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## Officials Must Attend 'Prajavani' on Time: District Collector Ankit

“Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Bhadradi Kothagudem Staff Reporter, April 05, Indian Chronicle: District Collector Ankit stated that district-level officials from all departments must attend the 'Prajavani' program, scheduled to be held at the Collectorate on Monday, April 6th, in a timely manner. He advised the public to submit written complaints regarding issues related to their specific grievances. The Collector noted that the 'Prajavani' program would commence at 10:30 AM. He issued directives to the officials of the concerned departments to promptly receive the complaints submitted by the public and to take appropriate measures to address them.

## Bar Association Observes Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram Jayanti

“Bhukya Ramesh Bhadradi Kothagudem District Burou , April 5, Indian Chronicle: The 119th birth anniversary of former Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram was observed with reverence under the aegis of the Bhadrachalam Bar Association. On the occasion, Bar Association President Kodali Srinivas, Vice President Sunnam Ramesh, former President Kota Devadanam, and senior advocate Perala Nagaraju, along with other members, paid floral tributes to the portrait of Dr. Jagjivan Ram. Speaking on the occasion, President Kodali Srinivas recalled the immense contributions of Dr. Jagjivan Ram towards the upliftment of the oppressed and marginalized sections of society. He stated that Dr. Jagjivan Ram's efforts for social equality remain exemplary and continue to inspire present and future generations. “He further noted that Dr. Jagjivan Ram played a significant role in implementing the ideals of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and his services to the nation are truly remarkable. “Several advocates participated in the programme.

# New High Court A Temple Of Justice For Poor And Oppressed, Says Revanth

Hyderabad, April 5

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Sunday likened the Telangana High Court complex coming up on a 100-acre parcel of land at Budvel in Rajendranagar to the temple of justice which would serve the poor, the weak, the voiceless, and the oppressed for the next 100 years. He said the High Court will become an icon and a functional lifeline for society and democracy.

Revanth Reddy was speaking at an event organised to lay the foundation for the Zone-II (residential and auxiliary facilities) of the upcoming complex. The foundation stone was laid by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, and High Court Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh at Rajendranagar.

Revanth Reddy said that the government was building not only one of the largest High Court buildings in India, but a benchmark of modernity and excellence in public infrastructure. He said it was a red-letter day for Hyderabad, as the government was taking a step to create a monument for the next century, a crucial pillar for public life.



“We believe all pillars of democracy must work with mutual respect and avoid confrontations. Hence, we give highest respect not only

to all verdicts and judgments, but to various observations and feedback,” he underlined.

“When we formed government in December 2023, one of our first decisions was to create the new High Court complex at Rajendranagar. Across the state, we are working on several new projects for 49 courts and many residential quarters in various towns and districts. As I said, we believe it is the duty of the executive to provide the infrastructure to the judiciary so they can help give the fastest, best justice,” the Chief Minister noted.

Revanth Reddy said building the High Court was one of the greatest opportunities provided to him, unlike earlier Chief Ministers, under whose tenure this could not be materialised.

“Many governments and Chief Ministers in the past could have taken up this project. But for some reason, it was left for my government to undertake this noble task. We knew that the current High Court, a building of great historical significance, was no longer able to support the needs of all stakeholders physically. For this reason, we took this decision to build a new High Court almost immediately after we took charge,” Revanth Reddy explained.



New Delhi, April 5

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday flagged problems related to the Centre's One Stop Centres (OSCs) that are intended to support women affected by violence and claimed that the “Modi government is not listening to anyone”. Gandhi asserted that safety is not merely a scheme; it is a fundamental responsibility of the government.

“Women are knocking on doors for help, yet the government has kept those doors shut. I asked in Parliament: When a woman flees violence and reaches a One Stop Centre (OSC) - why does she not receive help? Why does she find the doors locked instead? Why is there a shortage of staff? Why are complaints from across the country going unheard?” Gandhi said in a post on his WhatsApp channel.

“What was the government's response? That everything is 'satisfactory'. If everything is indeed 'satisfactory', then why are reports of so many problems regarding OSCs continuing to surface?” he said.

If safety is a priority, why is help still failing to reach three out of every five women, Gandhi asked.

“And why is only 60 paise out of every Rs 100 allocated to the Ministry of Women and Child Development being spent on OSCs?” the former Congress chief said.

“Safety is not merely a scheme; it is a fundamental responsibility of the government. Dismissing everything as 'satisfactory' does not ensure safety; it merely demonstrates that the Modi government is not listening to anyone,” Gandhi said.

In his question in Lok Sabha on March 27, Gandhi had asked whether numerous OSCs remain locked, non-functional/fail to operate round-the-clock as mandated, if

so, the details thereof; and the number of women who have sought assistance and shelter at OSCs and the number of cases of crimes against women registered during the last five years, state-wise and year-wise.

He also asked about the number of operational OSCs and new OSCs opened during the last five years, state-wise and year-wise; and the details of the funds released/ utilised for OSCs during the said period, state-wise and year-wise indicating the reasons for underutilisation.

He further asked about the details of the sanctioned versus filled posts in OSCs, including administrators, case workers, counsellors, medical officers and police, state-wise; and whether the Ministry has examined complaints of mismanagement/ violation of operational guidelines, if so, the details thereof along with the action taken thereon.

In her written reply to the question, Minister of State in the Ministry of Women and Child Development Savitri Thakur said OSC is a component of the Sambal vertical under the umbrella Mission Shakti and it provides integrated and immediate support and assistance under one roof to women affected by violence and those in distress, both in private and public spaces

“It provides services like medical aid, legal aid and advice, temporary shelter, police assistance and psycho-social counselling to needy women. Since inception, i.e. 1st April, 2015 up to 31st December, 2025, over 13.37 lakh women have been assisted in the country,” she said and also shared the state and UT-wise details of OSCs.

The minister said the overall implementation of the OSC scheme lies with the state governments and UT administrations.

“Two third party evaluations of the schemes of the Ministry, including the Mission Shakti Umbrella Scheme and its components relating to One Stop Centres (OSCs) have been conducted in 2020 and again in 2025 through NITI Aayog. The studies have found the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the scheme as satisfactory,” Thakur said.

## CI Suspended Over Role in Honour Killing Case in Palnadu

Palnadu, April 5

In a significant development, a Circle Inspector (CI) in Palnadu district has been suspended over his alleged involvement in an honour killing case in Macherla town.

The officer, identified as Venkataramana, is accused of accepting money from the parents of a woman named Chowdeswari and forcibly handing her over to them despite her having entered into a love marriage. Authorities allege that this act directly contributed to her subsequent death.

Following an inquiry, officials found that Venkataramana played a role in the honour killing along with the victim's parents. Acting on these findings, District Superintendent of Police Krishnarao issued orders suspending the CI.

Preliminary reports indicate that the officer not only ignored legal protections for



the couple but also facilitated the handover in exchange for a substantial sum of money. Further investigation into the case is underway.

## Rahul Gandhi Flags OSC Issues, Says Govt Not Listening

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# Indian Chronicle

## English Daily

### Avoid triumphalism, focus on development

As Maoist ideology is on the brink of slipping into history, it is a sobering moment for those who were drawn towards the pursuit of overthrowing the state and capturing power through the barrel of a gun and those who egged on youth to chase a false dream in the name of championing the cause of the poor. It is also a time for the government to avoid triumphalism and instead focus on the socio-economic development of the regions that were virtually turned into killing fields and became hostage to the violent activity of naxalite outfits for decades. In 2009, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh dubbed naxalism as the "gravest internal security threat" to India. Nearly 17 years later, Union Home Minister Amit Shah stood on the floor of Parliament and declared that the country has now become 'naxal-free', meeting the March 2026 deadline set by the NDA government. This is the culmination of an aggressive and well-coordinated security operation to hunt the Maoists in their strongholds, particularly in the Bastar region. Over the last five decades of violence, nearly 20,000 people have died, including over 5,000 security personnel. Since its birth in West Bengal's Naxalbari in 1967, the movement spread its tentacles across the country. At its peak, the insurgency had spread across 12 States, encompassing 17% of India's territory. In the Red Corridor, the Maoists virtually ran a parallel administration with kangaroo courts, armed enforcement units, and shadow taxation levied on contractors and villagers alike. However, over the years, the revolutionary movement lost steam and began to crumble under an unrelenting offensive by the security forces and the steady erosion of its support base. Once a romantic notion that attracted both the restive urban youth on campuses and the underprivileged and exploited sections in rural areas and gave them a sense of purpose and justice, naxalism gradually degenerated into a refuge for a clutch of extortionists and trigger-happy vigilantes indulging in pointless violent attacks and blindly obstructing developmental projects. Indiscriminate killing of innocent people, branding them as police informers, and resorting to the same brutal methods that they often accuse their enemy classes of, public hangings after holding kangaroo courts, killing politicians and policemen and resorting to extortions resulted in a steady erosion of public support. Academics and the intellectual class, once the mainstay of the Maoist ideology, slowly moved away from it. Leading security experts believe that the latest turn of events may well signal the end of Maoism in the country. Government data indicate that districts once considered Maoist strongholds have either been cleared of insurgent elements or substantially stabilised. Security forces, supported by improved intelligence, road connectivity, telecommunications expansion, and welfare delivery systems, have steadily pushed armed cadres into retreat. In 2019, the Centre imposed a single unified command structure, bridging central and State security forces.

