday, as he was nominated in parliament as a presidential candidate, Min Aung Hlaing anointed Ye Win Oo, a former intelligence chief seen as fiercely loyal to the general, as his successor to lead the military.

The military handover and Min Aung Hlaing's rise to the presidency are seen by analysts as a strategic pivot to consolidate his power as head of a nominally civilian government and earn international legitimacy, while protecting the interests of an armed forces that has run the country directly for five of the past six decades. "He has long harboured the ambition to trade his title of commander-in-chief for president and it appears his dreams are now becoming a reality," said Aung Kyaw Soe, an independent Myanmar analyst. Still, the civil war that has wrecked Myanmar for much of the last five years is raging, with some anti-junta groups — including those comprising remnants of Suu Kyi's party — and longstanding ethnic minority armies — forming a new combined front this week to take on the military.

"Our vision and strategic objectives are to completely dismantle all forms of dictatorship, including the military dictatorship, and to collectively initiate a new political landscape," the Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union said in a statement on Monday. Resistance groups could face intensified military pressure as well as increased scrutiny from neighbouring countries that may seek to bolster their relationship with Min Aung Hlaing's new administration, analysts say. "Amidst global oil and fuel shortages and economic crises, maintaining organisational stability could become difficult," analyst Sai Kyi Zin Soe said of the opposition. "As these hardships grow, it may become even harder to build mutual understanding and trust between groups, reach firmer agreements, and sustain cooperation."

## Donald Trump announces destruction of Iran's tallest bridge amid escalating Iran-Israel US war

GNS News Agency, April 3

U.S. President Donald Trump said Thursday (April 2, 2026) the tallest bridge in Iran had been destroyed, hours after threatening to bomb the country "back to the Stone Ages." Ghodrattollah Seif, the Deputy Governor of Alborz Province, where the B1 bridge is located, said the strike had killed eight people and wounded 95 others, according to state TV and Fars news agency. Due to reporting restrictions, AFP is not able to access the sites of strikes nor to independently verify tolls in Iran.

Mr. Trump posted footage on social media of smoke rising from the B1 bridge in Karaj, around 20 miles (35 kilometres) southwest of Tehran — and warned that there would be further destruction unless Iran comes to the table to end the five-week war. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a post on X: "Striking civilian structures, including unfinished bridges, will not compel Iranians to surrender." It only conveys the defeat and moral collapse of an enemy in disarray." Iranian state television had earlier reported two U.S.-Israeli strikes on the bridge. "A few minutes ago, the American-Zionist enemy once again targeted the B1 bridge in Karaj," state TV said, adding that an initial strike had caused two civilian casualties. It said the later attack took place as emergency teams were deployed to



the site to help victims of the first strike. The B1 bridge, which was still under construction, is West Asia's tallest according to Fars/Iranian media, with a 447-foot (136-meter) column. Mr. Trump delivered a speech on Wednesday (April 1) in which he argued that the war launched by the United States and Israel on February 28 was almost over — even as he threatened to bomb Iran "extremely hard" if it didn't bow to his demands. "Over the next two to three weeks, we are going to bring them back to the Stone Ages, where they belong," he said in his first prime-time address to the nation on the war.

## Pete Hegseth asks U.S. Army's top officer General Randy George to step down while U.S. continues war on Iran



GNS News Agency, April 3

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has asked the Army's top uniformed officer to step down, the Pentagon said on Thursday (April 2, 2026) without giving a reason for the departure as the United States wages a war against Iran. Gen. Randy George "will be retiring from his position as the 41st Chief of Staff of the Army effective immediately," said Sean Parnell, the Pentagon's top spokesperson. Mr. George has held the post of Army chief of staff, which typically runs for four years, since August 2023 under the Biden administration.

The ouster, reported earlier by CBS News, is just the latest of more than a dozen firings of top generals and admirals by Mr. Hegseth since he took office last year. Like many of those other firings, Pentagon officials are not offering a reason for George's departure, which comes nearly five weeks into U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran and with no clear timeline from President Donald Trump on when the war may end.

Mr. George is a graduate of West Point Military Academy and an infantry officer who served in the first Gulf War as well as Iraq and Afghanistan. He also served as Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's top military aide from 2021 to 2022 during the Biden administration before taking on top leadership roles in the Army. Mr. George made it through the initial round of firings under the Trump administration in February 2025, when Hegseth removed top military leaders, including Adm. Lisa Franchetti, the Navy's top uniformed officer, and Gen. Jim Slife, the No. 2 leader at the Air Force. Trump also fired Gen. Charles "CQ" Brown Jr. as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Since then, more than a dozen other top military generals and admirals have either retired early or been removed from their posts. Among these departures was George's deputy, Gen. James Minguis, who was in the post of vice chief of staff of the Army for less than two years when Trump suddenly nominated Lt. Gen. Christopher LaNeve for the position. Mr. LaNeve was then serving as Mr. Hegseth's top military aide, having been plucked for that post from commanding the Eighth Army in South Korea after less than a year in the job. Mr. LaNeve will be stepping in as acting Army chief of staff, according to a Pentagon official, who spoke on condi-

tion of anonymity to discuss the move before it has been announced. It is a meteoric rise for an officer who was only a two-star general two years ago. A spokesman for George could not be immediately reached for comment. The shakeup comes as Army paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne division are heading to the West Asia along with thousands of Marines and other assets. The Trump administration has avoided questions about whether or not the U.S. military will deploy ground troops against Iran.

## Donald Trump unveils 100% tariff on some patented drugs on 'Liberation Day' anniversary

President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Thursday (April 2, 2026) that could slap long-threatened pharmaceutical tariffs of up to 100% on some patented drugs from companies that don't reach deals with his administration in the coming months. Companies that have signed a "most favoured nation" pricing deal and are actively building facilities in the U.S. to onshore production of patented pharmaceuticals and their ingredients will have a 0% tariff. For those that don't have a pricing deal but are building such projects in the U.S., a 20% tariff will apply but will increase to 100% in four years.

A senior administration official told reporters on a press call that companies still have months to negotiate before the 100% tariffs kick in — 120 days for bigger companies, and 180 days for everyone else. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity to preview the executive order before it was issued, did not identify any companies or drugs that were in jeopardy of getting hit with the increased tariffs but noted the administration had already reached 17 pricing deals with major drugmakers, 13 of which have signed. In the order, Mr. Trump wrote that he deemed such actions necessary "to address the threatened impairment of the national security posed by imports of pharmaceuticals and pharmaceutical ingredients." It arrived on the first anniversary of Mr. Trump's so-called Liberation Day, when the President unveiled sweeping new import taxes on nearly every country in the world that sent the stock market reeling. Those "Liberation Day" tariffs were among the duties the Supreme Court overturned in February. Some warned of consequences of the coming tariffs announced on Thursday (April 2). Stephen J. Ubl, CEO of pharmaceutical company trade group PhRMA, said taxes "on cutting-edge medicines will increase costs and could jeopardize billions in U.S. investments." He pointed to America's already large footprint in biopharmaceutical manufacturing and noted medicines sourced from other countries "overwhelmingly come from reliable U.S. allies."

## Oil prices surge while Asian share prices rise moderately amid escalating Iran-Israel war



GNS News Agency, April 3

Oil prices continued to surge on worries of a prolonged Iran war, but the Asian markets that were open Friday (April 3, 2026) rose moderately in cautious trading, while others were closed for the Good Friday holidays. Benchmark U.S. crude rose 11.4% to \$111.54 a barrel. The price of Brent crude, the international standard, jumped 7.8% to \$109.03 per barrel. "A more extended conflict raises the threat to physical infrastructure, extends disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz, and will entail a longer post-war recovery period, with price impacts spilling over later into the year," according to a report from BML, a unit of Fitch Solutions. The

U.S. only relies on the Persian Gulf for a fraction of the oil it imports, but oil is a commodity and prices are set in a global market.

The situation is very different in Asia. Japan, for example, relies on access to the Strait of Hormuz for much of the nation's oil import needs and would need to rely on alternative routes. But some analysts say Japan and other nations are counting on an agreement with Iran to allow transports. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 gained 0.9% in Friday (April 3, 2026) morning trading to 52,938.62. South Korea's Kospi jumped 2.1% to 5,344.41. The Shanghai Composite sank 0.5% to 3,899.57. Trading was closed in Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Indonesia and India.

Wall Street, where trading is closed Friday (April 3, 2026), finished its first winning week since the start of the Iran war, although trading started out with a decline driven by a surge in oil prices. That came after U.S. President Donald Trump late Wednesday (April 1, 2026) vowed the U.S. would continue to attack Iran and failed to offer a clear timetable for ending the conflict in the West Asia. Treasury yields remained relatively steady in the bond market. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.3% from 4.32%. In currency trading, the U.S. dollar edged up to 159.66 Japanese yen from 159.53 yen. The euro cost \$1.1535, inching down from \$1.1537.

## Who is Todd Blanche, former Donald Trump lawyer who's the President's pick for acting attorney general

GNS News Agency, April 3

Mr. Blanche rose to prominence representing the President in criminal cases that consumed the four years between his first and second terms. Mr. Blanche, a former federal prosecutor and law firm partner, led Mr. Trump's criminal defense team, representing the Republican in matters including his New York hush money case, which ended in his conviction on 34 felony counts, and a pair of federal cases brought by special counsel Jack Smith, both of which have been abandoned. In a social media post, Mr. Trump called Mr. Blanche "a very talented and respected Legal Mind." As deputy attorney general, Mr. Blanche was the Justice Department's second-in-command.

Working under Attorney General Pam Bondi, he managed the department's day-to-day operations and became one of its most vocal defenders and visible public faces. He oversaw the release of government files on Jeffrey Epstein and appeared frequently on TV news programs.

Here's a look at Blanche's career and his rise to running the Justice Department. Mr. Blanche, 51, attended Brooklyn Law School at night while working as a paralegal at the U.S. attorney's office in Manhattan, and graduated cum laude. Originally from the Denver suburbs, he completed his undergraduate studies at American University in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Blanche served as a law clerk for federal judges Denny Chin and Joseph Bianco, both now members of the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and was a federal prosecutor for eight years in the same U.S. attorney's office where he had started as a paralegal. He spent two years as co-chief of the office's violent crimes unit, overseeing about two dozen prosecutors and cases involving killings, kidnappings, and other violent crimes. Mr. Blanche left the U.S. attorney's office in 2014, taking a job in the Manhattan office of the law firm WilmerHale. In September 2017, he moved to Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP, where he was a partner in the White Collar Defense and Investigations practice.

In a prelude to his work defending Mr. Trump, Mr. Blanche represented the president's former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, and in 2019 succeeded in getting a mortgage fraud case against him dismissed in the same New York court where Trump was convicted. Mr. Blanche argued that the case, brought by the Manhattan district attorney's office that later prosecuted Trump, was too similar to one that landed Manafort in federal prison and therefore amounted to double jeopardy. Mr. Blanche left Cadwalader in 2023, telling colleagues he was resigning to represent Mr. Trump. He joined the President's defense



team just prior to his arraignment in the hush money case. In an email announcing his departure, he wrote: "I have been asked to represent Trump in the recently charged DA case, and after much thought/consideration, I have decided it is the best thing for me to do and an opportunity I should not pass up." Despite his conviction, Mr. Trump came away from the hush money case impressed with Mr. Blanche's tenacity, his willingness to spar with witnesses and judges, and the poise he showed in speaking in front of TV cameras. Mr. Trump rewarded Mr. Blanche and another of his defense lawyers, Emil Bove, with prominent roles in his new administration's Justice Department, and last summer nominated Bove to be a judge on the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

In addition to the hush money matter, Mr. Blanche represented Mr. Trump in the two cases brought by the special counsel, his 2020 election interference case in Washington and the Florida case accusing the former president of hoarding classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate. In both cases, Mr. Trump's Blanche-led defense team successfully mounted a legal strategy focused heavily on delaying the cases until after the 2024 presidential election. When Trump won, Smith moved to abandon the cases, acknowledging a longstanding Justice Department policy that says sitting presidents cannot be indicted or prosecuted while in office. Ten days before Mr. Trump returned to office, Mr. Blanche sat alongside him at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, appearing by video together as a Manhattan judge sentenced the president-elect to no punishment in the hush-money case. "The majority of the American people also agree that this case should not have been brought," Mr. Blanche told the judge, citing the election results as a verdict of its own. "The American voters got a chance to see and decide for themselves whether this was the kind of case that should've been brought," Mr. Blanche said. "And they decided."

## Donald Trump unveils 100% tariff on some patented drugs on 'Liberation Day' anniversary

Mr. Trump has launched a barrage of new import taxes on America's trading partners since the start of his second term and repeatedly pledged that sky-high levies on foreign-made drugs were on the way. But the administration has also used the threat of new levies to strike deals with major companies — like Pfizer, Eli Lilly and Bristol Myers Squibb — over the last year, with promises of lower prices for new drugs. Beyond company-specific rates, a handful of countries have reached trade frameworks with the U.S. to further cap tariffs on drugs sent to the U.S. The EU, Japan, Korea and Switzerland will see a 15% U.S. tariff on patented pharmaceuticals, matching previously agreed rates for most goods, and the U.K. will get 10% — which Thursday's (April 2) order noted would "then reduce to zero" under future trade agreements. The U.K. previously said it secured a 0% tariff rate for all British medicines exported to the U.S. for at least three years.

In addition on Thursday (April 2), Mr. Trump rolled out an update on his 50% tariffs on imported steel, aluminium and copper. Starting Monday (April 6), tariff rates on those metals will be calculated based on the "full customs value" of what U.S. customers pay when buying foreign metal under the latest order, which the administration officials claimed will keep importers from other countries from escaping higher payments. Products fully made of steel, aluminium and copper will continue to be tariffed at 50% for most countries. But the administration is also shifting how tariffs are calculated for derivative metals — or finished goods that contain some of these metals, but are not made entirely of them.

For a product with metal that amounts to less than 15% of its entire weight (like the cap on a perfume bottle) only country-specific tariffs will now apply, officials told reporters Thursday. But for products with more metal, such as a largely steel washing machine, they said a 25% tariff will apply to the whole value. Thursday's (April 2) orders reflect the latest example of Mr. Trump tapping into sectoral



duties. The President used Section 232 of the 1962 Trade Expansion Act to impose the levies, the same authority he cited to slap import taxes on cars, lumber and even kitchen cabinets. And many expect to see more product-specific import taxes down the road.

That's because a ruling from the Supreme Court struck down tariffs Mr. Trump imposed using another law — the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act — to immediately slap tariffs on any country, at nearly any level. While the Feb. 20 court decision marked a significant blow to Mr. Trump's economic agenda, the President still has plenty of options to keep taxing imports aggressively. Beyond sectoral levies, Mr. Trump also imposed a 10% tariff on all imports under a separate legal power mere hours after the Supreme Court's ruling, but that duty can only last for 150 days. Some two dozen states already challenged the new tariffs. Mr. Trump has argued his steep new import taxes are necessary to bring back wealth that was "stolen" from the U.S. He says they will narrow America's decades-old trade deficit and bring manufacturing back to the country. But Mr. Trump has also turned to tariffs amid personal grudges, or in response to political critics. And upending the global supply chain has proven costly for businesses and households that are already strained by rising prices.

## Takeaway coffee cups release thousands of microplastic particles



studies. We looked at how common plastics such as polyethylene and polypropylene behave under different conditions. One factor stood out above all others: temperature. As the temperature of the liquid inside a container increases, the release of microplastics generally increases too. In the studies we reviewed, reported releases ranged from a few hundred particles to more than 8 million particles per litre, depending on the material and study design.

Interestingly, "soaking time" – how long the drink sits in the cup – was not a consistent driver. This suggests that leaving our drink in a plastic cup for a long time isn't as important as the initial temperature of the liquid when it first hits the plastic. To see how this works in the real world, we collected 400 coffee cups of two major types around Brisbane: plastic cups made of polyethylene and plastic-lined paper cups which look like paper but have a thin plastic coating inside. We tested them at 5°C (iced coffee temperature) and 60°C (hot coffee temperature). While both types released microplastics, the results revealed two major trends. First, material matters. The paper cups with plastic linings released fewer microplastics than the all-plastic cups at both temperatures. Second, heat triggers a significant release. For the all-plastic cups, switching from cold to hot water increased the microplastic release by about 33%.

If someone drinks 300 millilitres of coffee in a cup made of polyethylene per day, they could ingest 363,000 pieces of microplastic particles every year. But why exactly does heat matter so much? Using high-resolution imaging, we examined the inner walls of these cups and found that all-plastic cups had much rougher surfaces – full of "peaks and valleys" – compared to the plastic-lined paper cups. This rougher texture makes it easier for particles to break away. Heat accelerates this process by softening the plastic and causing it to expand and contract, creating more surface irregularities that eventually fragment into our drink. We don't have to give up our morning takeaway habit, but we can change how we approach it to manage the risk. For hot drinks, the best option is to use a reusable cup made of stainless steel, ceramic, or glass, as these materials do not shed microplastics. If we must use a disposable cup, our research suggests that plastic-lined paper cups generally shed fewer particles than pure plastic cups, though neither is microplastic free. Finally, since heat is the factor that triggers plastic release, avoid putting boiling liquids directly into plastic-lined containers. Telling the barista to make our coffee slightly cooler before it hits the cup can reduce the physical stress on the plastic lining and lower the overall exposure. By understanding how heat and material choice interact, we can design better products and make better choices for our daily caffeine fix.

Melbourne: It's 7:45am. You grab a takeaway coffee from your local cafe, wrap your hands around the warm cup, take a sip, and head to the office. To most of us, that cup feels harmless – just a convenient tool for caffeine delivery. However, if that cup is made of plastic, or has a thin plastic lining, there is a high chance it's shedding thousands of tiny plastic fragments directly into your drink.

In Australia alone, we use a staggering 1.45 billion single-use hot beverage cups every year, along with roughly 890 million plastic lids. Globally, that number swells to an estimated 500 billion cups annually. In new research I co-authored, published in *Journal of Hazardous Materials: Plastics*, we looked at how these cups behave when they get hot. The message is clear: heat is a primary driver of microplastic release, and the material of your cup matters more than you might think.

What are microplastics?

Microplastics are fragments of plastic ranging from about 1 micrometre to 5 millimetres in size – roughly from a speck of dust to the size of a sesame seed. They can be created when larger plastic items break down, or they can be released directly from products during normal use. These particles end up in our environment, our food, and eventually, our bodies. Currently, we don't have conclusive evidence on just how much of that microplastic remains in our bodies. Studies on this subject are highly prone to contamination and it's really difficult to accurately measure the levels of such tiny particles in human tissue. Furthermore, scientists are still piecing together what microplastics might mean for human health in the long term. More research is urgently needed, but in the meantime, it's good to be aware of potential microplastic sources in our daily lives. Temperature matters. My colleagues and I first conducted a meta-analysis – a statistical synthesis of existing research – analysing data from 30 peer-reviewed

## Fight between many avatars of Mahayuti and Maha Vikas Aghadi



For the second phase of civic polls across Maharashtra, the six parties in the State – BJP, two Shiv Senas, two NCPs and Congress – have allied in different combinations to fight each other across the 29 municipal corporations which will go to polls. Crucial cities where civic polls will be held include Mumbai, Thane, Kalyan-Dombivli, Nashik, Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Kolhapur, Nagpur to name a few. Results will be announced on January 16. Stakes on these corporations, which have been run by administrators for the past three years, are high as all six parties have re-jigged their coalition partners based on the local heft each of them hold. In the first round of civic polls held in two phases in December 2025, the Mahayuti and MVA parties fought separately including several 'friendly fights', but stuck to their respective coalition partners post-polls.

Of the 288 municipal councils nagar panchayats which went to polls, Mahayuti won 207 – BJP grabbed victories in 117 civic bodies, followed by Shiv Sena in 53 and NCP in 37. The MVA managed to win only 52 municipalities – Congress (28), Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP-SP won only nine and seven respectively. Ahead of voting, 68 candidates of the Mahayuti have already won 'unopposed'. These include – 44 BJP candidates, 22 from Sena and two from NCP. The 'winners' are spread across Kalyan-Dombivli, Thane, Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Panvel, Bhiwandi, Dhule, Jalgaon and Ahilyanagar. Amid Opposition crying aful, the State Election Commission (SEC) has stated that it will not declare winners till an inquiry report is submitted. For India's richest civic body – Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), BJP has retained Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena as its partner to dent Shiv Sena (UBT)'s chances. Uddhav Thackeray has buried his hatchet with cousin Raj Thackeray and allied with Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) and Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP-SP). Meanwhile, Congress has allied with Prakash Ambedkar's Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) while Ajit Pawar's NCP is contesting independently. BJP is contesting on 137 seats, Shiv Sena on 90 seats in the 227-member BMC. Mahayuti ally RPI(A) was furious at being excluded from the seat-sharing and will contest on 20 seats. On the Thackeray side, Sena (UBT) will contest on 165 seats, MNS on 52, leaving NCP-SP to contest 10 seats. The third coalition in the fray will see Congress contest on 143 seats, VBA on 62 and smaller allies on six seats, taking the bloc's total to 195 seats. However, in 21 of the 62 seats allotted to it, VBA failed to find a suitable candidate, leaving 32 seats where BJP-Sena will clash directly with the Thackerays.

NCP and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) are contesting independently on 94 and 75 seats respectively. BMC has stayed with the Shiv Sena since 1985 (barring 1992-1996) and is where the Thackeray clan has its strongest hold, fending off its prime challenger BJP several times. BJP, which nurtures wishes to contest 2029 Assembly polls solo, came close to dethroning the Sena in 2017 winning 82 seats while the undivided Sena won 84, retaining its mayor seat. Wishing to retain this Thackeray turf, the two cousins have buried their twenty-year-old hatchet, marking the first Shiv Sena-MNS joint bid for the BMC – a first since 2005. Suburbs outside Mumbai

Thane is a Shiv Sena stronghold – specifically, Eknath Shinde's home turf. For the 131-seat council, Sena is contesting on 87 seats, BJP on 40 and smaller allies have been allotted four seats. The Thackerays and NCP-SP which have continued their alliance in Thane, will see Sena (UBT) clash on 53 seats, MNS on 34 and NCP-SP on 36. Congress and NCP are contesting solo on 96 and 75 seats respectively. In 2017, the undivided Sena won 67 out of the 131 seats, forming the council on its own while NCP won 34 seats and BJP grabbed 23 seats. Currently, 66 of the 67 Sena corporators who were elected in 2017 are backing Mr. Shinde, giving him a definitive edge. However, Mr. Thackeray is banking on support for the 'original' Sena. Barring 1987-1993, Sena has ruled Thane owing to legacy of Shiv Sena stalwarts – Balasaheb Thackeray and Anand Dighe. The alliance holds true in Kalyan-Dombivli too where

Mr. Shinde's influence holds true. His Sena is contesting on 65 seats, BJP on 57. While NCP was expected to be given 10 seats from either party's kitty, it did not fructify. On the Opposition side, the Thackerays split the 122 seats with Sena (UBT) contesting on 68 and MNS on 54. NCP-SP switched alliances joining the Congress-VBA bloc and is contesting on 45 seats. Congress has grabbed 55 seats, while VBA on 12 seats. A dog fight is underway for Mira-Bhayander, Navi Mumbai and Bhiwandi as all main parties are contesting independently, with some already winning 'unopposed'. Local alliances with smaller parties like Bahujan Vikas Aghadi, Bahujan Samaj Partt have cropped up in Amravati, Jalna, Vasai-Virar to name a few. Pawar clan has come together in a bid to regain their fiefdom in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad. In 2017, BJP stormed into power winning 97 seats in the 165-member corporation, a first for the saffron party. Like the Thackerays, Ajit Pawar and NCP patriarch Sharad Pawar have buried their differences as a last-ditch attempt for their bastion. Both Ms. Supriya Sule and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar presented a united front and unveiled their joint manifesto and senior NCP leader Sunil Tatkar has not ruled out a merger of the two factions. In Pune, NCP has put up 130 candidates while NCP-SP had fielded 43, setting up a friendly fight in seven seats. Similarly, in Pimpri-Chinchwad, Ajit Pawar's faction has grabbed 110 seats while Sharad Pawar's faction is contesting on 18 seats for the 128-member civic body. The BJP-Shiv Sena alliance talks broke down in Pune as BJP refused to cede more than 15 seats to Sena, while Mr. Shinde demanded 25 seats. A disgruntled Sena has fielded 119 candidates setting up a direct fight with the BJP which has also decided to contest solo. Congress, on the other hand, has foregone its reservations regarding MNS, allying with the Thackerays to counter the Pawars. Sena (UBT) is contesting on 65 seats of which MNS has been allotted 21. Nashik and Dhule's smaller Mahayuti parties – Shinde's Sena and Ajit Pawar's NCP have allied to take on the Thackerays-Sharad Pawar and the BJP which is going solo. Post-polls too fluidity among the Mahayuti partners is evident as it emerged winners in key councils of Ambarnath falling under Thane district, Parli in Beed and Akot in Akola. In Ambarnath, where polls were held on December 20, post-poll tussle have gotten ugly as BJP councillors allied with Congress and Ajit Pawar's NCP to form the 'Ambarnath Vikas Aghadi' – securing 31 seats in the 60-member council. This was to keep Shinde's Sena which had won 27 seats from taking control. While Congress expelled its 12 councillors (who promptly jumped to BJP), Sena wrested away NCP (which won 4 seats) from the Aghadi and secured one Independent's support. The Sena-led coalition has successfully elected Sadashiv Hender Patil as the deputy mayor along with five other members who were nominated to the council. Similarly, in Akot, BJP councillors had joined hands with ideological rival – All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) to form the 'Akot Vikas Manch' after elections. Prior to the polls, BJP had allied with NCP which in turn sought AIMIM's support after the elections. After CM Devendra Fadnis issued a rebuke to Akot MLA Prakash Bharsakale, the local BJP unit distanced itself from it. However, the BJP nominee for council president – Jiten Barethia was elected with the backing of the five AIMIM councillors. BJP's Mahayuti partners too seemed to have picked up the idea. In Parli, the NCP, which

## The importance of blue



In India, the colour blue has an age-old association with the struggles of the marginalised. In early 1859, peasants in Bengal, who had been exploited by white planters for decades, took a cue from a magistrate's notice that made the sowing of indigo non-obligatory, and for the first time refused to cultivate the plant. Though many historians have termed the protests that ensued as non-violent, some others say that besides non-cooperation – passive resistance and boycotting of Indians who served British planters – peasants attacked factories and defended themselves against armed goons sent by the planters. The Bengali bourgeoisie were careful not to antagonise the British government. This fence-sitting by the intellectuals may have been one of the reasons why this 'blue movement', which sustained for over a year, remained local and anti-planter, and did not develop into a larger anti-colonial campaign. Nearly 60 years after this episode, the indigo blue came back into focus. But this time, it was as the launch pad for an entirely new method of anti-colonial activism. One that played a pivotal role in freeing us from the colonial yoke in 1947.