### Congress In-Charge Parameshwar Reddy Tours Mallikarjun Nagar

Development works will resolve colony issues: Parameshwar Reddy

\*\*\*\*\*KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 5 (Indian Chronicle):\*\*\*\*\*Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-Charge Parameshwar Reddy stated that issues in Mallikarjun Nagar Colony under Uppal Division are being addressed through development works. He said that priority-based development activities are being taken up in the colonies. "Parameshwar Reddy visited Mallikarjun Nagar Colony along with association representatives and interacted with residents to understand their problems. On this occasion, members of the Mallikarjun Nagar Welfare Association brought several key issues to his attention. They requested the construction of CC roads in the colony and highlighted the severe drainage problem. Responding to their concerns, Parameshwar Reddy directed officials to prepare proposals for the construction of CC roads and a permanent solution to the drainage issue in Mallikarjun Nagar Colony. He also instructed that nala desilting works in the colony be expedited. He assured residents that necessary steps will be taken to provide CC roads and a permanent solution to drainage issues in both Shesh Sai Nagar Colony and Mallikarjun Nagar Colony. Several local leaders and residents, including Sattireddy, Nagesh, Rangareddy, Ranganath Goud, Gaalayya, Obul Reddy, Narayana Reddy, Obulesh, Santosh, Murthy, Kondal Reddy, Sammayya, Srinivas Reddy, Gopi, Nageswara Rao, Ganesh, Janardhan, Raju, Gopal Reddy, Surender Reddy, Madhu, Brahmanandam, Yadaiah, Gopi Naik, and Pranay, participated in the program.



## Indiramma Housing Scheme Should Be Extended to Khammam Journalists: WJI Resolution

\*\*\*\*Arvapalli Nagesh Khammam Bureau April 4, (Indian Chronicle): The Khammam district committee of the Working Journalists of India (WJI) has urged the Telangana government to extend the 'Indiramma' housing scheme to all journalists working in the district. The committee appealed that under this scheme, journalists across various media sectors should be allotted house sites and provided financial assistance for constructing homes. "The resolution was passed during a district committee meeting held on Saturday in Khammam city under the (chairmanship) of District Convener Gantela Anand. State Secretary Nara Subrahmanyeswara Rao (N.S. Rao) attended the meeting as the chief guest. Detailed discussions were held regarding the issue of housing plots for journalists in Khammam, and it was decided to soon prepare an action plan to secure house sites and benefits under the Indiramma scheme. "The meeting also passed another resolution demanding the implementation of a pension scheme for senior journalists. It noted that several states are already providing pensions—Rs 15,000 in Bihar, Rs 20,000 in Madhya Pradesh, and between ₹6,000 and ₹20,000 in 19 states including Assam, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry. The committee demanded that Telangana introduce a similar pension scheme at the earliest. "Additionally, WJI called on the central government to immediately restore railway passes for journalists that were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also decided to submit representations to Members of Parliament from the district to push for reinstatement of these passes. "The meeting strongly condemned attacks on journalists covering the ongoing conflict involving the United States, Israel, and Iran in West Asia. Concern was expressed over media personnel being targeted, and the committee urged authorities to prevent such incidents. Condolences were also offered to journalists who lost their lives in these attacks. "WJI Continues Fight for Journalists' Welfare and Rights" Speaking on the occasion, State Secretary N.S. Rao said that WJI has been consistently striving for the welfare, rights, and professional dignity of journalists across India. He stated that the union works to safeguard the interests of reporters, editors, photographers,



videographers, desk journalists, and other media personnel. "He further added that the organization is pressuring media institutions to implement recommendations such as those of the Majithia Wage Board. Ensuring pension benefits, health insurance, and other welfare schemes for journalists, as well as combating yellow journalism and upholding truth and credibility in news, remain key objectives of the union. "The meeting was attended by district co-conveners Yenneboyina Srinivasa Rao, M.A. Ansar Pasha, N. Ramakrishna, Khammam Assembly Constituency Convener K. Kalyan Chakravarthy, and other district leaders including G. Narayana Rao, Modepalli Kiran, Enigandla Srinivasa Rao, and Jabishetty Kutumba Rao.

## Cops Harness Social Media to Drive Youth Awareness and Social Change



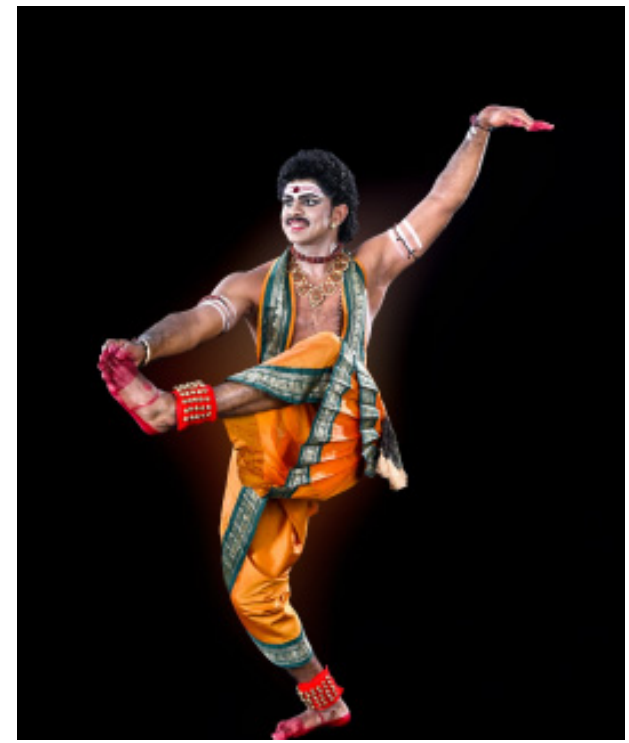
\*\*\*\*Bhukya Ramesh, Bhadradi Kothagudem District Bureau, April 5, Indian Chronicle:\*\*\*\* "In an era where social media significantly influences young minds, two police officers from Telangana are turning these platforms into powerful tools for awareness and positive change. Officers Kashiram Banoth and Om Prakash are gaining recognition for their unique approach in guiding youth while efficiently discharging their official duties. "Emphasizing that policing goes beyond enforcing the law, the officers are actively contributing to community development by building trust and offering guidance. Despite the pressures of their profession, they have consistently engaged with young people through digital platforms, delivering impactful and practical messages. "Through short videos, live interactions, and motivational content, they address crucial topics such as goal setting, self-discipline, mental resilience, and the importance of education. Their simple and relatable communication style has struck a chord with both rural and urban youth. Many aspirants preparing for competitive examinations have acknowledged the positive influence of their content in shaping their careers. "The officers are also focusing on critical social issues affecting youth, including substance abuse, online betting, and cybercrime. By sharing real-life incidents and consequences, they caution youngsters against falling into such traps and encourage them to pursue meaningful and productive paths. Their consistent message highlights that temporary pleasures can have lasting negative impacts, while hard work and perseverance lead to true success. "In addition to this, they are actively promoting public safety. Campaigns on road safety—such as the importance of wearing helmets, avoiding drunk driving, and following traffic regulations—are regularly featured in their outreach. They also raise awareness about seasonal risks, including the dangers of hazardous kite strings during festivals, and suggest practical safety measures like ensuring children carry contact details to prevent them from getting lost in crowded places. "Their outreach further extends to social values, including respect for women, the importance of girls' education, family responsibility, and compassion towards animals. By addressing these aspects, they aim to build not just responsible individuals but a more ethical and aware society. "Kashiram Banoth's journey stands as a story of determination and resilience. Coming from a remote tribal background, he overcame financial struggles and academic setbacks to secure a Sub-Inspector position in 2009 on his first attempt. After serving in Bhadradi Kothagudem and contributing as a trainer in Warangal, he is currently working as a Reserve Inspector. He strongly believes that education can transform lives and dedicates part of his income to social causes, promoting the idea that meaningful change begins with individuals. "Om Prakash, hailing from Buchampet village in Mulugu district, was inspired at a young age to pursue a career in policing. After completing his B.Tech, he joined the force as a Reserve Sub-Inspector in 2018. He has been actively raising awareness about cyber threats, online fraud, and digital safety, equipping youth with essential knowledge to navigate the modern world. He also emphasizes environmental awareness and social responsibility in his initiatives. "Their efforts have created a measurable impact, with thousands of followers engaging with their content and applying the lessons in real life. Educational institutions and youth groups have also begun recognizing their contributions, occasionally inviting them for awareness sessions and motivational talks. "By effectively blending professional duty with social commitment, Kashiram Banoth and Om Prakash are redefining the role of policing. Their work demonstrates how innovative use of technology can foster awareness, inspire youth, and contribute to building a safer and more responsible society.

## Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram Jayanti Celebrations Organized in a Grand Way

\*\*\*\*Sangareddy, April 05:-Indian chronical correspondent Sunil ..... " The Jayanti celebrations of former Deputy Prime Minister of India Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram were organized in a grand way in the district on Sunday. "On this occasion, TGIC Chairperson Nirmala Jaggareddy, District Collector Praveenya, District SP Paratosh Pankaj, MLA Chinta Prabhakar, Municipal Chairperson Vanitha Santosh, Additional Collector Pandu and others garlanded the statue of Babu Jagjivan Ram and paid tributes in a grand way. "Later, they participated in the Jayanti Utsav program organized near Nataraj Theater under the auspices of the District Social Welfare Department and paid floral tributes to the portrait of Babu Jagjivan Ram. "Speaking on the occasion, TGIC Chairperson Nirmala Jagga Reddy said that Babu Jagjivan Ram fought against caste discrimination from his childhood and became a byword for high thinking, hard work and commitment. She praised him as a great man who worked to ensure equal rights for everyone in the society. She suggested that one can reach a higher level only through education, and that students should work hard and grow in life. She called on the youth to follow the path shown by him and become partners in building an equal society. The state government is giving priority to educational development and students should take advantage of the available opportunities. "District Collector Praveenya said that the youth should work for the development of the society with the inspiration of Babu Jagjivan Ram. She said that Babu Jagjivan Ram was a great man who dedicated his life for equality and social justice. She said that students and youth should take his ideals as an example and move forward. She asked the officials and public representatives to take his ideals forward and lead the district on the path of development. "He advised the representatives of caste associations to create awareness about



the various welfare schemes being implemented by the government for the development of Scheduled Castes and ensure that those eligible in the district take advantage of them. "District SP Paratosh Pankaj said that Babu Jagjivan Ram was a freedom fighter and a social justice activist. He said that he fought continuously for the rights of Dalits and served the country by holding many key positions as a Union Minister. He said that the Telangana government and the police department are working in line with his ideals. He called for following his path to build an equal society. "The cultural performances of the students were impressive at the event. The songs of cultural leaders and artists entertained the audience. "District Library Chairman Anjaiah, Municipal Chairperson Vanitha Santosh, Additional Collector Pandu, District Social Welfare Department Development Officer Akhilesh Reddy, officials of various departments, representatives of various caste associations, representatives of employment associations, youth, students, people and others participated in this program.



Hyderabad, April 4: Mayuri Dance Academy organised Mani Prasad's " Bharathanatyam - Arangetram" at Ravindra Bharathi's main hall, here today on Saturday. " Mani Prasad, resident of Miyapur, son of Hanuman Prasad & Chandrika. His Guru is Ms. Vaidehi Subhash at Mayuri Academy. "Mani Prasad who was student is now-a-days, began to teach in same Dance Academy. " Mani Prasad performed 7 items as part of his Saturday's Arangetram, which named as - pushpanjali, jathisvaram, shabdum, varnam, padam, keerthanam, thillana. " Varnam event was performed on lord Shiva, Keerthanam was done on Ravana's prayer towards lord Shiva. Padam & Shabdum on lord Krishna.

## Thanks, Revanth Anna... Once Again a Flood of Funds for Chilkanaagar Division in Uppal Constituency..! Rs 16.40 Crores Sanctioned for Road Development Works Congress Leaders Perform Milk Abhishekam to Portraits of CM Revanth Reddy and Parameshwar Reddy



\*\*\*\*KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 5 (Indian Chronicle):\*\*\*\* "The sanctioning of funds for development works in Uppal constituency is continuing like a steady flow. With the support of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy has been consistently bringing in funds and initiating several development activities. "Under the Comprehensive Road Maintenance Programme (CRMP), a total of ₹16.40 crores has been sanctioned for the Chilkanaagar Division. "Expressing their gratitude for securing these funds, Congress leaders led by Chilkanaagar Division Congress President Mulakalpalaji Rajesh Mudiraj performed a milk abhishekam to the portraits of Chief Minister Revanth

Reddy and Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy at the Indira Gandhi statue in Chilkanaagar Division. They also extended special thanks to other ministers and senior government officials for their support. Senior Congress leaders who participated in the program included Bajaj Jagan Goud, Malkajgiri DCC General Secretary Kompally Balaram, Chilkanaagar Division Congress In-charge Akkiti Agam Reddy, Nallavelli Mahender Mudiraj, Sandeep, Macharla Balaram, Jerripothula Chandrayya, Sriramulu, Mamu, Bottu Rajesh, Palnati David, Naroju Radhakrishna, B.M. Kiran, Sravan, Palnati Ramesh, Jagadeesh, Sonu, Fayum, Surender, Mohammed Nawab, Lavodu Kumar, Asif, Kiran and others.

## Attack on the Gajwel BRS camp office is disgraceful

An example of Congress factional politics

BRS District President, former MLA Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar

“Devulapally Srinivas, Warangal Bureau (Hanamkonda), April 5 (Indian Chronicle): BRS former Chief Whip, former MLA, and BRS Hanamkonda District President Dasyam Vinay strongly criticized that Congress is resorting to factional politics and attacks similar to those



in neighboring states in Telangana, stating that this is not people's governance but oppressive rule. On Sunday, he held a press conference at the party district office in Hanamkonda. Before that, he paid floral tributes to the portrait of India's former Deputy Prime Minister and Bharat Ratna Babu Jagjivan Ram. “Speaking on the occasion, Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar said they strongly condemn the attack on the Gajwel camp office of Telangana statehood leader, the first Chief Minister of Telangana, and opposition leader KCR, and that they consider this attack carried out on a government office by the ruling party as an attack on democracy. “He said that similar attacks were witnessed even during the Telangana statehood movement and that they responded appropriately then, warning that Congress would be taught a proper lesson in the coming days as well. He alleged that when people question Congress about the promises made during elections, the party, unable to respond, is resorting to attacks, diversion tactics, and corruption politics instead of implementing its promises. “Legislative Council Opposition Leader and MLC Sirikonda Madhusudhana Chary said that Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has forgotten the dignity of his position and is behaving irresponsibly, making the future of Telangana uncertain. He criticized that Revanth Reddy went to Kerala and made inappropriate remarks about Pinarayi Vijayan. He said that while speaking in Kerala, Revanth Reddy claimed he would arrange a flight and invite them to Telangana to show the implementation of the six guarantees. He challenged that if Revanth Reddy proves the implementation of the six guarantees, he would hang himself at Hanamkonda Chowrasta, and asserted that Revanth does not have the stature to speak about a national-level leader

like Vijayan. “He said everyone knows how crop yields changed before and after the construction of the Kaleshwaram project, but a Union Minister made negative comments in Parliament saying that ?1 lakh crore worth of water went to waste, criticizing that the minister spoke without even basic knowledge of his own department. He strongly condemned yesterday's attack on the Gajwel camp office and questioned Congress whether they would place Modi's photo in Rahul Gandhi's office. He suggested that a referendum should be held among Ghanpur people to determine which party Kadiyam Srihari belongs to and advised Srihari to stop making trivial remarks. “He said they visited a young boy named Yuvan, who was injured at Medaram and is undergoing treatment at Guardian Hospital, and alleged that everyone including the Chief Minister had set up camps in Medaram only for their own benefits. He said substandard work took place in Medaram and demanded an immediate inquiry and action against those responsible. He added that due to adulterated food in many hostels in the state, students' health is deteriorating, and although the Chief Minister had earlier asked Minister Ponnampaluri to take responsibility for hostel management, he made a show for two days and then neglected it. He said incidents of students falling ill in hostels are increasing day by day, yet the government remains indifferent. “Former ZP Chairman Sambari Sammarao said farmer suicides are increasing in the state, and farmers are falling into debt due to lack of fertilizers and reduced imports. He expressed concern that even Rythu Bandhu assistance has not been provided so far, and questioned what the government is doing when even handloom workers are committing suicides. He said that during KCR's government, handloom workers were given subsidies, Bathukamma saree orders, and contracts for student uniforms, whereas the Congress government is instead taking commissions from contractors and harming weavers. “Corporator Bongu Ashok Yadav, former corporators Jorika Ramesh and Elimi Satish, West constituency convener Thallapalli Janardhan Goud, coordinator Puli Rajinikanth Mudiraj, senior leaders, Minority Cell district president Nayeemoddin, Salvaji Ravinder Rao, party division presidents Kodakandla Sadanath and Punnam Chander, leaders Panuganti Sridhar, Janaki Ramulu, Rammurthy, Sudarshan, Sarika, Sauram Raghu, Gandrakota Rakesh Yadav, Domakuntla Rajkumar, Pullayya, Mootika Raju Yadav, Surasi Mahesh, Sampathi Raghu, Naveen, Vijay Reddy, Thakkallapalli Vineel Rao, Manda Srujan Kumar, and others participated in the program.