Gandhi's first experiment with satyagraha, or civil disobedience, in India was in Champaran, Bihar, in 1917. Champaran was full of indigo plantations. The tenants of the plantation were bound by law to plant indigo on a portion of their land. 'This system was known as the tinkathia system, as three kathas out of twenty kathas (which make one acre) had to be planted with Indigo,' Gandhi noted. The tenants lived in oppressive conditions, and landlords used force and extortion to make sure they remained subjugated. Even when the price of indigo began falling, they had no choice but to grow the crop. Gandhi first went to Champaran on the invitation of Rajkumar Shukla, an agriculturalist. Very soon, he realised the gravity of the situation. He studied the problem, listened to the voices of the tenants, and mobilised public participation for a peaceful agitation. His overtures to the office-bearers of the planters' association were rudely rebuffed; he was an outsider.

Still, Gandhi's investigations were having an impact and made the government uneasy. He was issued a notice to leave Champaran, but he stayed on. Then the administration issued him a summons. The night before Gandhi was to appear in court, crowds gathered around the house where he was staying. The following day, the court was overflowing. In his characteristic style, Gandhi said, 'In my humble opinion it is a question of difference of opinion between the Local Administration and myself. I have entered the country with motives of rendering humanitarian and national service. I have done so in response to a pressing invitation to come and help the ryots, who urge they are not being fairly treated by the indigo planters... As a law-abiding citizen my first instinct would be, as it was, to obey the order served upon me. But I could not do so without doing violence to my sense of duty to those for whom I have come. I feel that I could just now serve them only by remaining in their midst... I venture to make this statement not in any way in extenuation of the penalty to be awarded against me, but to show that I have disregarded the order served upon me not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience to the higher law of our being, the voice of conscience.' Soon enough, the case was withdrawn. Gandhi continued his inquiry and recorded thousands of statements by tenants and held multiple public meetings. The result was the abolishment of the tinkathia system. The satyagraha began as a response to violence in the name of blue. Momentarily, blue also became the colour of ahimsa,

satyagraha and righteousness. But the dark blue of indigo soon faded from memory. It needed Ambedkar to bring it back into the public imagination. Ambedkar statues, seen in innumerable street corners across the length and breadth of the country, have him attired in a blue suit, holding the Constitution in one hand and urging us to move forward. There are many theories about how the association between blue and Dalit movements came about. Was it Ambedkar's favourite colour? Ambedkar's suit was a social statement and the choice of blue possibly just his preference. Some associate blue with the expanse of his vision and the non-discriminatory nature of the sky itself. Blue is also considered the colour of equality, representative of the working class. Buddhist and folklore associations with the colour blue have also been pointed out. We know that Ambedkar gave blue a political presence by choosing it as the colour of the flag of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation that he founded in 1942. Part XI of the amended Constitution of the Federation, published in 1955, states: 'The flag of the Federation shall consist of stars against a blue cloth cut in triangle.' The Republican Party of India, founded by Ambedkar in 1956, also had a blue flag.

In his *Riddles of Hinduism: An Exposition to Enlighten the Masses*, Ambedkar reviewed what the Puranas had to say on the origin of the varna system. He quoted from John Muir's translations of some sections of the Mahabharata and the vulgar version of Harivamsha. From the Mahabharata: 'The colour (varna) of the Brahmans was white; that of the Kshatriyas red; that of the Vaishyas yellow, and that of the Sudras black.' From Harivamsha: 'The Brahmans, beautiful (or, dear to Soma), were formed from an imperishable (akshara), the Kshatriyas from a perishable (kshara), element, the Vaisyas from alteration, the Sudras from a modification of smoke... Hence in the world men have become divided into castes, being of four descriptions, Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras... That the colours blue and black are used as interchangeable shades was not important in these correlations. The scholar Nick Allen demonstrates that equivalences between certain colours and people's social functions, nature and even appearance are found in many cultures. These cultural associations also reveal that people at the lowest rung of society are invariably allocated dark colours, very often blue or black. Allen calls black a 'non-colour' which is connected with the semiotics of inferiority and otherness. Although Ambedkar wrote this particular essay in the 1950s, he had been seriously engaging with the Hindu scriptures for a long time. This makes me wonder if his choice of blue was influenced by the association of this colour with shudras. Be that as it may, the blue has come to stay. Dalit protests across the country are flooded with blue flags. Political parties that represent Dalit communities have at least a spatter of blue on their emblems and flags. Homes are coloured blue; activists, musicians and movie makers use blue to signify battles against oppressors. The spirit of the blue has also changed with every generation of Dalit voices. It used to be about gentle appeals, then a strong collective demand. Today it is a forceful assertion of identity and rights, a powerful pushback that informs the oppressing majority that their time is up. The blue chakra is at the literal heart of the Indian flag, holding within itself the strength of the Dalit community and the spirit of civil disobedience. It is a reflection of our right to assemble peacefully and without arms. An assertion that we will assemble to protect our rights and ally with all those society forgets to notice. It is also a reminder of our unkept promises. Interestingly, Ambedkar doesn't seem to have been present in the Constituent Assembly on 22 July 1947, when the resolution to accept the flag was moved by Nehru. With the partition of Bengal, Ambedkar had ceased to be a member of the Constituent Assembly. In late June, an anxious Rajendra Prasad wrote to the prime minister of Bombay, asking him to elect Ambedkar so that he could attend the next session commencing on 14 July. Ambedkar was re-elected in July and signed in his credentials on the first day of the session. He came in on 21 July too, but is conspicuously absent on the next day. Perhaps he did not care very much for symbols and signs; it was minds and actions that needed to change. The blue wheel of dharma moves only when those on the periphery are placed at the hub of social,

## U.S. tariff threat puts India-Iran ties, BRICS plans under strain



India's ties with Iran have come under renewed pressure after U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Tuesday (January 13, 2026) that "any country" having trade ties with Iran would face a 25% tariff if it sought to do business with the United States. Government sources told The Hindu that India is preparing to bring down its trade with Iran further in the current financial year, citing "external economic factors". The developments have come even as India still last weekend, was getting ready to host Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian for the upcoming BRICS summit, which India will host this year as it marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of India-Iran diplomatic ties.

The U.S. policy on increasing pressure on Iran has also put a question mark on the expected visit of Iranian Foreign Minister Syed Abbas Araghchi to New Delhi later this month. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar announced India's vision for BRICS 2026 on Tuesday, saying that as BRICS Chair, India will highlight that the intergovernmental organisation is capable of absorbing "global shocks". India's policy on Iran will be keenly watched as the Islamic Republic is a member of BRICS of which India has been a founding member. Mr. Jaishankar spoke at an event to launch the logo of the upcoming BRICS summit that was attended by several envoys of BRICS member states, including Russian ambassador Denis Alipov and Iranian ambassador Mohammad Fathali. In the evening, Mr. Jaishankar announced that he had a telephonic conversation with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and informed that the conversation covered "trade, critical minerals, nuclear cooperation, defence and energy."

Against the backdrop of fast-paced moves, India's policy on Iran will be keenly watched as the Islamic Republic is a member of BRICS, of which India has been a founding member. At both bilateral and multilateral levels, the India-Iran relation was expected to see multiple high points this year as India was getting ready to broaden its presence

in Iran's Chabahar port, which is of crucial importance for both India's connectivity plans with Central Asia and Russia as well as for its newly unfolding partnership with the anti-Pakistan Taliban administration in Afghanistan. Iran joined BRICS as a full member on January 1, 2024, as the grouping expanded by including Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates at the 2023 summit in South Africa. Officials informed that as a member of the BRICS, Iran's President may not face legal hurdles while travelling to India for the summit. However, they indicated that Iran's escalating confrontation with the U.S. President has pushed the country into crisis for at least one month.

An official with knowledge of India's assessment of the situation said that the ongoing public protests in Iran – which are being supported by President Trump – pose a serious threat to the current regime in Tehran. The official added India's embassy is in contact with the Indian citizens in the Islamic Republic, where authorities have blacked out Internet connectivity. The welfare of Indians in Iran was expected to figure prominently during Mr. Araghchi's proposed visit, which would have been his second visit to India in less than a year. The Iranian Foreign Minister had last visited New Delhi in May 2025 after India launched Operation Sindoor against terror targets in Pakistani territory.

## Parties scout for winning candidates as Karimnagar municipal polls approach

Karimnagar: As the process for municipal elections resumes, political parties have begun searching for suitable candidates. Besides conducting surveys, several other methods are adopted to identify the best aspirants among leaders vying to contest the civic polls. There are two municipal corporations and 13 municipalities in the erstwhile Karimnagar district. While parties are looking for winning aspirants, leaders keen on contesting the elections are approaching party leadership circles to secure confirmed tickets. However, political parties determined to win a majority of civic bodies are scouting for capable candidates, irrespective of seniority. In almost all parties, senior leaders mount pressure on the leadership for tickets by projecting their seniority. However, the parties insist on giving tickets only to candidates with winning prospects.

## Decisive new factors in the Iranian conundrum



tors of trading, manufacturing and contracting. While Iran's President, Masoud Pezeshkian, recently claimed resolution of the merchants' grievances, the details have not been made public. It remains to be seen if the omnipotent IRGC, currently crucial to government survival, would agree to roll back their businesses. Second, while Tehran may have tactics to curb protests, the ruling elite lacks eco-political levers to fix the root causes of the recurring social convulsions. The Iranian leadership's steadfast pursuit of a nuclear and missile programme and support to regional proxies diverts scarce economic resources and triggers western economic sanctions, causing social angst.

Over two-thirds of Iranians were born after the Revolution and have different aspirations than their gerontocratic politico-theocratic leadership. They see the affluence of their Gulf Arab neighbours and hold the leadership responsible for their abject penury. They also notice the kleptocracy and corruption in the top echelons of power. Moreover, with radicals in control of the clergy, parliament and judiciary, and a relatively powerless executive, significant social groups, such as women and non-Shia minorities feel alienated. While the managed election of a moderate President in 2024 raised hopes, these have been belied due to regional turmoil. Third, the foreign abatement of the agitators has become mainstream, with U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu openly encouraging them with military threats to punish the Iranian regime and possibly replace it. However, they lack any smart and easy options, and the outcome of any precipitous foreign action cannot be guaranteed. In 1980, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein attacked Iran to exploit the post-Islamic revolutionary chaos, only to see all Iranians unite against foreign aggression. Moreover, Iran's Shia majority has a long tradition of glorifying martyrdom and sacrifice, making them more inured to foreign military threats. Despite its losses during the June 2025 military bout with Israel and the U.S., Iran retains sufficient retaliatory capability to thwart a repetition. Tehran's options include targeting U.S. interests in the geo-economically sensitive and febrile region, making the Gulf Arab states wary of paying for a U.S. military misadventure.

Moreover, when driven to a corner, Iran could close the Strait of Hormuz, raising global oil prices. Mr. Trump has often criticised his predecessors for dragging the U.S. into "endless wars" and has so far avoided having "boots on the ground", preferring surgical airborne strikes and smart economic coercion. Although he has been emboldened by his tactical success against President Nicolás Maduro Moros of Venezuela, there is a clear realisation that the multiplicity of power centres in Iran makes military decapitation a risky and even counter-productive endeavour. Instead, Mr. Trump is veering toward non-kinetic measures such as cyberattacks and the imposition of secondary punitive tariffs on the countries trading with Iran, encouraged by the outcome of a similar exercise in curbing Indian imports of Russian crude. Their efficacy remains uncertain as Iran has long been subject to Israeli cyberattacks and has a well-oiled sanctions-busting machinery in place, from marshalling cryptocurrencies to dark oil-tankers smuggling crude to China and dhows to Dubai (the world's largest trans-shipment port just 150 kilometres across the Persian Gulf). Despite U.S. pressure, China and the United Arab Emirates are Iran's top trading partners, with respective bilateral commerce estimated at \$40 billion and \$30 billion last year, totalling over half of the entire Iranian foreign trade. The proposed secondary sanctions by the U.S. may not curb such trade but only obfuscate it. Still, as a diversionary tactic, Tehran has offered to reopen talks with Washington. The notion that turmoil in Tehran is inconsequential for India is misplaced. First, any conflagration in Iran would affect the security and stability in the Gulf, where India has substantive stakes in terms of diaspora, oil supplies, remittances and trade and investments. Second, it would allow Pakistan to project itself as a dubious security arbiter to both Iran and the Gulf Arabs and earn brownie points with the White House. India also needs Iran to access Afghanistan and Central Asia. Third, after Iran, South Asia has the largest number of Shias, with their number in India estimated at around 25 million. They are natural stakeholders in what happens to their Iranian co-confessionals. Lastly, once four decades of western sanctions are lifted, the resuscitation of the Iranian economy would provide lucrative opportunities for India, particularly as Tehran has long pursued its version of Atmanirbharta.

## Avoid travelling to Iran: India issues fresh advisory

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Wednesday (January 14, 2026) issued an advisory against travelling to Iran amid ongoing unrest and widespread protests in Iran. "In view of the ongoing developments in Iran, Indian nationals are once again strongly advised to avoid travel to the Islamic Republic of Iran until further notice," the MEA said in a statement. The Indian Embassy in Iran also issued an advisory for Indian citizens living in Iran. "In continuation of the advisory issued by the Government of India on 5 January 2025, and in view of the evolving situation in Iran, Indian nationals who are currently in Iran (students, pilgrims, business persons and tourists) are advised to leave Iran by available means of transport, including commercial flights," the advisory said.



"It is reiterated that all Indian citizens and PIOs should exercise due caution, avoid areas of protests or demonstrations, stay in contact with the Indian Embassy in Iran and monitor local media for any developments," it further read. "All Indian nationals in Iran are requested to also have their travel and immigration documents, including passports and IDs, readily available with them. They are requested to contact the Indian Embassy for any assistance in this regard," it read. The Indian embassy listed the following emergency contact helplines: Mobile Numbers: +989128109115; +989128109109; +989128109102; +989932179359. Email: cons.tehran@mea.gov.in

"All Indian nationals who are in Iran, and who have not registered with the do SO on the Indian Embassy, are to requested link (<https://www.meaers.com/request/home>). The link is also available on the Embassy website. In case any Indian national is unable to register due to internet disruptions in Iran, their families in India are requested to do so," the MEA advisory said. The Ministry, on January 5, had said that "Indian citizens and PIOs currently in Iran should exercise due caution, avoid areas of protests or demonstrations, and closely monitor news as well as the website and social media handles of the Embassy of India in Tehran."

Indian nationals living in Iran on resident visas are advised to register with the Indian Embassy, if not already done so," the advisory further said. Earlier on Wednesday (January 14), the head of Iran's judiciary signalled there

would be fast trials and executions ahead for those detained in nationwide protests despite a warning from U.S. President Donald Trump. The comments from Iran's judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei come as activists had warned hangings of those detained could come soon. Already, a bloody security force crackdown on the demonstrations has killed at least 2,571, the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency reported. That figure dwarfs the death toll from any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades and recalls the chaos surrounding the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

## Centre plans Aadhaar-style ID for EV batteries for traceability

New Delhi: The road transport ministry has proposed a new system to give electric vehicle batteries a unique identification number, similar to Aadhaar, to improve tracking, safety and recycling.

The move is aimed at ensuring complete traceability of batteries from manufacturing to final disposal. Under the draft guidelines issued by the ministry, every battery producer or importer will be required to assign a 21-character Battery Pack Aadhaar Number, or BPAN, to each battery introduced in the market or used for self-consumption.

## CMF Headphone Pro Review: A versatile everyday option



After adding a twist to the smartphone segment, CMF by Nothing has stepped into a new gadget category: the overhead headphone. It has launched the CMF Headphone Pro, blending funk, practicality, and well-thought-out features, all for just ₹26,999. With Hi-Res certified sound, a 100-hour battery, adaptive ANC and a modular design that lets you express your style, CMF aims to redefine what everyday headphones can offer. The CMF Headphone Pro immediately stands out because of its modular design. The interchangeable ear cushions allow you to customise the look depending on your mood or outfit. It's quick and satisfying to swap them; just a gentle twist, and they come right off. This fresh approach turns a pair of headphones from a mere audio accessory into something personal.

CMF has focused on making these headphones practical for daily use, eschewing touch controls, which can be hit or miss, for physical buttons and dials. At the heart of this control system is an Energy Slider paired with a Multi-function Roller, letting you fine-tune bass and treble, adjust volume, manage playback, and control ANC with precision. There's also a customisable Action Button for quick access to features like Spatial Audio. On the right earcup, you'll find a dedicated button that lets you call up your Google Assistant instantly, which is great for setting reminders or changing tracks hands-free. The headphones also pack a clear on/off button and a 3.5mm audio jack for wired listening. And for charging, CMF includes a modern USB Type-C port that tops up the battery fast and can even draw power directly from your smartphone when you need it. Comfort is another area where CMF gets it right. The lightweight build and soft cushioned ear pads make these easy to wear for long hours. They served an additional purpose on chilly Delhi mornings, keeping my ears warm while blocking out the wind. The build quality feels tough and dependable, tested through 66 different durability checks, which means they're ready to handle the bumps and twists of daily life. Whether you're in the gym, on your commute or just relaxing at home, they sit snug and stable without feeling too tight.

Controls I've already mentioned some of the controls, but they're worth a closer look. The Energy Slider lets you change the feel of your music instantly, moving between bass-heavy punch and treble-rich clarity. It works in real time, too. The Multi-function Roller takes care of volume ad-

justments, playback, and noise cancellation. Its scroll-and-click style is satisfying and quick to use. Along with this, the Action Button offers one-tap access to features like Spatial Audio. Together, these controls make everyday interaction simple and reliable without forcing you to constantly reach for your phone.

Connectivity CMF Headphone Pro pairs up quickly with devices, whether phones, tablets, or laptops. Even without the Nothing X app, connecting is straightforward on both Android and iOS. Google Fast Pair and Microsoft Fast Pair make first-time pairing almost instant. If you install the Nothing X app, you unlock deeper control. You can tweak the EQ, customise buttons, adjust ANC intensity, and keep firmware updated. One standout feature in the app is the Audiobook personal sound profile test, which tunes the audio specifically for your hearing and stores it directly on the headphones. Your sound stays personalised no matter the device. Sound Quality The CMF Headphone Pro's sound quality is impressive for its price. The 40mm custom drivers with nickel-plated diaphragms deliver clear highs, detailed mids, and deep, satisfying bass. It's the kind of sound that feels balanced without losing energy. The Hybrid Adaptive ANC is especially good in everyday use. It adapts automatically to your surroundings and reduces ambient sound by up to 40dB. In crowded metros or busy street traffic, it works well to filter out noise and keep your listening peaceful. Spatial Audio adds depth to music and movies. Cinema mode creates a broad soundstage for clearer dialogue, while Concert mode pumps up the energy for live tracks. LDAC and dual Hi-Res certification mean high-resolution audio every time, whether you're listening wired or wireless. Call Quality Call quality on this gadget is solid for daily communication. The three HD microphones with Clear Voice Technology help keep your voice audible and reduce wind noise. Busy outdoor settings may demand a slightly louder voice; however, clarity remains good in most situations. Battery

The battery life is excellent, offering 100 hours of playback with ANC off and around 50 hours with ANC on. Even with mixed use, frequent recharging is not a challenge here. A 5-minute charge translates to around four hours of listening with ANC on; a full charge via the Type-C port takes under two hours. The ability to charge directly from your smartphone makes them even more practical, especially for those who travel or use headphones all day. Verdict CMF has packed modular style, strong audio performance, smart controls, and excellent battery life into the Headphone Pro, and kept the price reasonable, at under ₹26,999. The combination of interchangeable ear cushions, tactile sliders and rollers, a Google Assistant button, wired and wireless listening, and Adaptive ANC makes these headphones a versatile everyday option. Students and young professionals especially will like the blend of fashion and function offered by these headphones. But anyone looking for a comfortable, reliable, and feature-rich headset for daily use will find good value here.

## Accident leads to rescue of 'kidnapped' children in Dharwad; accused had a POCSO case against him in 2018



An accident at Joida in Uttara Kannada district on Monday (January 12, 2026) night helped in the miraculous rescue of two children who were allegedly kidnapped by a motorcyclist from a government school in Dharwad. The two children, Tanveer Dodmani and Lakshmi Kariyappanavar, were picked up on January 12 by the motorcyclist — later identified as Karim Mestri — from their school at Kamalapur in Dharwad during their lunch break, on the pretext of taking them to Ulavi Jatre (fair). Their disappearance from the school came to light in the evening, leading to panic among the public. The police launched a manhunt for the motorcyclist who was caught leaving the premises with the two kids in the CCTV of a shop near the school.

When the residents of Joida in the neighbouring Uttara Kannada district alerted the police about an accident involv-

ing a motorcyclist and two kids, they did not realise that their intervention had actually resulted in the children's rescue. It was only after the police reached the spot that the link to the kidnapping in Dharwad became clear. While the accused suffered injuries on his head and limbs, the children suffered minor injuries. They were initially treated at Joida taluk hospital and later brought back to Dharwad and treated at the district hospital before being reunited with their parents. On Tuesday (January 13, 2026), Hubballi Dharwad Police Commissioner N. Shashikumar visited district hospital in Dharwad and consoled the parents. Mr. Shashikumar said the accused Karim Mestri (50), now being treated at KMCR Hospital in Hubballi, had issued incoherent statements about taking the children with him. "He is a construction worker and said he loved children and had taken them to get them snacks. He also spoke of buying chocolates for them. But taking unknown children with him raises suspicion about his motive." Preliminary investigation has revealed that a POCSO case was registered against him in 2018 for taking a child into a forest, in which he had, subsequently, escaped too. And he is named in the history sheet of Haliyal Police Station. After his discharge from the hospital further interrogation will be conducted," he added. Clarifying that the parents of the children were not related to the accused, he said that fortunately, the children had returned safely. The Police Commissioner also said that in the presence of the parents and the police, the medical examination of the children was carried out and that the kids had suffered minor injuries.

## Inquiry panel to look into lapses that led to kidnap of children from school



Chief Executive Officer of the Dharwad Zilla Panchayat Bhuvanesh Patil has constituted an inquiry committee to look into the kidnap of two children from a government school at Kamalapur in Dharwad during school hours. Speaking to presspersons after meeting the rescued children getting treated at the District Civil Hospital in Dharwad on Wednesday, Deputy Commissioner Divya Prabhu G.R.J. said that based on the inquiry committee report, action will be taken against those responsible, if there have been any lapses. She said that the incident happened after the lunch hour and already, teachers, members of the school development and monitoring committee and parents have been informed about the safety guidelines. Instructions have also been issued to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in future, she added.

Ms. Divya Prabhu said that already the Zilla Panchayat

CEO has been directed to submit an action plan to the district administration for increasing security on school premises and implementing the requisite guidelines for ensuring safety of students. Earlier, she spoke to the children who suffered injuries in the accident which actually led to their miraculous rescue and collected information from them about the whole incident. Consoling the children's family members, she assured them of impartial investigation of the incident to ensure justice. Later, speaking to police officials, she said that the district administration has taken the case seriously and if there is any need for a special prosecutor to argue on their behalf, the police should submit a report to the district administration. Zilla Panchayat CEO Bhuvanesh Patil said that based on the report of the inquiry committee action will be taken against those responsible. During school hours, it is mandatory that teachers are on the school premises and taught students and also took care of their safety. Suitable directions have been issued in this regard, he said. CCTV cameras He also said that a circular will be issued to all government schools to install CCTV cameras on school premises. Steps will also be taken towards improvement of school infrastructure and construction of compound walls, he said. Deputy Director of School Education S.S. Keladimath, Block Education Officer Ramakrishna Sadalagi, District Surgeon Sangappa Gabi, District Health Officer S.M. Honaker, Assistant Commissioner of Police Prashanth Siddanagoudar and Deputy Director of Women and Child Development H.H. Kukanur were present.