## Government machinery at the service of the people

Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy

““Devulapally Srinivas, Warangal Bureau (Hanamkonda), April 5 (Indian Chronicle): Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy stated that they are implementing every promise made and are initiating development works in divisions in a phased manner. He said he is striving to provide better services to the people and that governance is moving in the direction of taking the administrative machinery directly to the people. On Sunday, he laid the foundation stone for internal road construction works in NGO's Colony and Vaddepalli of the 58th division. Speaking on the occasion, he clarified that all promises made during the elections are being fulfilled and that development programs in all divisions will be completed in phases. “He further stated that during the pre-election padayatra (foot march) across the constituency, he identified several issues, and after being elected as an MLA, he has been addressing them one by one. He emphasized that his political life is dedicated to public service. He mentioned that a special action plan has been prepared to visit all 26 divisions, directly meet the people, understand their problems, and resolve them. He assured that officials from all departments will work among the people to resolve issues, and necessary funds will be allocated wherever development works are required and completed within the stipulated time. He added that these division-level visits will significantly contribute to development and requested continued public support for future progress. Local public representatives, party leaders, officials, and others participated in the program.”— Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy



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## Grand Celebration of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram Jayanti in Habsiguda

Former Medchal–Malkajgiri District Youth Congress President Kandi Shruvan Reddy attends as Chief Guest



““KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 5 (Indian Chronicle):“The birth anniversary of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram, a social reformer, freedom fighter, and former Deputy Prime Minister of India who worked tirelessly for the welfare of Dalits and weaker sections, was celebrated with great enthusiasm in the Habsiguda division.“The event was organized under the aegis of the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Youth Association, Habsiguda. Former Medchal–Malkajgiri District Youth Congress President Kandi Shruvan Reddy attended the program as the chief guest.“On the occasion, floral tributes were paid to the statues of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram at the Habsiguda junction. Several Congress leaders and local representatives participated in the program, including senior leader Kandi Aagi Reddy, Division President Gannaram Vijay Kumar, General Secretary Dharma Naik, District ST Cell President Ganesh Naik, Ramalayam

Temple Chairman Chintala Babu Rao, Division Youth Congress President Vasu Naik, Indiramma Committee Member Rajanna, and others such as Javed, Vishal Kumar, Tinku, Bhaskar, Kumar, Venkatesh, Bikshapathi, Narsing Rao, and Shivaraj Madiga.“Also present were Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Youth Association President Chintala Lakshmi Narayana, Working President Suddala Poorna Chander, General Secretary Muthyala Naveen Kumar, Vice President Gunti Sai Kumar, Suddala Sandeep Kumar, Treasurer Edula Sai Kiran, Joint Secretary Mudugula Chandrasekar, Nagulapalli Chandrasekar, Games and Cultural Secretary Pitla Rajalingam, Organizing Secretary Chintala Jai Narayana, and Executive Members Gyara Uppender, Chenchula Srinivas, Ulla Ravi Prasad, Gyara Vijay Bhaskar, and Chintala Prem Kumar, among others.

## MLA Sanjay Kumar: "Service activities are commendable"

““Jagithyal Correspondent, April 5 (Indian Chronicle):“MLA Dr. Sanjay Kumar praised the service activities undertaken by the spiritual Arya Vaishya family formed by Vaishya brothers. He attended the first anniversary of the spiritual Arya Vaishya family. The MLA appreciated the activities taken up to benefit the poor. He expressed gratitude to Sur Srinivas and all members for providing health cards to the spiritual family members and literature to the Veda Brahmanuttamulu. Ram Mandir President Mothe Umakant Sharma and 21 Veda Brahmins blessed the members. President Sur Srinivas said that the spiritual family presented literature to the Veda Pandits on this occasion.“Some notable attendees included former Municipal Chairman Giri Nagabhushan, Aaduvala Lakshman, Basetti Prabhakar, Gudisa Bhadrappa, Elagandula Kailasam, Nune Kumar, Mar Kailasam, K L V Krishna, Nalmas Rajasekhara, Rayanch Harish, Yamsani Srinivas, Yamsani Suryaprakash, Katkuri Chandramohan, Bolla Papayya, Manchal Lachayya, Kantala Srinivas, Urturi Sampath, Mar Rajesham, Jilla Prakash, Rajesh N Jeevan, Vavila Shekhar, Velishala Bhadrappa, Bollisani Srinivas, Chakkinam Prasad, Gaurishetti Bala Prasad, Basetti Harish, and Moturu Sampath Kumar.



## Former Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj Pays Tribute to Babu Jagjivan Ram

““KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 5 (Indian Chronicle):“On the occasion of the 118th birth anniversary of former Deputy Prime Minister Babu Jagjivan Ram, former Chilkanagar Division Corporator and GHMC Standing Committee Member Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj, along with BRS party leaders, paid rich tributes by garlanding the statue of Jagjivan Ram at a program organized under the aegis of the Chilkanagar Scheduled Castes Welfare Association. Speaking on the occasion, Geetha Praveen emphasized that everyone should strive to fulfill the ideals of Jagjivan Ram and work for the upliftment of marginalized communities. She urged the youth to follow the path shown by Jagjivan Ram and become active contributors to the nation's development. She praised him as a great social reformer who fought against untouchability and brought awareness among the people. She expressed hope that future generations would move forward inspired by his ideals.“The program was attended by BRS state leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, senior leaders and activists Gajjala Satya Raj Goud, Kokonda



Jagan, Muddam Srinivas Yadav, Shyam, members of the Scheduled Castes Welfare Association, and several others.

## Tension at Film Employees Federation Office in Yousufguda



“Hyderabad correspondent (KS Reddy) April 5, Indian Chronicle: A tense situation unfolded at the Telugu Film Industry Employees Federation office in Indiranagar, Yousufguda, after a dispute broke out between general members and the executive committee. Members raised strong objections to the decision to proceed with elections without presenting the federation's financial accounts. Alleging mismanagement and misuse of funds, they demanded that the accounts be disclosed before any electoral process is carried out. The disagreement soon escalated into a heated argument and brief scuffle between both sides. As tensions mounted, the executive committee members left the meeting abruptly without announcing any date for the elections. In a related development, based on a complaint filed by Surla Ramesh, a member from Shivajinagar, a case has been registered at the Banjara Hills Police Station against Federation President D. Sitaram, General Secretary Mehboob Beg alias Khadir Basha, and Vice President P. Venkatesh over alleged misappropriation of funds. Police have initiated an investigation into the matter.

# Tributes mark Jagjivan Ram's 119th birth anniversary in Karimnagar

## Leaders recall his role in nation-building and stress Dalit welfare initiatives.

Khaja Sikander Mohiuddin Staff Reporter, Indian Chronicle Karimnagar, April 05: Floral tributes were paid to veteran leader Babu Jagjivan Ram on the occasion of his 119th birth anniversary at Mancheril Chowrasta in Karimnagar on Sunday.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Choppadandi MLA and Jayanti Celebrations Committee chairman Medipally Satyam, District Collector Chitra Mishra, Mayor Kolagani Srinivas, Deputy Mayor Sunil Rao, along with other public representatives, officials and leaders of various organisations, garlanded the statue and paid homage.

Speaking to the media, Mr. Sanjay described Jagjivan Ram as a towering leader who fought lifelong for social justice and the upliftment of Dalits. He said Jagjivan Ram, who served as a Union Minister for nearly 29 years, treated service to the nation as his supreme duty and practised it throughout his life.

Recalling his early struggles, Mr. Sanjay said Jagjivan Ram overcame caste discrimination and dedicated his life to the welfare of the underprivileged. He highlighted three principles the leader stood for — overcoming hardships, standing by weaker sections, and considering national service as the highest duty — and said these ideals should inspire the youth.

He noted that Jagjivan Ram remained a Member of Parliament from the first general elections in 1952 until his demise in 1986, and also played a significant role in the freedom movement alongside Mahatma Gandhi. He described him as a leader respected across political and social spheres and called upon the younger generation to follow his ideals and reformist vision.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Satyam said Jagjivan Ram served the country for nearly three decades in key positions including Agriculture, Defence and as Deputy Prime Minister. He said the State government was giving priority to Dalit welfare through housing schemes, land distribution and implementation of the SC/ST Sub-Plan, which has contributed to development in several villages. He urged people to pursue higher education and work towards societal progress.

District Collector Ms. Mishra advised beneficiaries to make effective use of welfare schemes implemented



through the SC Welfare Department and create awareness about government programmes. She assured that the administration would address public grievances.

Police Commissioner Gaush Alam said Jagjivan Ram worked for equality and social justice, adding that special focus was being laid on investigation of SC/ST atrocity cases and ensuring compensation to victims.

Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Ashwini Tanaji Wakade called for support to weaker sections in all professions, while Municipal Commissioner Prapul Desai emphasised the need to draw inspiration from great leaders and understand civic responsibilities.

Students from welfare hostels and candidates who secured government jobs through the Ambedkar Study Circle shared their experiences. Incentives were also distributed to inter-caste couples.

Additional Collector (Revenue) Lakshmi Kiran, RDO Maheshwar, members of the Jayanti Celebrations Committee, representatives of Ambedkar Youth Association and leaders of Dalit organisations were present.

# Funds of Rs 3.80 Crore Sanctioned for Road Development in Ramanthapur Division

## Milk Abhishekam performed to the Chief Minister's portrait under the leadership of Division President Mohammed Rafeeq

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 5 (Indian Chronicle):“Under the leadership of Ramanthapur Division President Mohammed Rafeeq, a grand milk abhishekam program was organized at Krishna Hotel Chowrasta as a mark of gratitude to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for sanctioning ₹3.80 crore for road development in Ramanthapur Division as part of the CRMP program. “Special thanks were extended to Uppal Congress Party In-charge Mandamula Parameshwar Reddy, who played a key role in bringing this development initiative to the attention of the Chief Minister and securing the funds. Speaking on the occasion, Mohammed Rafeeq stated that the government is committed to the development of Ramanthapur. He expressed confidence that the Congress leadership is gaining public trust by addressing people's issues effectively. He also hoped that the road development works would ensure smoother and more convenient travel for the public. Medchal-Malkajiri District Congress General Secretary Jaleel Pasha, Pallapu Srikanth Yadav, Naam Rajireddy, Poosa Sattaiah, Sandeep, Bhaskar, Gangaputra Bhaskar, Muthyala Jangaiah, Mogili Lingam, Samuel, MD Jilla,



Shaga Sridhar, Satish Goud, Mittu Goud, Muthyala Babu, Bullet Ashok, Gayatri Goud, Ambika, Mengashobha, Tabbusum, Begum, Poornima, Cable Ashok, Abdul Mateen, Suri, Swami, Madhu, Sai, Poosa Balraj, Vishal and others participated in the program.