# India talks trade expansion with China, a first after 2019 RCEP talks exit



For the first time since India pulled out of the China-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations in 2019, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal held bilateral talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Wentao on the sidelines of the 14th World Trade Organisation (WTO) interministerial conference in Cameroon last week. "I also met, after a long time, the minister from China with whom we discussed ways to expand trade, move towards more balanced trade and generate trust to help smooth bilateral trade between China and India and give greater opportunity for our exporters to export our pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, fish and farm products. All in all, a good start to generating greater opportunities for our exporters in China," Goyal said Thursday while speaking about bilateral engagements at the WTO.

The talks between the two ministers come at a time when trade tensions between the two countries, simmering since 2020, have been showing signs of easing. While China has eased restriction of rare earth magnets and stepped up imports of Indian goods, Delhi has also moderated its restrictions on Chinese investments. However, India has maintained its opposition to a China-led proposal at the WTO. After South Africa lifted its opposition to the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD), India was the only country blocking the investment agreement. "India has successfully been able to ensure that a plurilateral like Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) cannot be brought into the Annexure 4 of the Marrakesh agreement," Goyal said. "It is important that we do not let issues which are not a part of the mandate of the WTO creep into the WTO agreement. And, therefore, India stood on its principles and what we believe is right. But because of that, it has not changed the dimension of our multifaceted relationship with any other set of countries or any other country," he said, adding that proper guardrails should come into the plurilateral agreement. The China-backed IFD agreement aims to improve the investment climate and promote international cooperation to facilitate the flow of foreign direct investment among WTO members by aligning facilitating policies with global benchmarks. Support for the agreement has grown rapidly. Since it was first discussed in 2017, support for the agreement grew from 70 countries to 128 (out of 166 WTO members) as of last year. During the ministerial meeting that concluded last week, India was the only country opposing it.

India has maintained that incorporating the IFD through a plurilateral route raises broader questions about the WTO's future, which is traditionally based on multilateralism and consensus. New Delhi-based think tank Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) said the IFD has additional strategic considerations for India. The report said its significant feature is its overlap with Chinese connectivity and infrastructure initiatives, especially the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Of the 128 IFD participants, 98 are also members of China's flagship BRI. India-China relations had taken a hit following Chinese incursions along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh, more so after the Galwan Valley clash in June 2020. A month before the clash, India had imposed restrictions on investments from China through Press Note 3 (PN3) in April 2020, making government approval mandatory for investments from countries sharing a land border with India. The move was aimed at preventing opportunistic takeovers during the Covid-19 pandemic and had remained in force amid heightened national security concerns following the Galwan clash. Last month, the government set a 60-day deadline for processing and deciding investment proposals from countries sharing a land border in specified manufacturing sectors. The PN3 was primarily meant for Chinese investors, as entities of Bangladesh and Pakistan can invest only under the government route, while investments from other border-sharing countries, such as Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan and Afghanistan, are very small as a share of India's total foreign investment inflows.

Last month reported that the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) for India's maiden bullet train project is set to arrive in Mumbai, marking a major step forward for the 21-km tunnel stretch of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) project. The long-awaited machine, designed to excavate tunnels, is required to complete the tunnel in Mumbai for the project. The 3,000-tonne machine is supplied by German company Herrenknecht. The availability of the machine had been a concern for Delhi because China was blocking its export to India. In 2024, Goyal had confronted a German minister regarding the blocking of the machine. In a video of an interaction between Goyal and Germany's Vice Chancellor Robert Habeck during a Metro train ride in Delhi, the Commerce Minister was heard telling Habeck that India was to get some TBMs from Herrenknecht that the company was making in China, but China was not allowing the sale of those machines to India. A spokesperson for Herrenknecht later told The Indian Express, "For several months now, we have been observing extraordinary circumstances in the customs clearance processes for machines to be delivered from China to India. These are hindering us from fulfilling our delivery obligations as expected and, in some cases, entirely."

# Govt gives full customs duty exemption on critical petrochemical products till June 30



With an aim to reduce cost pressure for downstream sectors and key industries using petrochemical products as primary inputs amid the ongoing West Asia war, the government has given full customs duty exemption on critical petrochemical products till June 30. "In light of the ongoing conflict in West Asia and the consequent disruptions in global supply chains, the Government of India has decided to provide full Customs Duty exemption on critical petrochemical products till 30th June, 2026," the Ministry of Finance said in a statement.

This measure has been taken as a "temporary and targeted relief" in order to ensure continued availability of critical petrochemical inputs for domestic industry, reduce cost pressures on downstream sectors, and safeguard supply stability in the country, the Ministry said. Exemption is expected to be helpful for sectors dependent on petrochemical feedstock and intermediates such as plastics, packaging, textiles, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, automotive components, and other manufacturing segments. "This will also provide relief to consumers of final products," the Ministry said. The customs duty exemption for petrochemical products for three months is expected to have a revenue loss of Rs 1,800 crore for the government, an official said. Since the global geopolitical and economic situation is dynamic, the revenue implication figure is not final and needs to be seen in that context, the official added. About 40 petrochemical products have been given the customs duty exemption including anhydrous ammonia, toluene, styrene, dichloromethane, methanol, acetic acid, ammonium nitrate, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polyols, polycarbonates, polyurethanes, and poly butadiene, styrene butadiene.

With an increase in crude oil prices following the Israel-US strikes on Iran on February 28 and the continuing conflict, industries have faced cost pressures and sourcing gaps for ensuring smooth supplies for production. From shortage of gas availability for car paint shops to technical grade urea in the automotive value chain to increase in price of sulphuric acid — a critical input in fertilisers — to glass and other packaging materials, the supply chains for many industries have been disrupted. Domestic petrochemical production has been hit due to the government-mandated diversion of important feedstock streams—butane and propane—to maximise the production of LPG, a critical fuel on which crores of Indian households depend. Moreover, the government has also restricted natural gas supplies to petrochemical plants and refineries in a bid to ensure that high-priority sectors get adequate natural gas supplies. As much as 90% of India's LPG imports and around 60% of liquefied natural gas imports came from West Asia via the Strait of Hormuz. The government has been taking a series of measures to address the supply-chain bottlenecks. On Friday, the Centre had increased the allocation of commercial LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) to states and union territories by another 20%, bringing the total to 70% of the pre-crisis level, to meet the requirements of industries. The additional allocation was meant for labour-intensive industries and those providing support to other essential sectors, with priority to steel, automobiles, textiles, dyes, chemicals and plastics. Special priority is being given to process industries or those requiring LPG for specialised heating purposes that cannot be substituted by natural gas.

Also, the government has made it mandatory for commercial and industrial consumers of LPG to register with public sector fuel retailers, and also apply for a piped natural gas (PNG) connection to become eligible to get commercial LPG, with exceptions for industries where LPG is used for special processes or purposes and cannot be replaced by natural gas. On Wednesday, the government announced a one-time concessional measure for manufacturers in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) for one year allowing eligible manufacturing units in SEZs to undertake sales to the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) at concessional rates of duty. Before that, the Reserve Bank of India extended an earlier concession for exporters by allowing pre- and post-shipment export credit to run for up to 450 days for all disbursements made till June 30. In November last year, the RBI had extended the credit window from 270 to 450 days for loans sanctioned up to March 31, 2026 in view of the impact due to the US tariffs.

# RBI grants approval to Emirates NBD Bank to acquire up to 74pc stake in RBL Bank

New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has accorded approval to Dubai-based Emirates NBD Bank to acquire up to a 74 per cent stake in RBL Bank, paving the way for the bank to become a foreign lender. The approval from RBI came on April 1 with one year validity, RBL Bank said in a regulatory filing on Thursday. The approval follows Emirates NBD Bank, the second largest in UAE, expressing its interest in October 2025 to acquire a majority 60 per cent stake in RBL Bank for Rs 26,853 crore. As per the approval letter, the Emirates NBD (ENBD) would acquire and maintain a shareholding of at least 51 per cent of the paid-up share capital of the RBL Bank and the bank would be classified as a foreign bank in subsidiary mode, with the Investor as its parent foreign bank. "The provisions applicable to foreign banks operating in wholly owned subsidiary mode, as set out in Chapter IV of the Reserve Bank of India (Commercial Banks – Governance) Directions, 2025 dated November 28, 2025, shall be applicable to the bank, except the requirement to have at least half of the directors attending board meetings to be independent directors shall not apply," it said. The bank has been advised to suitably amend its Articles of Association and obtain approval of the RBI in this regard, and the bank will take the necessary steps accordingly, it said. The Reserve Bank has no objection to ENBD being classified as the promoter of RBL Bank, subject to applicable Securities and Exchange Board of India regulations, it said. The voting rights of ENBD shall be capped at 26 per cent of the total voting rights of RBL Bank, in accordance with section 12(2) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, it said. The ENBD is exempted from the requirement of single mode of presence until the Indian branches of the investor are amalgamated with the Bank, or within one year, whichever is earlier, it said. It further said that the RBI approval is subject to receipt of necessary approval from Government of India for investment beyond 49 per cent in the bank under the approval route and compliance with the relevant provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

# "Is Netanyahu real or AI?" | Generative AI warps truth of West Asia war



Speculation spiraled online that Netanyahu might be dead or wounded in an Iranian strike and that Israel was covering it up with a double generated by artificial intelligence. "Last time I checked, humans usually don't have 6 fingers... AI does," said one post on X, garnering nearly five million views. "Is Netanyahu no more?" Digital forensics researchers were quick to explain the "extra" finger: a trick of light that made part of his palm resemble an additional digit. But that message was largely drowned out in the online uproar. It also mattered little that advanced AI visual generators, now capable of churning out uncannily real-looking deepfakes within seconds, have largely erased the oncelitelltale glitch of extra fingers. So how do you prove what's real is real when the line between reality and fabrication has blurred so much in the fog of the West Asia war?

A few days later, Netanyahu posted another video: a proof-of-life clip from a coffee shop. He held both hands up as if to challenge skeptics to count his fingers. But instead of quelling the speculation, the video fuelled a new wave of unfounded theories.

"More AI," said one viral Threads post, questioning why his cup remained full after a large sip. Suspicion reigned even after Netanyahu posted a third video, this one with the US ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee. Some online sleuths zoomed in on Netanyahu's ears, claiming their shape and size did not match older images. AFP's global network has produced more than 500 debunkings of false information in multiple languages since the conflict began, a rate never before seen in such a crisis. Between a quarter and a fifth of them used AI. The Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Israel-Gaza war and the conflict between India and Pakistan all triggered waves of AI-generated content.

What sets the West Asia war apart is the sheer volume, and realism of AI images produced by advanced tools that are cheap and capable of eliminating many of the old signs of manipulation, researchers say. Tech platforms are now saturated with what is widely dubbed "AI slop". The result is a deepening crisis of trust as hyper-realistic AI fabrications compete for attention with, and often drown out, authentic images and videos. "I think at this time we all need to start treating photos, video and audio on the same footing as hearsay," Thomas Nowotny, who leads an AI research group at the University of Sussex in the UK, told AFP.

The issue for Constance de Saint Laurent, a professor at Ireland's Maynooth University, "is not so much that people believe" disinformation, it is "that they see real news and they don't trust it anymore." The volume of fakes has largely outpaced the verification capacity of professional fact-checkers. The work often feels like a game of whack-a-mole. Debunked claims routinely resurface across platforms awash with fakes, a pattern some researchers call "zombie" misinformation.

Algorithms amplify content based on engagement, and engagement is often driven by sensationalism, outrage and misinformation. Social media platforms "act as editors through what they decide to show to their users, primarily through their feed. And very often, that includes harmful content and misinformation," said Saint Laurent. Financial incentives further accelerate the problem. Some platforms, including X, allow creators to earn revenue based on engagement, encouraging influencers to push misleading or entirely fabricated content for clicks. According to the London-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), a network of X accounts posting AI content about the West Asia war has amassed more than one billion views since the conflict began. In another viral example, an X account posted an AI video appearing to show Dubai's Burj Khalifa skyscraper collapsing in a cloud of dust. "10 million views and no Community Note. We cooked ya'll," information warfare analyst Tal Hagin wrote on X 20 hours after it was posted.

By the time a Community Note, a crowd-sourced verification system, whose effectiveness has been repeatedly questioned by researchers, was appended to the post a few hours later, the video had more than 12 million views. Synthetic content has continued to proliferate on X even after the Elon Musk-owned platform announced that it would penalise creators, suspending them from its revenue-sharing programme for 90 days, if they post AI war videos without a label. Meme-driven AI content that trivialises conflict as it spreads misinformation is increasingly crowding out reality on digital platforms, in what ISD researchers call the "Legofication" of war propaganda. A spoof Iranian AI

# Sunaina Roshan opens up about 'reversing' grade 3 fatty liver; shares how her 'unbreakable' spirit helped: 'Was addicted to junk, alcohol'



Sunaina Roshan, 54, opened up about her "unbreakable" spirit, sharing how she managed to "reverse" her grade 3 fatty liver with discipline. "Discipline saved my life, and I don't say that lightly. I was diagnosed with grade 3 fatty liver. I was addicted to junk food, and alcohol addiction made it even worse. And I didn't realise how much it was affecting my body. When I saw my reports, I had two choices — ignore them or heal my body. So, I made one decision," she shared in a post on Instagram.

The film producer, who is the sister of actor Hrithik Roshan, continued, "Exercising regularly, eating healthy but delicious home-cooked meals, and choosing my health first. I trained, I moved, I showed up even when I didn't feel like it. And I managed to reverse my grade 3 fatty liver through my unbreakable spirit. If your body is asking you to change, listen and act on it." Agreeing, Dr Swapnil Sharma, consultant liver transplant and gastrointestinal surgeon, Wockhardt Hospitals, Mumbai Central, said timing is important. "Even advanced fatty liver can improve, and sometimes reverse, if action is taken before permanent scarring, or cirrhosis, develops. The liver can heal itself, but it needs consistent changes. Weight loss, a better diet, and reducing alcohol intake are the three most crucial factors," said Dr Sharma.

How big a role does discipline play in recovery? Fatty liver doesn't develop overnight, and it won't resolve overnight either. "Regular exercise, careful eating habits, and avoiding triggers like alcohol and processed foods create the right environment for the liver to heal. In this case, discipline isn't about being perfect; it's about showing up every day," said Dr Sharma. The focus should be on simple, balanced, home-cooked meals. "Diets high in vegetables, enough protein, whole grains, and healthy fats can help reduce fat buildup in the liver. At the same time, cutting back on sugar, refined carbohydrates, and fried foods is essential. Many people underestimate how much sugary drinks

I trained, I moved, I showed up even when I didn't feel like it, shared Sunaina

and packaged foods can worsen fatty liver. Physical activity is one of the strongest tools available. "It improves insulin sensitivity, helps burn stored fat, and directly reduces liver fat. Even moderate activities, such as brisk walking, strength training, or cycling, when done regularly, can lead to noticeable improvement. The key is to keep it sustainable, not intense," said Dr Sharma. Is alcohol a major factor even in non-alcoholic fatty liver cases? Even in cases called non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, now called MASLD, alcohol can speed up damage. "For someone already diagnosed with Grade 3 fatty liver, it is strongly advised to avoid alcohol completely to prevent further strain on the liver," said Dr Sharma.

## Travishek come to the party for Sunrisers, while KKR batters implode in another damaging defeat to start season



GNS News Agency, April 3

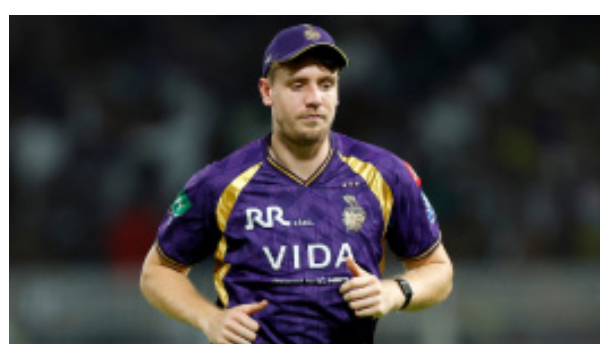
Kolkata Knight Riders, coming in from the cold after a thrashing in the hands of the Mumbai Indians at Wankhede, hoped to find some semblance of victory's warmth at the Eden Gardens. But after a humbling at the hands of the Sunrisers Hyderabad by 65 runs on Thursday, KKR were left with more questions than answers. With their decent batting lineup failing to fire, except Angkrish Raghuvanshi's half-century, two run-outs involving the youngster led to chaos and summed up their struggles. KKR batters implode

Overhauling 226 was going to be a tall ask with Kolkata needing an explosive start that mirrored Hyderabad's beginning. With a less-than-ideal bowling lineup at SRH's disposal, Finn Allen went into beast mode straightaway, slamming David Payne for 25 runs in the first over. However, Harsh Dubey slammed the brakes, taking out the New Zealander in the next over. SRH skipper Ishan Kishan persisted with spin, curiously bringing Abhishek Sharma into the proceedings in just the 3rd over, laying bare Hyderabad's bowling depth's frailties. He ended up conceding 15 as Raghuvanshi, in at No. 3, mined him for 2 sixes. KKR reached a quick-fire 50 in the 4th over as Raghuvanshi kept going hard, slamming 2 boundaries off the 5th by Jaydev Unadkat but the SRH bowler had the last laugh, sending back KKR skipper Ajinkya Rahane for just 8 runs. New man Cameron Green departed in the very next over for just 2 runs after a horrible mix-up with Raghuvanshi as SRH wrested the momentum back, leaving KKR at 74/3 after the powerplay. Sunrisers Hyderabad players look at the screen during Match 6 of the TATA Indian Premier League 2026. (Photo by Sumeet Parmar / CREIMAS for IPL) Raghuvanshi did not have much time to dwell on the miscommunication with KKR's chase placed precariously

on his and Rinku Singh's shoulders. The 21-year-old kept his head down and motored along, bringing up his fifty off 27 balls, breathing a bit of life in the innings as Kolata brought up their 100 in the 10th over. Raghuvanshi, however, was in the middle of another mix-up with Rinku and lost his wicket, with the senior partner displeased with the lack of communication. Rinku wouldn't last long either, edging to Unadkat off Nitish Reddy as KKR's hopes quickly faded.

The toss at Eden Gardens presented a dilemma for both teams due to their relatively weak bowling attacks, which failed to defend 200+ scores in their opening matches. Even if they did bat first, would their respective bowling lineups be able to box in the opposition in the second act? Rahane eventually went with the tried and tested decision of choosing to chase. The decision looked to have backfired immediately with Travis Head grabbing a hat-trick of boundaries inside the first couple of overs while Abhishek chipped in with a six. The Australian kept up his aggression, slamming two sixes and two fours off the third over bowled by Vaibhav Arora which forced Rahane to bring in Sunil Narine and Varun Chakaravathy within the powerplay. While the West Indies allrounder yielded just 3, Varun's rough patch continued with Abhishek mining him for 25 runs, courtesy of two sixes and three fours. Tyagi ultimately sent back Head for 46 off 21 but SRH had their tails up, reaching 84/1 in the powerplay. Abhishek continued his merry way, not even sparing the economical Narine, taking a four and a six as SRH posted their 100 in just the 8th over, with captain Ishan Kishan also joining the party with some cracking hits before holing out to Rinku for 14 off Blessing Muzarabani. The lanky Zimbabwean struck once again in the same over, sending Abhishek back for 48 as KKR found a way back into the match. Anukul was the next to strike, snapping up Aniket Verma for 1 as Hyderabad's momentum came to a screeching halt after the explosive start. With the KKR spinners finding more of a say as the match wore on, SRH went boundary-less for almost three straight overs before Nitish managed to squeak one in. KKR, however, failed to take advantage of the quick wickets, leading to Heinrich Klaasen and Nitish stitching an 82-run fifth-wicket partnership. By the time Vaibhav sent Nitish back for 39 in the 19th, SRH had already touched 200. Klaasen ended up completing his 50 in the last over but was snapped by Muzarabani for his third wicket of the night before the seamer completed a 4-wicket haul, impressing on his home debut. But it was only a silver lining at the end of another thrashing.

## 'Cam Green doesn't fit in this team': Former India bowler wants Aussie all-rounder to be dropped from KKR playing XI



GNS News Agency, April 3

Former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh has observed that Kolkata Knight Riders' faith in their record signing Cameron Green may be misplaced, and that the Aussie all-rounder does not find room in an ideal XI after two successive defeats. After losing their opening match in Mumbai, where Green, who is currently restricted from bowling by Cricket Australia (CA) made 18 runs, the Knights lost their first match at home at the Eden Gardens on Thursday to SunRisers Hyderabad by 65 runs. Involved in a run-out mix-

up with wicketkeeper-batter Angkrish Raghuvanshi, the 26-year-old Green only scored two runs during a 227-run chase against SRH. Without offering services with the ball, KKR's Rs 25.20 crore auction buy is not worth game time, according to Harbhajan.

The two-time World Cup winner said that KKR could instead bolster their batting by roping in the in-form New Zealand star Tim Seifert who lit up the recent T20 World Cup or West Indies powerhouse Rovman Powell. "I feel that Cameron Green doesn't fit in this team, and the simple reason is that he isn't bowling. The team should bring in Tim Seifert and have him open the innings, because if Cameron Green isn't going to bowl, there are better options available purely as a batter. That option is Seifert. Then there's Rovman Powell, who could also be played," Harbhajan said on his YouTube channel. With two defeats, KKR are reeling at the bottom of the points table with concerns on both bowling and batting fronts. "Now suddenly KKR's team must be feeling the pressure because they have lost both of their first two matches, one at home and one away. If they want to make a comeback from here, they need to fix a few things. First, they have been hit hard in both matches, first by Mumbai and now at home by SRH," said Harbhajan.

## 12 defeats in 20 matches: 'Ruturaj Gaikwad's captaincy a big question mark,' says former CSK batter

GNS News Agency, April 3

Ruturaj Gaikwad's returns as Chennai Super Kings captain are yet to find a stable position across three seasons in the IPL. Suffering a crushing eight-wicket defeat to Rajasthan Royals in CSK's IPL 2026 opener on Monday in Guwahati, Gaikwad's captaincy record has plunged to 12 defeats in 20 matches.

Last year, an injury situation ruled Gaikwad out of the season, prompting MS Dhoni to return as captain before CSK finished at the bottom of the league standings. The meek surrender in the opening game against Rajasthan has also raised questions over Gaikwad's leadership nous, led by former CSK batter S Badrinath. Badrinath highlighted Gaikwad's negative win-loss record as captain and challenged his decision-making skills.

"His [Gaikwad] captaincy has been a big question mark. The side's energy seemed very low in the last match. His decisions are also questionable. And his captaincy record is also not good." Speaking ahead of CSK's second match against Punjab Kings at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai, Gaikwad conceded that his fledgling group of players must be allowed to make mistakes. "Till last year, we had the best experienced players available playing for our team. So, nothing much was really needed or any inputs were not needed for them. Looking at this team now, it is a very young team. Obviously, excitement is there. But, at the same time, you know, there is a lot of difference be-



tween experienced players and inexperienced players.

"So, you have to allow them to make mistakes. You have to allow them to express themselves. You have to make sure that they are in a good headspace. That is what my and Fleming or the whole coaching management job is. So, that is what we are trying to do," Gaikwad told reporters. The Maharashtra batter also admitted that the pressure of the IPL environment also takes a toll on the players. "In IPL there is lot of pressure from families, from media, from team members, everyone. So, to cope that and to just get into that IPL performance mode it takes time. It is about giving them time. And when this batting lineup starts clicking, I think that is the one to look up," Gaikwad said.

## 'Kisi ko kuch prove nahi karna': Arjun Tendulkar on dogs, Boost ad, and why he sat with the ball boys

Arjun Tendulkar — three weeks married, first day at a new franchise, Lucknow instead of Mumbai — is trying to explain what comfort zone means to him. Speaking on Shubhankar Mishra's YouTube channel before the start of the IPL season, the interviewer suggests leaving one is a big deal. Arjun disagrees, quietly. "Comfort zone se nahi nikla hoon main. Idhar bhi maza aa raha hai." Same enjoyment, different city. His face doesn't change when he says it. He is twenty-five, carries the most famous surname in the history of Indian sport, and none of that, he is telling you, is the point.

There is a version of this story that writes itself — the son emerging from a giant shadow, the weight of a name, the struggle to be seen. Arjun knows that version. He has been living adjacent to it his whole life. He declines to perform it. "Kisi ko kuch prove nahi karna. Main bas cricket apne passion ke liye khelta hoon. And I work hard." Nobody to prove anything to. Just the game and the passion. There is a Kanga League afternoon from about ten years ago that tells you something. A dry monsoon in Mumbai, coarse maidan grass, an under-prepared pitch. Arjun had just been bowled off an inside edge. Chai was going around in white plastic cups, and a teammate turned to pass one on. "Eh, chai peeyega?" Arjun shook his head. The boy let fly some snark: "Haan haan, tu toh Boost hi piyega na?" — a reference to the TV ad, to the father, to everything that followed the name. Arjun went quiet and stared ahead. He sat alone in the crowd. He was a teenager then. Learning, among other things, that the name opened some doors and made others harder to walk through.