# Grand Celebrations of Babu Jagjivan Ram's Birth Anniversary at the SP Camp Office; SP Rohit Raju Pays Tribute by Garlanding His Portrait.

“Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Bhadradi Kothagudem Staff Reporter, April 05, Indian Chronicle: Commemorating the birth anniversary of freedom fighter, architect of modern India, and former Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram, grand celebrations were held today at the District SP camp office. Attending the event as the chief guest, District SP Rohit Raju paid rich tributes to Babu Jagjivan Ram by garlanding his portrait. On this occasion, district police officials and staff members recalled and honored his services. Speaking subsequently, the SP lauded Babu Jagjivan Ram as an illustrious figure who, despite being born into a poor family in the state of Bihar in 1908, rose through the ranks to occupy the nation's highest constitutional offices. He noted that, from his very childhood, Babu Jagjivan Ram raised his voice against caste discrimination and untouchability prevailing in society and wielded education as a weapon to fight against injustice. The SP explained that Jagjivan Ram—who assumed office as the youngest minister in independent India's first cabinet—implemented numerous laws for the welfare of workers during his tenure as the Minister of Labour. The SP remarked that Babu Jagjivan Ram's life serves as an open school of learning, and his efforts toward achieving social equality stand as an exemplary model for the present generation. The SP issued a call to action, emphasizing that it is the collective responsibility of us all to build a society characterized by equality and brotherhood, in alignment with his



ideals. Stating that striving for the upliftment of marginalized sections and for the integrity of the nation constitutes the true tribute we can offer to this great visionary, the SP expressed his hope that every individual would actively participate in the service of the motherland. Participating in this program were Kothagudem DSP Adinarayana, SB Inspector Srinivas, One Town CI Karunakar, MTO Sudhakar, Admin RI Lal Babu, Welfare RI Krishna Rao, and SIs Praveen, Ravi, Ramakrishna, and Manisha.

# Grand celebrations of the 118th birth anniversary of social reformer and former Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram were held in Chilukanaga

“— Floral tributes paid to Jagjivan Ram by A. Aagham Reddy and Division President Mulakalapalli Rajesh Mudiraj. “KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 5 (Indian Chronicle):“As part of the 118th birth anniversary celebrations of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram, an event was organized under the aegis of the Scheduled Caste Service Association in Chilukanagar Division. On this occasion, Chilukanagar Division Congress Party In-charge A. Aagham Reddy and Division Congress Party President Mulakalapalli Rajesh Mudiraj paid floral tributes to the statue of Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram. “Speaking on the occasion, Mulakalapalli Rajesh Mudiraj said that Dr. Jagjivan Ram, who was born into a poor family, served as a Union Minister for nearly 50 years and was elected as a Member of Parliament eight times. He focused on the issues faced by Dalits in society. During the drought of 1974 and the India-Pakistan war, he displayed great courage and leadership. He served the nation as Deputy Prime Minister and worked tirelessly for the country's development and for social equality. His contributions to the nation are unforgettable, he added. The program was attended by Congress party members and senior leaders including Bajaj Jagan Goud, Malkajiri DCC General



Secretary Kompalli Balaraj, Nallavelli Mahender Mudiraj, Sriramulu, Bottu Rajesh, Naraju Radhakrishna, B.M. Kiran, Shrivani, Jagadeesh, Rebel Bhaskar, Namakant Reddy, Tijju Thomas, Chichcha, Guna, Sonu, Anoop, Surender, Rajsheed, Faiyum, Mohammed Nawab, Lavodu Kumar, Asif, Sona Kiran, Sandeep, Rakesh and others.

# Easter celebrations in grandeur at Puneetha Anthony Church

“Devulapally Srinivas Warangal Bureau (Hanamkonda), April 5 (Indian Chronicle): Guru Father Jerome said that people all over the world celebrate the festival of Easter with great pomp. On Sunday, Easter celebrations were held with great pomp under the auspices of Father Jerome at Puneetha Anthony Church, Vangapahad, Second Division, Hanamakonda. Father Inna Reddy and Brother Chauhan were the chief guests of this program organized on Calvary Hill and gave a valuable message. Speaking on this occasion, they said that the festival of Easter stands as a symbol of new life, hope, and the victory of good over evil. “Churches are resounding with the songs of 'Hallelujah' with the belief that Jesus Christ rose again on the third day after conquering death, he said, adding that Easter is the most sacred day for Christians, which is celebrated as the end of Holy Week. He revealed that Jesus' path to the cross, the sufferings he endured, and every drop of blood he shed were for the welfare of the people, and that he washed away the sins of the people with his blood and sanctified them. “From Good Friday to Easter, people always pray for the people to be happy, healthy and prosperous, and pray for the blessings of Jesus to



be upon all the people of the world. President Doma Kornel, Upadeshi Adduri Swami, Doma Murali, Manda Kishore, Bokka Prasad, Ponnala Antony, Pasula Prasad, Pasula Dasu, Pasula Devaiah, Sudarshan, Kumar, Prakash, Photo Ramesh, Rajamouli, Sharada, Sampurna, Ganipaka Maria, Manda Chotakka, Pasula Sweetie, Narmetta Jeevitha, and others participated in this program.

# Bharat Ratna should be conferred on Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram: Manda Krishna



“ Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, April 5: “MRPS Founder President Manda Krishna demanded that the Government of India should immediately confer the Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian award, on Babu Jagjivan Ram, a freedom fighter, former Deputy Prime Minister of India, and a towering leader who played a key role in nation-building. He stated that the time has come to give due recognition to Jagjivan Ram for his long-standing service as a Member of Parliament and his relentless efforts for social justice. “He was speaking as the chief guest at the 119th birth anniversary celebrations of Babu Jagjivan Ram held at the MRPS national office. On the occasion, floral tributes were paid to his portrait. “Among those who participated in the program were MSP Telangana State President Injam Venkataswamy, National Leader JP Latha, Hyderabad District President TV Narasimha, Official Spokesperson Dappu Mallikarjun, and several other leaders and activists.

# Babu Jagjivan Ram's services are unforgettable

## MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy performed the groundbreaking ceremony for the statue construction

“Devulapally Srinivas, Warangal Bureau (Hanamkonda): Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy stated that the services rendered to the nation by former Deputy Prime Minister of India and freedom fighter Babu Jagjivan Ram are unforgettable, and called upon the youth to carry forward his ideals. On the occasion of Babu Jagjivan Ram's birth anniversary, he paid rich tributes by garlanding his portrait on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the path shown by him in achieving equality and social justice in society is an inspiration to everyone. “First, at the Public Gardens premises in Hanamkonda, he broke a coconut and performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the installation of Babu Jagjivan Ram's statue. He stated that he would undertake the construction of the statue at his own expense. “He said that installing his statue in Hanamkonda would provide an opportunity to remind future generations of his greatness, and assured that he would personally take responsibility for completing the statue. He emphasized the need to move forward on the path shown by him for the upliftment of marginalized sec-



tions of society, and urged the youth to take his ideas as an inspiration and work for the development of society. “Later, at the Babu Jagjivan Ram birth anniversary celebrations held at Ambedkar Bhavan, along with MLA Nayini, Warangal MP Kadiyam Kavya and District Collector Chahat Bajpai garlanded his portrait, lit a lamp, and paid tributes remembering his services. “Local public representatives, leaders, activists, and a large number of people participated in the program.

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



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 posi-

tion 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. Civil war persists. 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."

## Jonathan, world's oldest tortoise, very much alive despite death rumours

"The Governor's Office wishes to address recent rumours and misinformation circulating online regarding Jonathan, the world's oldest living tortoise. We can confirm that Jonathan is alive and well, continuing to enjoy his peaceful life on St Helena," the St. Helena, Ascension and Tristan Governor's Office posted on Reports of the death of the world's oldest living land animal — a nearly 200-year-old tortoise — were greatly exaggerated. "It was a hoax," Anne Dillon, head of communications on the island, told The Associated Press on Thursday (April 2, 2026) about his alleged passing. "I don't have all those details, I can just assure you that he is very much alive." An account on X, falsely claiming to be that of Joe Hollins, a veterinarian who had worked with the reptile on the island west of Africa in the south Atlantic Ocean, said he was heartbroken to announce the death of the "gentle giant" that "outlived empires, wars, and generations of humans". The post quickly accumulated nearly 2 million views through Thursday (April 2, 2026), mostly an outpouring of condolences. But Dr. Hollins later said on Facebook that he didn't even have an X account and something more sinister was afoot. "There is a hoax — not even an April Fool — going around," Dr. Hollins wrote. "The hoaxer is asking for crypto donations. It's a con." Guinness World Records lists Jonathan, a Seychelles giant tortoise, as the oldest living land animal



and oldest tortoise ever. He was believed to be about 50 years old when he was brought to St. Helena in 1882. No, Jonathan the tortoise is not dead despite claims that the world's oldest land animal had died at the age of 193. Ms. Dillon said the tortoise was still roaming the grounds of the Governor's residence on the island best known as the place Napoleon Bonaparte was exiled to following his defeat by the British at Waterloo in 1815. Bonaparte died there in 1821, about a decade before Jonathan is believed to have taken the first steps in what would become a very long life.

## U.S. agencies to monitor drinking water for microplastics, pharmaceuticals



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Health and Human Services has announced that they will monitor the impact of microplastics and pharmaceuticals on drinking water, the first step toward assessing their health risks and shaping new policies. The joint announcement was hailed by EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin and Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. as a win for President Donald Trump's "Make America Healthy Again" agenda, whose priorities have included reducing the number of recommended childhood vaccines and promoting whole foods in new dietary guidelines.

The EPA will now include microplastics and pharmaceuticals on the sixth Contaminant Candidate List, which would mean they would start being tested and monitored under the Safe Drinking Water Act and receive funding for research, a precursor to future regulation if they are determined to threaten public water systems. "We cannot treat what we cannot measure. We cannot regulate what we don't understand," Kennedy said at a press conference at EPA headquarters. Zeldin and the EPA have drawn criticism from MAHA activists for falling short on addressing their concerns, including microplastics, and not applying more stringent rules on pesticides. "For too long, Americans have been ignored as they sound the alarm about plastics in their drinking water. That ends today," Zeldin said at the press conference.

Move follows petition Seven U.S. governors from states including New Jersey and Michigan as well as 175 environmental and health groups late last year filed a legal petition calling on the EPA to add microplastics to the list of contaminants to monitor. The list is updated every five years. Microplastics are microscopic pieces of plastic that have been discovered everywhere from inside human bodies to drinking water to the depths of oceans and Arctic ice. Some studies have linked them to cancers or reproductive harm. Plastic industry groups have dismissed these studies and said the science is not settled concerning the harms caused by microplastics. Judith Enck, president of Beyond Plastics and former EPA regional administrator, said the

EPA's move is "an important first step." Kimberly Wise White, vice president of regulatory and scientific affairs at the American Chemistry Council, which represents plastic manufacturers, said the group supports science-driven monitoring of drinking water for microplastics. When Kennedy ran for the 2024 Democratic presidential nomination, he pledged to tackle plastic pollution, including its production. He later endorsed Republican candidate Trump, whose administration last year warned countries to oppose any attempt to cap plastic production under a potential UN treaty to limit plastic pollution.

## French, South Korean leaders say they'll work together on Strait of Hormuz

French President Emmanuel Macron and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung agreed on Friday (April 3, 2026) to work together to help reopen the Strait of Hormuz and ease global economic uncertainties caused by the war in West Asia. Their summit in Seoul came as U.S. President Donald Trump slammed allies for not supporting the U.S. and Israeli war against Iran. Mr. Macron was making his first visit to South Korea since taking office in 2017 as part of an Asian tour that already has taken him to Japan.

Mr. Macron told Mr. Lee at the start of the meeting that the two countries can play a role in helping to stabilise the situation in West Asia, including the Strait of Hormuz, according to South Korean media.

At a joint televised briefing afterwards, Mr. Macron underscored the need for France and South Korea to cooperate to help reopen the strait and de-escalate West Asia animosities, while Mr. Lee said the two affirmed "their resolve to cooperate to secure the safe shipping route in the Strait of Hormuz." The two leaders did not take questions and did not elaborate on how they would help reopen the strait, the narrow waterway between Iran and Oman through which about one-fifth of the world's oil passes. Mr. Lee said he and Mr. Macron agreed to expand cooperation in technology, energy and other areas. South Korean and French officials also signed agreements to cooperate on nuclear fuel supply chains, jointly invest in an offshore wind project in southern South Korea and to collaborate on critical minerals. Mr. Macron's Asia trip comes as Mr. Trump has ramped up his frustration with allies. In a speech on Wednesday (April 1, 2026), Mr. Trump said Americans "don't need" the Strait but the countries that do "must grab it and cherish it." "Let South Korea, you know, we only have 45,000 soldiers in harm's way over there, right next to a nuclear force — let South Korea do it," Mr. Trump said. "Let Japan do it."

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



The UN Security Council has postponed a vote scheduled for Friday (March 3, 2026) on authorising the use of "defensive" force to protect shipping in the Strait of Hormuz from Iranian attacks, according to the official program. The 15-member body was set to vote Friday morning on a draft resolution brought by Bahrain, but by Thursday (April 2) night the schedule shifted. The reason given was that the United Nations observes Good Friday as a public holiday, according to diplomatic sources — despite this fact being known when the vote was first announced.

No new date has been given for voting on the draft. Iran has placed a stranglehold on the key shipping lane — threatening fuel supplies and roiling the global economy — in retaliation for U.S.-Israeli strikes that triggered the month-old war in West Asia. "We cannot accept economic terrorism affecting our region and the world, the whole world is being affected by the developments," Bahrain's United Nations ambassador Jamal Alrowaie said this week. He said the text, which has gone through several amendments and is supported by the United States, "comes at a critical juncture."

## West Asia crisis : Donald Trump threatens to strike Iran's bridges and electric power plants

U.S. President Donald Trump warned late on Thursday about striking and destroying bridges and electric power plants in Iran in his latest threat to hit the country's infrastructure. The U.S. military "hasn't even started destroying what's left in Iran. Bridges next, then Electric Power Plants," Mr. Trump wrote on social media. His post said that Iran's leadership "knows what has to be done, and has to be done, FAST!"

Mr. Trump, who has previously offered shifting timelines and objectives for the war, said in a televised speech on Wednesday (April 1, 2026) that the war could escalate if Iran did not give in to Washington's terms, with strikes on its energy and oil infrastructure possible. Dozens of international law experts in the U.S. signed an open letter released earlier on Thursday (April 2, 2026) saying that U.S. strikes on Iran may amount to war crimes.

The 1949 Geneva Conventions on humanitarian conduct in war prohibit attacks on sites considered essential for civilians. The Geneva Conventions and additional protocols say that parties involved in military conflict must distinguish between "civilian objects and military objectives", and that attacks on civilian objects are forbidden. "We are going to hit them extremely hard over the next two to three weeks. We are going to bring them back to the Stone Ages,

President Donald Trump on Wednesday (April 1) called for countries struggling with fuel shortages to "go get your own oil" in the Strait of Hormuz, adding that U.S. forces would not help them. A sixth and final draft, seen by AFP, greenlights member states — either unilaterally or as "voluntary multinational naval partnerships" — to use "all defensive means necessary and commensurate with the circumstances." It applies to the strait and adjacent waters to "secure transit passage and to deter attempts to close, obstruct or otherwise interfere with international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz." The measure would last for a period of at least six months. The draft resolution has been molded in a bid to rally several countries that have appeared skeptical, including Russia, China and France. Revised wording no longer explicitly invokes Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which allows the Security Council to authorise armed force to restore peace. The latest version, which was scheduled to be voted on at 11:00 a.m. (1500 GMT) Friday before the postponement, also emphasizes the defensive nature of any intervention — a stipulation that seems to have alleviated French concerns. Jerome Bonafont, France's UN ambassador, said on Thursday that "it is up to the Council to quickly devise the necessary defensive response" after members voted in March to condemn Iran's blocking of the Strait of Hormuz. President Emmanuel Macron earlier said a military operation to free the waterway is "unrealistic." Russia and China's veto power is not certain that Russia and China — who both wield veto powers — will back the draft resolution. "Authorizing member states to use force would amount to legitimizing the unlawful and indiscriminate use of force, which would inevitably lead to further escalation of the situation and lead to serious consequences," said Chinese ambassador Fu Cong. Russia, a long-time ally of Tehran, has denounced what it calls one-sided measures. Considering the possible Russian and Chinese vetoes, the text "faces tall odds to make it through the Security Council," Daniel Forti, an analyst at International Crisis Group, told AFP. "It is hard to see them supporting a resolution that treats stability in the strait exclusively as a security issue, instead of one that also grapples with the need for a durable political end to the hostilities," he said. Normally, around a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas passes through the Strait of Hormuz. Its near-total closure is impacting global supplies of important commodities including oil, liquefied natural gas and fertilizer and leading to sharp rises in energy prices.



where they belong," Mr. Trump said in his Wednesday (April 1, 2026) address. While he said Washington was nearing the completion of its goals in Iran, Mr. Trump did not lay out a timeline to end the war. The war began on February 28 when the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran. Tehran responded by launching its own attacks on Israel and Gulf states with U.S. bases. Joint U.S.-Israeli strikes in Iran and Israeli attacks in Lebanon have killed thousands and displaced millions. The war has also raised oil prices and shaken global markets. Mr. Trump's mixed messages thus far have done little to ease the concerns over his country's biggest military attacks since the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

## Iran President Pezeshkian says in letter that Iran harbors no enmity towards ordinary Americans



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said in a letter addressed to the American people that his country harbors no enmity towards ordinary Americans. He said in his letter that portraying Iran as a threat was "neither consistent with historical reality nor with present-day observable facts." President Masoud Pezeshkian said in his letter, "The Iranian people harbour no enmity toward other nations, including the people of America, Europe, or neighbouring countries. Even in the face of repeated foreign interventions and pressures throughout their proud history, Iranians have consistently drawn a clear distinction between governments and the peoples they govern. This is a deeply rooted principle in Iranian culture and collective consciousness — not a temporary political stance. For this reason, portraying Iran as a threat is neither consistent with historical reality nor with present-day observable facts. Such a perception is the product of political and economic whims of the powerful — the need to manufacture an enemy in order to justify pressure, maintain military dominance, sustain the arms industry, and control strategic markets. In such an environment, if a threat does not exist, it is invented," the letter reads.