At his father's farewell Test in 2013, Arjun was initially in the stands with his family. But on successive days he slipped away to sit with the other ball boys — his teammates from the Mumbai junior circuit, kids his own age doing an ordinary job. He wanted to be with them, not in the family enclosure. "Two stress fractures" is how he accounts for the years when other people's sons were becoming household names. The back went first. 2015. Two stress fractures, back to back. The action had to be rebuilt from scratch. "Ek saal gaya." One year gone. "It was my make-or-break year in U-19 and I had to miss the whole year." That window closed while he was doing the slow, unglamorous work of relearning how to bowl. There were more challenges after that. "Boolunga toh time nahi jayega," he says. If I start listing them, we'll be here all night. But the back is the one he names.



His first wicket in professional cricket was Bhuvneshwar Kumar — who once dismissed Sachin Tendulkar for a duck in a Ranji match. When the interviewer points this out, Arjun looks briefly surprised. "Pata bhi nahi tha mujhe. Frankly kuch nahi pata tha." Five years at Mumbai Indians. More time on the bench than in the middle. The question arrives: didn't it frustrate you, not getting more games? "Hamesha lagta hai. Kisi ko nahi lagta?" It always feels that way. Who wouldn't feel that? But the only thing in his hands is the work — "mehnat karo aur jab mauka aaye toh performance karo." At Lucknow Super Giants, new coaches are adding new layers. Bharat Arun, who shaped Bumrah and Shami, is now shaping him. In a practice match he bowled one over, took two wickets, gave seven runs. He reports them without modesty or pride. Just the facts of a working cricketer. In Lucknow, he went to the old city and ate biryani and shami kababs. The dogs are in Goa. Five of them. When the interviewer asks how he keeps himself calm — apne aap ko cool kaise rakhte ho — that is his answer. No stats, no social media, friends who talk about other things. Five years from now, the interviewer asks: Indian team, IPL star — or a happily successful person who lived life on his own terms and gave it everything he had? "Apne aap ko khush rakho. Kisi ka nuksaan mat karo. Imaandari se zindagi jiyo. Fraud mat karo." Keep yourself happy. Don't harm anyone. Live honestly. Don't cheat. His father's advice to him runs along the same lines: "Mehnat karo. Poori imaadari se mehnat karo. Game enjoy karo. Shortcuts mat doondho." Work hard. Work honestly. Enjoy the game. Don't look for shortcuts. Father and son, saying the same thing in different words. One earned it across twenty-four years of international cricket. The other is earning it his own way.

## Iga Swiatek trains with Rafael Nadal at his academy ahead of clay court season: 'He's the person I can turn to'

GNS News Agency, April 3

Six-time Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek has revealed that Rafael Nadal remains a key source of guidance in her career, as she trained at his academy ahead of the clay-court season. Swiatek, who is preparing for the upcoming Stuttgart Open starting April 13, was seen practising at Nadal's academy with the 22-time Grand Slam champion by her side. The Pole said the Spaniard has always been approachable and willing to offer advice when needed. "You know, Rafa is my idol and basically the only person I watched play tennis as a child. He was also kind enough to talk to me several times during his career and give me tips. He's the person I can turn to if I need help or have a problem. Having someone so experienced — the best, the GOAT, in fact — is obviously a fantastic opportunity, and I'll take advantage of it if I can," Swiatek told Sport.pl. She added that while Nadal has always been approachable, she would prefer to keep the details of their interactions private. "Rafa is very open. He's a great guy. Just having his number and being able to contact him is a huge honour. But honestly, whether he helped me or not, I'd like to keep it between us, because he's part of this story. I wouldn't want to put him in



an awkward position," she added. The 24-year-old recently made a coaching change, parting ways with Wim Fissette and bringing in Francisco Roig, who had worked closely with Nadal during his career. The move has drawn praise from six-time Grand Slam champion Boris Becker. Swiatek also addressed her split with Fissette, saying it was a carefully considered decision rather than a reaction to a single result. "This is between us."

## Telangana thrash Gujarat 20-0 in sub junior men's hockey championship



GNS News Agency, April 3

Rajgir: Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Delhi Hockey, Telangana Hockey and Chhattisgarh Hockey registered notable wins in their respective matches on the second day of the 16th Hockey India Sub Junior Men National Championship 2026 at the Rajgir Hockey Stadium in Bihar on Thursday.

In the first match of the day, Hockey Andhra Pradesh secured a 3-1 win against Le Puducherry Hockey in Pool A of Division C. Surya Ganesh Kataru Pradeep (13'), Chaitanya Lanka Chaitanya Yesu (19') and captain Maduru Ganga (27') scored for the winners. For Le Puducherry Hockey, Dharshan (58') netted their only goal. The second

match of the day in the same division saw Hockey Mizoram beat Assam Hockey 6-0. Joseph Malsawmtluanga (5', 33', 54') bagged a hat-trick, with captain Malsawmkima (12'), Vanlalhmangaiha (38') and Lalmangaihualla (48') also scoring.

In Pool A of Division B, Delhi Hockey registered a 9-1 victory against Hockey Bengal. Aryan (4', 14'), captain Yuvraj Singh (10', 22'), Sushant Sehrawat (26', 58') and Siddharth (29', 53') all scored a brace each, with Luv (24') also adding to the tally. Ayush Pradhan (13') scored for Hockey Bengal. In the same pool, Telangana Hockey overpowered Hockey Gujarat with a 20-0 win. Amit Dayal (5', 21', 22', 37', 41', 47', 50', 52', 55', 56') had a day to remember, while Hadrian Lawrance (2', 20'), Harsh Kumar Gautme (4', 7'), Akhil Gogula (24', 34'), Gyaneshwar Pittala (12'), Pendor Dhanraj (26'), Eslavath Yuvaraj (35') and captain Yashith Jala Surya (44') also scored. In Pool B of Division B, Hockey Karnataka played out a 2-2 draw against Hockey Arunachal. Captain Adarsh Govind Mutagar (18', 54') scored for Hockey Karnataka, while captain Kumar Shashank (4') and Ashwani Patel (45') netted for Hockey Arunachal. In the final game of the day from the same pool, Chhattisgarh Hockey prevailed 7-2 against Hockey Himachal. Captain Piyush Kumar Sahu (30', 38', 60') netted a hat-trick, with Yogesh Thakur (39'), Om Kumar Yadav (47'), Aadsh Raj Singh (51') and Abhishek Yadav (53') also scoring. Sidhant Kaushal (13') and Daksh (59') scored for Hockey Himachal.

## How Javokhir Sindarov out-prepared the preparation master and Candidates favourite Fabiano Caruana

GNS News Agency, April 3

It's still early days in the chess candidates, but Uzbek Javokhir Sindarov, just 20 like R Praggnanandhaa, is troubling the big names, with stellar preparation. One of the many GMs with teen Seconds — Sindarov trains with Mukhiddin Madaminov, 19 — Sindarov impressed with outsmarting Caruana with this particular line, playing Queen's Gambit Accepted, playing literally 16 moves on sheer preparation. "We worked very good with my seconds and we prepared very well and I checked every line which he can play. I thought he would play GA (Queen Gambit Accepted), I thought I needed to repeat the line and I was lucky to get this until move 16 and everything went fantastic," Sindarov who leads with 3.5/4 told Lichess.org. All the by-hearing and preparation came in handy with his stellar combination of c6, and bishop takes knight d4 — a move played in seconds, which had he sat down to calculate might've taken considerably longer. "It was my preparation. If I needed to think about this move, I would have spent 20 minutes. But I played so quickly," he told Lichess.

However on the line f5, of Fabiano, Sindarov said there was no preparation. The calculating mind then stepped in, though he knew the broad contours of where he would like to be. "After rook g8 I forgot about the bishop e4, but in file I remember if you take queen d4 at some position, and if I

need to play g3f3, so I thought rook g8, g3 also cannot be so bad and also h7 pawn was hanging so I thought I have a bit of advantage. But after f5. I realised I'm already very good, and after bishop c4 it should be a very good advantage," Sindarov said. The Uzbek, a winner at World Cup and bronze medalist from last Asian Games, said it was one of his finest. "This game will make my list of 60 best games because I played really well and in all critical moments I found best moves."

His pre-meditation of what Caruana was likely to do meant Sindarov collected previous minutes on the clock to store them away to put time pressure on Fabiano. "My idea was to play solid, but after he forgot his lines I knew I needed to put pressure. I was playing with white so of course I needed to put pressure. If he played well, then it should be draw."

But I was lucky to get 16 moves with my preparation and a big time advantage at the same time," he told Lichess. Sindarov has used up two whites against two lowest seeds, but also beaten two favourites Caruana, and Praggnanandhaa. The Indian surprised him with queen a4, pinned him fair bit too, but Sindarov who had lost plenty to the Indian as junior came fighting in Round 3 to hand the Indian an avenging defeat, where the usually adept at time trial Indian, was caught scrambling 10 moves in 5 minutes.

## Maamla Legal Hai 2 review: Ravi Kishan show builds on its strengths, with only a few missteps



GNS News Agency, April 3

The court com, as I'd dubbed it in 2024 when it popped up as a streaming choice, broke the clutter. It had a distinct voice and tonality: a lower court in India's capital, with the kind of characters and creatures that go with the surroundings, and a handful of cases, some serious, some quirky, all culled from real-life incidents which make the headlines in small fonts in smudged newsprint. It's tough to do a serio-comic show around legal matters, but Maamla Legal Hai pulled it off with just a few hiccups. This time around, the court com has ironed out the kinks, and except for the odd episode which doesn't land, it builds on exactly that tone which drew us in the very first time, which allowed us to marvel at the human condition, with all its complexities, anxieties, insecurities, and happy oddities, without getting all heavy about it.

The second season starts from where the first left off (with writing credits split between Kunal Aneja, Syed Shadan, Mohak Aneja, and Tatsat Pandey), with our cutting-comers-smart-cookie-vakeel Tyagi finding himself in a judge's hot seat. He is left wrestling with the kind of dilemmas those worthies have to take in their stride, especially when it comes to that hardest block of all—delivering a hanged-until-death sentence. The penitent man in the dock is just 24, but does his youth, and the prospect of a life in prison, mitigate the heinousness of the crime?

Yes, there's one episode (there are eight in all) which bravely does go there—two young people murdered, with the perpetrator showing remorse, and two devastated sets of parents—smartly leaving the gory details to our imagination. Kishan, who has always been good at broad comedy, lifts his conflicted Justice Tyagi by revealing a deeper, more thoughtful side to his persona.

The rest of the cast, which endeared themselves to us in the first season, is doing just fine too. Sujata Didi (Bisht) and Mintu (Batra) find themselves ensconced in a prize chamber that used to be Tyagi's, and snappily circle around each other till they find a convivial middle ground. Anant Joshi is as sprightly as he was in the first season, and the fancy-schmancy Harvard-returned lawyer Ananya (Grewal) learns how to do pro bono without feeling all righteous about

it. Picking on the lighter side of things has the advantage of leaving us smiling, which is what most of the other episodes do, some served with a side of thoughtfulness: there's one in which an unwitting triangle—two men and a woman, triangulated by desire and convention—is left fighting over a prize property in south Delhi. There's another in which a mother-in-law from hell tries very hard to drive a wedge between her son, a total mama's boy, and his wife (played by Prasanna Bisht, so effective in Chiraiya as the newly-minted bride), which show us the insides of a family court and the over-the-top dramas that can happen in there.

The cat-fighting between two female lawyers, with Kusha Kapila as a new addition to the cast, as natively turned out as Naila Grewal, feels more like a distraction than anything else. How a criminal stayed hidden in plain sight, featuring Dibyendu, trails off, and an episode in which rats are accused of having polished off loads of marijuana (I read a news report on a similar incident from a Gujarat maalkhaana just a couple of days back, so these adventurous rats are clearly all over the country!) lacks a certain edge. The good-natured bickering—who gets a coveted iPhone, who doesn't get a party invite—amongst the group of judges makes up for it, though: what else can you do but crack up when people you think of as stern judgement-deliverers play games of oneupmanship. Or shall we dub it judgementship: don't call us out, please, as most judges are still male: the lone woman in the well-appointed judges' chamber shares a tip about smiling. A judge can't risk a smile at anyone or he/she can be accused of bias: does that mean never being able to smile, if you preside over a courtroom? The crazy levels of babugiri and bureaucracy which creates layers of responsibility—everyone pointing fingers at everyone else, no one taking any accountability—finds an echo in a terrific episode involving the proverbial 'act of god' with a moving end: a poor vendor handing out a plate of freshly-made kachoris, which are then eaten with relish in a high chamber. You are left with a lump in the throat, but keeping in tune with the show, things move briskly on, without milking the moment.

A special mention for the sparring between the excellent pair of Bisht and Batra, schooled by the calm and collected Rajoria who's been there, seen everything, and still has wisdom left to spare. Vijayant Kohli's smarmy rivalry with Kishan, Brijendra Kala's practiced drollery, and new entrant Dinesh Lal Yadav Niharua's hilarious supplicant, whose burnt-ampits-with-a-dodgy-deo are a character in themselves, Anant Vijay's fondness for a specific brand of samosas—all demand our attention. I wished there was more space created for Tanvi Azmi, though, as she comes on for a blink, and disappears, just like last time. And, also, just for those who will miss him, there's no Yashpal Sharma this time around. But the rest of it stays enjoyable: maamla mazedaar hai. Bring on the third season, quick. Maamla Legal Hai 2 cast: Ravi Kishan, Nidhi Bisht, Naina Grewal, Anant Joshi, Anjum Batra, Vijay Rajoria, Amit Vikram Pandey, Kumar Saurabh, Kusha Kapila, Dibyendu Bhattacharya, Vijayant Kohli, Brijendra Kala, Dinesh Lal Yadav Niharua, Tanvi Azmi

## Zeenat Aman recalls pushing Amitabh Bachchan's 'dead weight' in a wheelchair in Don: 'It was awfully difficult'



Zeenat Aman recalls pushing Amitabh Bachchan's dead weight in a wheelchair in Don. Zeenat Aman recalls pushing Amitabh Bachchan's 'dead weight' in a wheelchair in Don. Zeenat Aman keeps sharing interesting anecdotes and memories from her earlier films on social media. The veteran actor's latest post was about her hit 1978 film, Don, opposite Amitabh Bachchan. She recalled playing the role of Roma in the film, and shared a scene when she pushed Amitabh in a wheelchair using all her might.

Taking to her Instagram handle, Zeenat posted a video

## When Irrfan Khan joked about winning Best Actress award on the Screen Awards stage

As anticipation builds over who will claim the coveted Best Actor award at the upcoming Chetak Screen Awards 2026, set to be held in Mumbai on April 5, it is worth revisiting a memorable moment from the past, when one of Indian cinema's most beloved performers, the late Irrfan Khan, took the trophy home.

The year was 2018. Irrfan was honoured for his nuanced portrayal in the blockbuster Hindi Medium, with the award presented by actor Manisha Koirala. As she announced the winner on stage, she said, "The award goes, very well deserved and my favourite actor, Irrfan!" Taking the stage to accept the award, Irrfan delivered a speech that was as heartfelt as it was characteristic of his understated wit.

"Thank you very much for acknowledging me in the right context. I've waited for this for a long time. In return, I promise to keep surprising you, and myself, and to keep you interested in giving me more awards across different categories. Maybe one day I'll even win for Best Actor female, I'll try my level best (laughs). There even was an offer for the same, I was about to sign, but they said, 'aapko

of the scene from the film, where she acts as a nurse in the hospital to help an unconscious Amitabh escape from the police. Along with the clip, she wrote in the caption, "Yes, this is THAT scene from (the original 1978) Don—Roma, ever enterprising and daring, dupes the police and escapes with an unconscious Don from a hospital room." The actor further recalled, "Now I had already worked with many of the cast and crew in previous productions, so I was at complete ease through the making of the film. I also relished Roma's character. She was smart, daring, and smooth."

Zeenat Aman revealed using all her strength to move the wheelchair and added, "Who wouldn't want to embody such a woman! Unfortunately being smooth on set that day wasn't easy! Why, you ask. Because that relic of a wheelchair, with Mr. Bachchan's dead weight to boot, was awfully difficult to manoeuvre. I had to keep my poker face for the part, while actually pushing with all my might!" Zeenat ended the caption with an interesting remark about watching another reboot of the OG film. "I would be quite keen to watch another reboot of Don, as I very much enjoyed the last one too. What do you think?" she asked. Several fans flooded the comments section saying Don could never be remade. For the unversed, Don was written by Salim-Javed and directed by Chandra Barot. The blockbuster film starred Amitabh Bachchan, Zeenat Aman, Pran, Iftikhar, Om Shivpuri and Satyen Kappu, among others. The 1978 film was the beginning of the Don franchise, as Javed Akhtar's son Farhan Akhtar later remade it as Don: The Chase Begins Again (2006) and its sequel Don 2 (2011). Both the movies featured Shah Rukh Khan and Priyanka Chopra.



daadhi katwani padegi ladki ka role karne ke liye' (you will have to shave your beard to play a female role). Maine bola daadhi nahi katwayunga par ladki ka role kar sakta hoon.

## Before Ranbir, there was Prithviraj: How the Kapoor family's connection to Lord Ram goes back 93 years



Some legacies announce themselves loudly. Others surface up, years later, when you least expect them. The Kapoor family's connection to Lord Ram is very much the latter kind. With the first glimpse of Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Ram in Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana unveiled on Hanuman Jayanti this year, the internet understandably erupted. But underneath all the excitement about the visuals, the scale, and the star cast lay a piece of history that deserved far more attention than it received. Ranbir is not the first Kapoor to have carried the weight of that role on screen. His great-grandfather, the legendary Prithviraj Kapoor, did it 93 years ago in a film that, by any reasonable measure, changed the course of Indian cinema. The film that started it all in 1933, director Debaki Bose brought the story of the Ramayana to the screen

with Seeta, produced by the East India Film Company. It was a landmark Bengali talkie that went on to achieve recognition far beyond its borders. Based on the Uttar Kand of the Ramayana, the film was among the first Bengali talkies and later enjoyed a Hindi release as well, becoming one of the earliest major Indian films to cross language barriers. At the centre of it was a 28-year-old Prithviraj Kapoor as Lord Ram. By this time, he had already achieved fame with Alam Ara and cemented his status as one of the top stars of the period. Opposite him, actress Durga Khote played Sita, in what was her entry into Hindi cinema after working exclusively in Marathi films. She would later become a prominent character artiste in films such as Mughal-e-Azam, Bobby, Karz, and Abhimaan. Gul Hamid played Laxman, while Prithviraj's younger brother Trilok Kapoor appeared as Luv, Lord Ram's son, in one of his early film roles. The two brothers were the first members of the Kapoor family to enter the film industry. Coinciding with Hanuman Jayanti 2026, the makers of the new Ramayana unveiled a glimpse of Ranbir Kapoor stepping into the revered role. The film also features Sai Pallavi as Sita, Yash as Ravana, and Sunny Deol as Hanuman. Directed by Nitesh Tiwari and produced by Namit Malhotra, it is being mounted on a scale that Prithviraj Kapoor could not have imagined when he walked onto Debaki Bose's set in 1933. The technology, the scale, the global reach, the expectations, all of it is different. But the role itself remains unchanged. And so, in a quiet but unmistakable way, does the family asked to carry it.

## Abhishek Bachchan says there are no fixed roles for him and Aishwarya Rai while parenting Aaradhya Bachchan: 'I have never butted heads with her'



Abhishek Bachchan has, on several occasions, spoken at length about how his life, belief systems, and perspectives have evolved after the birth of his daughter, Aaradhya Bachchan. Once again, he has opened up about how watching her grow up and parenting her has brought new dimensions to his life. Abhishek shared that her constant questioning has led to realizations he didn't even know he was seeking.

'I have never butted heads with her': Abhishek Bachchan in a recent conversation with Lilly Singh, Abhishek Bachchan recalled an anecdote from Aaradhya Bachchan's early years, one that has stayed with him ever since: "We were watching TV when she was a kid, and I was being tortured by Peppa Pig. I said, 'Hey, Aaradhya...' You know how kids are, they're like zombies. I said, 'Aaradhya, can you just get Papa a glass of water?' She looked at me like, 'What?' I said, 'Can you give me a glass of water?' She said, 'Why?' I said, 'Because I asked you to.' It's normal, right? I'm the dad, get me a glass of water. She got up,

went and got me a glass of water very sweetly. I said, 'Thank you,' gave her a kiss, and she sat down."

Abhishek went on to explain how the situation took a turn shortly after: "Half an hour later she says 'Papa?' I said 'Yes?' She asked, 'Can you give me a glass of water?' And I'm like 'Go get it yourself.' She said, 'Why? If you can ask me, why can't I ask you?' I had no answer to that. And I was like, she's right. I mean, I can't pull rank on her. She's right. If she can get me a glass of water, why can't I get it for her? And I never butted heads with her after that. It's very logical."

No rigid parenting roles at the Bachchan's residence. Speaking further about parenting, Abhishek Bachchan shared that neither he nor his wife, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, believe in rigid parental roles: "In my home, as parents, both of us try to be the best example for Aaradhya instead of telling her what is right and what is wrong. We believe in showing what to do by being that ourselves. It's never been like, 'Okay, I'll teach her self-defence.' If you've seen my wife, she can take care of herself. It's never been divided like, 'I'll teach her self-defence, you teach her to be empathetic.' No, it's not that." Elaborating on this approach, he added: "It's simply about leading a good, responsible life with your values and morals. Your child sees that, emulates it, and in that way, you've equipped them. So there's no competition at home about who has to be the man or who has to be the woman. When it comes to children, we both believe you have to lead by example, not try to teach them what is right and wrong. Because what's right for us might not be right for them. Generations change. Our world is very different, and our children's world is going to be even more different." Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan tied the knot in April 2007 in a private ceremony at their residence in Mumbai. They welcomed their daughter, Aaradhya Bachchan, on November 16, 2011.

## Rana Daggubati reacts to Vetrimaaran's veiled dig at Dhurandhar, says, 'No victors in wars, everybody loses'



Now, Neelira's co-producer, Telugu actor Rana Daggubati, best known for his performance in the Baahubali movies, has reacted to Vetrimaaran's comments. However, he too refrained from mentioning the title Dhurandhar. "The main theme of Neelira's story is humanity.

With the release of director Aditya Dhar's Ranveer Singh-starrer Dhurandhar, the topic of propaganda films has once again come under the spotlight, reigniting debates. While Dhurandhar (2025) and its sequel, Dhurandhar The Revenge (2026), received rave reviews from various quarters, they also drew intense criticism for purportedly whitewashing some of the central government's policies and actions, including the 2016 demonetisation, which caused significant upheaval across the country.

Among those who took a dig at Dhurandhar, albeit indirectly, was Tamil filmmaker Vetrimaaran. At the recent trailer launch of Neelira, helmed by Someetharan, Vetrimaaran stated without naming Dhurandhar, "This film (Neelira) doesn't talk about hate or advocate violence. It is

not a propaganda film. It is not made to promote an ideology with crores of rupees. It does not aim to monetise hatred or violence to earn Rs 100 crore. On that basis, this is a film that does not caricature any race, community, or religious sect. It presents events without directly criticising anyone. Our writer has done an extraordinary job."

Now, Neelira's co-producer, Telugu actor Rana Daggubati, best known for his performance in the Baahubali movies, has reacted to Vetrimaaran's comments. However, he too refrained from mentioning the title Dhurandhar. "The main theme of Neelira's story is humanity. It doesn't take any sides. It's a story that says there are no victors in a war and that everybody loses in a war. A message like that is very, very rare in a commercial film," he shared during a conversation with News18. "For instance, if someone came to me with a war tale, one would assume that it would be of gun battles. That's something we would seek. But we're missing out on perspectives. We're looking at things from a top-angle view now, and unless you go deep, you won't understand the trauma and reality of war," he pointed out. Rana, nonetheless, advocated for freedom of expression, mentioning that every filmmaker can choose their narrative and that it's fine to make all kinds of cinema.

At Neelira's trailer launch, Vetrimaaran also discussed demonetisation, making it clearer that he was taking potshots at Dhurandhar movies. "We all know how demonetisation affected us. We are aware of the number of people who died while standing in queues to exchange money. But it is very easy to alter its impact through cinema. So what can we do against hate propaganda? We make films like this (Neelira). We must use memory in the right way to spark meaningful conversations," he noted. Also starring Arjun Rampal, Sanjay Dutt, R Madhavan, Sara Arjun, Rakesh Bedi, Gaurav Gera, and Danish Pandor in key roles, Dhurandhar:

The Revenge, currently running in theatres, has so far grossed over Rs 1,500 crore globally—far higher than its predecessor (Rs 1,307.35 crore)—becoming the fourth-highest-grossing Indian film of all time. It currently trails behind Allu Arjun's Pushpa 2: The Rule (Rs 1,742.10 crore), Prabhas-Anushka Shetty's Baahubali 2: The Conclusion (Rs 1,788.06 crore), and Aamir Khan's Dangal (Rs 2,070.3 crore).