Commenting on U.S. army bases in Gulf countries, he said, "Within this same framework, the United States has concentrated the largest number of its forces, bases, and military capabilities around Iran — a country that, at least since the founding of the United States, has never initiated a war. Recent American aggressions launched from these very bases have demonstrated how threatening such a military presence truly is. Naturally, no country confronted with such conditions would forgo strengthening its defensive capabilities. What Iran has done — and continues to

do — is a measured response grounded in legitimate self-defence, and by no means an initiation of war or aggression." Pezeshkian on U.S. working as "proxy for Israel." Mr. Pezeshkian said, "Is it not also the case that America has entered this aggression as a proxy for Israel, influenced and manipulated by that regime? Is it not true that Israel, by manufacturing an Iranian threat, seeks to divert global attention away from its crimes toward the Palestinians? Is it not evident that Israel now aims to fight Iran to the last American soldier and the last American taxpayer dollar — shifting the burden of its delusions onto Iran, the region, and the United States itself in pursuit of illegitimate interests?" "America First" truly among the priorities of the U.S. government today? Mr. Pezeshkian wrote in his address to U.S. citizens. He added, "I invite you to look beyond the machinery of misinformation — an integral part of this aggression — and instead speak with those who have visited Iran. Observe the many accomplished Iranian immigrants — educated in Iran — who now teach and conduct research at the world's most prestigious universities, or contribute to the most advanced technology firms in the West. Do these realities align with the distortions you are being told about Iran and its people?"

## Forest department transforms tribal schools in reserve forest areas in Khammam

Khammam: The district forest department has taken steps to improve educational standards, strengthen basic infrastructure and create an effective learning environment in government primary schools in the tribal areas of Sathupalli in the district.

District Forest Officer Siddharth Vikram Singh said that, with the support of HDFC Bank's corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds, development works with modern facilities are being taken up in the primary schools at Chandrayapalem and Regallapadu in reserve forest areas.

## One Hyderabad apartment, eight trans lives, and a law that threatens them all



In an apartment complex in a quiet corner of Uppal, not far from Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, Sanihit sits talking to his friend Sai Pallavi over tea. In the three-storey apartment building — home to eight trans people — the conversation turns naturally to the one thing that has been foremost on their minds: the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026. "I lived through every trauma that I'd ever had to endure when the Bill passed," says 27-year-old Sanihit, a transman and building occupant. "The question was, where do I go from here?"

It's a question on the minds of all eight trans people in the building. Introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 13, the law — passed in both Houses of Parliament and securing the President's assent in 19 days — does not recognise self-identification as the basis for determining gender. Although it recognises socio-cultural identities such as kinner, hijra, aravani or jogta, and people with variations in characteristics such as primary sexual characteristics, external genitalia, chromosomes or hormones, it does not recognise categories such as transmen, transwomen, non-binary and gender-queer people. For transgender people, the law — which critics say was passed in "undue haste without consultations" — marks an erasure of the very identities they have spent years fighting to keep. In the apartment building, anxiety over the Bill is pervasive, spilling into morning chores, work and dinner-time conversations. "It undercuts our independence," says 30-year-old Anil/Savithri, a non-binary person who, along with their partner Sandy — a gay man — founded the queer rights NGO Mobbera Foundation.

The building is also home to four more trans people besides Sanihit and Anil/Savithri, among them Sai Pallavi and Abhinetri, both transwomen. Here, they have set up homes with their chosen partners. "These are our families now," says Anil/Savithri. It was Anil/Savithri's and Sandy's love story that led the eight trans people to the apartment. It began when the two met on Facebook in 2014, when they were both in their twenties. Anil/Savithri, Sai Pallavi, Abhinetri Anil/Savithri, Sai Pallavi, and Abhinetri/Together, they founded 'Flash Mobbers' — a WhatsApp group for people with diverse gender and sexual identities. The group would eventually become Mobbera. For Anil/Savithri, it was one of the most memorable periods of their life. "The most unforgettable performance was when we did a flash mob at the gate of Osmania University," they say. "A group of us danced and dispersed soon after, but the memory of those days remains with us. Students and parents were supportive. We felt happy." Over time, the group evolved — from Flash Mobbers to Mobbers and then Mobbera. "We defined Mobbera as a mob of people ushering in a new era," Anil/Savithri says. In 2015, Mobbera registered itself as an NGO. For those who led it, it felt like a new beginning: the year before, the Supreme Court, in the landmark NALSA vs Union of India judgment, had declared transgender people the 'third gender' — a watershed moment for the trans rights movement.

The years that followed — from the Supreme Court's 2018 ruling decriminalising homosexuality and the 2019 law upholding aspects of the NALSA judgment — felt like steady, hard-won progress. The couple's personal life saw changes, too. In 2019, they moved to the current apartment complex, without coming out to the landlord. "He realised that we were a couple only four years later. He was supportive by then," Anil/Savithri says. "In the early days, the flat became a harbour for trans people in need of support. We would help others out for one or two days." Over time, others joined them in the apartment complex: in 2024, Sai Pallavi and Abhinetri moved into the flat below, and in 2025, Sanihit and his friends — two trans women and two trans men — moved into another flat. Sai Pallavi, a background verification analyst, speaks about how she came to live here. For this trans woman from Telangana's Karimnagar, coming out to her family was not easy. When she did in 2023, the fallout was severe. "I was taken to doctors and to tantriks to make me a 'man'. I eventually ran away from home and went to a friend in Nellore," she says. Soon, she made what felt like her only choice: joining a hijra cultural group. In the rigid guru-chela system, defiance was not tolerated.

"There is no independence. You're either into begging, doing badhai (blessing) or doing sex work," Sai Pallavi says. It was when she met Sandy that Pallavi saw her chance to leave. "By then, I had finished my B.Tech in mining engineering. Sandy said I could look for a job," she says. Like many others in the building, Sanihit, who works in account management at a corporate firm in Hyderabad, has a similar story. Originally from a village near Nagpur in Maharashtra, he moved to Hyderabad five years ago in search of the freedom to be himself — something he had long dreamed of. "I never came across a single transgender person in my village apart from myself," Sanihit says. He has yet to come out to his parents, though he believes they may already know. With his extended family, however, it is different. "They still don't know what I look like," he says. For many here, the Bill unfairly divides the trans community into two groups — those who are recognised and those who are not. Many now fear being pushed back into the lives they had tried to escape. "The amendment bill is basically making us go back to that guru-chela culture," says Pallavi. There are other concerns too — from losing jobs to losing transgender identity cards. Abhinetri, a traffic cop, fears for her position. "I'm worried that because I'm an independent transwoman, I will be thrown out of the force," she says. Sai Pallavi adds: "The Bill will make it difficult for everyone who has not undergone gender-reassignment surgery to claim that they are trans people. Because of my ill health, I've not undergone the surgery. Will my transgender card be revoked?"

Sanihit, who had been planning to come out through a Pride march in his village, has now put those plans on hold. "After seeing the Pride here in Hyderabad, I wanted to start one in my village, but now I'm not sure," he says. In their anxiety and confusion, they turn to their only solace — the Mobbera Foundation. But the Act threatens its existence too. The amendment penalises anyone who "kidnaps" a person and "forces" them to become transgender. Penalties range from up to 10 years' imprisonment for adults to life imprisonment in the case of minors. Members of the community say this could criminalise support systems. "There are several transgender persons who seek out people within the community to help them in the initial days of coming out. All such people can be prosecuted for years of imprisonment if family members claim they were kidnapped," Anil/Savithri says. Yet, there is some hope. In Delhi, a group of transgender people plan to challenge the Act in court, and the residents in Uppal see that as a way forward. "We, as a society, have come a long way. Why would we want to go back to troubled, backward times?" Anil/Savithri asks.

## Holding SIR judicial officers hostage in West Bengal a 'calculated attempt' to disrupt elections: SC

The Supreme Court on Thursday (April 2, 2026) said the gheraoing of seven judicial officers without food or water for more than nine hours at a government office in West Bengal's Malda district reported after several voters were struck off the electoral roll in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) was not only a "brazen attempt" to browbeat the officers but amounted to a challenge to the authority of the top court. Hundreds of judicial officers have been deployed on the basis of a Supreme Court order to function as Election Registration Officers and adjudicate objections raised by voters excluded from the electoral roll during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) ahead of the Assembly election scheduled on April 23 and 29. Noting that three of the judicial officers were women, the court said the incident exposed the "complete failure of the civil and police administration in the State of West Bengal".

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, heading a three-judge Bench, asked what the political leaders were doing during all those hours of captivity — could they not have gone to the spot and calmed down the situation. A shocked apex court pointed out that the judicial officers were pelted with stones as they were finally rescued and led out by the police after being detained from 3.30 p.m. on April 1 till well past midnight. "This was not a routine incident. It was an ex facie a calculated, well-planned and deliberate move to demoralise the judicial officers and impact the ongoing process of adjudication of objections. We will not allow anyone to interfere and take law into their hands by causing fear in the minds of judicial officers. This undoubtedly amounts to criminal contempt," Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, heading a three-judge Bench, observed.

The Chief Justice said he had never seen such a "politically polarised State like West Bengal". "You are forcing us to say. Unfortunately in your State, each one of you speaks a political language... I have never seen such a politically polarised State. Even in court orders, the politics is reflected... We passed the order deploying judicial officers because we thought we could have a neutral structure for the adjudication of objections, and this is how people are behaving? Do you think we are not aware who are the miscreants behind this incident? I was monitoring events till 2 a.m.," Chief Justice Kant addressed the West Bengal side. Justice Jyomalya Bagchi, on the Bench, said political leaders who form part of the executive of the State and leaders in the Opposition must condemn the incident in one voice. "The orders of the judicial officers are deemed to be the orders of this court. This incident sought to scuttle the entire effort, discourage judicial officers... It amounts to contempt of court," Justice Bagchi remarked. The court directed the Election Commission (EC) to assign the Central Bureau of Investigation or National Investigation Agency, during the course of the day, with the task to probe the incident. It directed the Commission to requisition Central forces to pro-



tect the life, liberty and families of the judicial officers involved in West Bengal SIR.

The Bench narrated that the Registrar General of the Calcutta High Court had informed the local police and civil administration for immediate backup on learning about the gherao. "The matter was met with conspicuous inertia until approximately 8:30 p.m.," it said. The official had then contacted the Home Secretary, the Director General of Police (DGP) and the Chief Justice of the High Court. "Though assurance of early action was given, no tangible action was taken," the court stated. Finally, the High Court Chief Justice had to intervene personally, following which the Home Secretary and the DGP had turned up at his residence at midnight. Chief Justice Kant said the High Court Chief Justice, in his letter to the apex court, had strongly deprecated the delay on the part of the police and the civil administration. The apex court said the Chief Secretary, Home Secretary, DGP, District Collector and Superintendent of Police had acted in a "highly deplorable" manner during the hours of crisis.

The Bench directed the DGP, Malda District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police to show cause why suitable action should not be taken against them. The Bench scheduled the case for hearing on April 6. "They have to place before this court reasons for failing to take any effective measures to secure the safety of the judicial officers," the court ordered. Senior advocates Kalyan Bandhopadhyay, Menaka Guruswamy and Gopal Sankaranarayanan, variously representing the State government and the ruling Trinamool Congress leaders, said the Chief Secretary and DGP were the poll body's own appointments in March. Senior advocate Dama Seshadri Naidu, appearing for the Commission, said the judicial officers were held "hostage". "This is jungle raj," he exclaimed.

This is a failure on the part of the EC. The EC had shifted these officials... These are your officials who did not take the Chief Justice's calls," Mr. Bandhopadhyay countered. The court further directed that not more than five persons would be allowed to assemble at adjudication centres.

## How women voters are shaping State politics in 2026



Women voters have become a central point of discussion in elections in India in recent times. Rightly so, because parties in power roll out women-centric schemes, sometimes even direct cash transfer ones, to win their support. Opposition parties too make promises about initiating schemes for women's welfare, if elected. These promises seem to be making some impact, which is reflected in the rising turnout of women voters. Parties appear to have mobilised women through welfare schemes, and this mobilisation is seen as a key factor for electoral success. The upcoming Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu are unlikely to be different. Women, who constitute nearly half of the electorate in each State (and slightly more in Kerala), are a key focus of all political parties. Electoral trends show that while turnout has increased, women remain underrepresented in State assemblies. However, evidence from Lokniti-CSDS data suggest that their voting choices have somewhat shaped party strategies and political outcomes. Across all four States, women's voter turnout has remained high and largely stable over the past three decades, often matching or slightly exceeding men's participation. The table below shows the gender gap in voter turnout in State elections. (+) indicates higher turnout of women compared to men, (-) indicates lower turnout of women.

In Assam, the gender gap narrowed from -1.48 percentage points in 1991 to +0.41 in 2021. Kerala shows a similar trend, with women voting at levels equal to or slightly higher than men. In 2016, women's turnout surpassed men's, with a gap of +2.17 percentage points. By 2021, the turnout was nearly equal, with a gap of +0.09 percentage points. In West Bengal, women's turnout remained slightly below men's until 2011, when it surpassed men's for the first time and maintained a marginal lead in the subsequent election (+0.38 percentage points in 2021). Tamil Nadu, historically lower in voter participation compared to other States, reached near parity by 2011, and women's turnout has remained close to men's turnout through 2021, with only a minimal gap of -0.27 percentage points. Representation in Assemblies While women have consistently shown high voter participation, converting this engagement into representation in State Assemblies remains a persistent chal-

lenge. Over the past three decades, the proportion of women elected to Assemblies in all four States have varied, but remained low.

In Assam, women's representation rose from 3.97% in 1991 to a peak of 11.11% in 2011, but fell to 4.76% in 2021 (six of 126 seats). Kerala shows a relatively stable but persistently low level of women's representation, with women legislators occupying between 5% and 9% of seats over the years. In 2021, only 11 women were elected, accounting for just 7.86% of the 140-seat Assembly. West Bengal stands out for gradual gains rising from 7.14% in 1991 to 13.95% in 2016, and 13.61% in 2021. In 2021 about 40 women were elected to the 294-member Assembly, the highest among these States. Tamil Nadu presents the most volatile trajectory. Representation peaked at 13.68% in 1991 but fell sharply to 3.85% in 1996. In 2021, women's representation stood at 5.13%, with 12 women elected to the 234-seat Assembly. On voting patterns

Survey-based estimates from Assembly election studies conducted by the Lokniti-CSDS provide insight into how women have voted over time. In Assam, there has been a clear shift. In 2011, the Congress led among women voters with 39% of women voting for them, while the BJP secured 10%. By 2021, the BJP-led alliance increased its women's vote share to 44%. As shown in the table below, the Mahajot alliance also secured significant support, receiving 33% in 2016 and 41% in 2021, making the contest more competitive. Kerala presents a closely contested pattern between the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Left Democratic Front (LDF) with women's support nearly equal in 2011 and 2016. In the 2021 Assembly elections, the LDF gained a modest advantage securing 45% of women's votes compared to the UDF's 41%. The BJP which contested independently in 2011 received 5% of the women's votes. In 2016 and 2021, contesting as part of an alliance, its share rose to 12% and 11% respectively, but it remains a secondary player in a largely bipolar contest. In West Bengal, the Trinamool Congress, whether contesting alone or in alliance, has consistently secured close to 50% of the women's vote. The BJP, contesting independently in 2011 and 2016, received 4% and 10% of the women's votes, respectively. By 2021, the BJP and its allies expanded sharply among women voters, receiving 36% of the votes, pointing to some restructuring of the electoral landscape. Tamil Nadu shows alternating patterns between the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). The AIADMK led among women voters in 2016 (46%), but the DMK alliance overtook it in 2021 with 45% compared to the 42% of the AIADMK and its allies. Despite their high participation, women remain a small minority in State legislatures. Over the past three decades, structural barriers such as limited party nominations, competitive electoral dynamics and social and cultural constraints have constrained representation. Yet, their voting patterns increasingly shape party strategies and influence political contests.

## Western hegemony and the language of violence

The war on Iran has rapidly become one of the most consequential conflicts since the Second World War. On February 28, the United States and Israel launched coordinated strikes across Iran, targeting critical sites and eliminating the senior Iranian leadership. The war has since expanded with missile and drone attacks, causing widespread destruction. Disruption of ship movement through the Strait of Hormuz has resulted in a pronounced volatility in global oil markets. Governments worldwide are observing the situation with increasing concern. The conflict has now entered a more unpredictable phase with discussion of negotiations occurring alongside preparations for a potential military escalation, even the possible deployment of American ground forces. While the exercise of military power in this war is evident, the narratives that accompany it raise deeper questions. Why is Iran characterised in Western discourse as a rogue state and a threat to international order, whereas the U.S. frames its own use of force as lawful, defensive and stabilising? Furthermore, how has this narrative achieved such widespread acceptance in international politics? The explanation lies not only in the distribution of power but also in the processes through which knowledge about international politics has been produced.

Many key terms used in international politics appear neutral. Terms such as "terrorism", "rogue state", or "responsible power" seem to offer simple descriptions of behaviour. In practice, however, these terms frequently serve as political labels. Powerful states shape how these terms are used. They classify states and actors into moral categories and usually determine what constitutes acceptable force and what counts as illegitimate violence. This pattern is visible in the ongoing war on Iran, where language constructs a moral hierarchy regarding the use of violence. The power of discourse

For decades, the linguist and political thinker Noam Chomsky has been among the most prominent critics of this double standard. He contends that the label "rogue state" often reflects political power rather than consistent legal criteria. If uniform standards were applied, major powers themselves may be classified as rogue actors due to repeated violations of international law and their support for violent proxy groups abroad. Chomsky references the U.S. involvement in the Contra war in Nicaragua during the 1980s. The International Court of Justice ruled that Washington's actions amounted to an illegal use of force and ordered it to pay reparations. The U.S. rejected the ruling and vetoed a UN resolution calling upon states to comply with international law. Such incidents show how powerful states can evade the labels they impose on others. Understanding the persistence of these patterns requires moving beyond the immediate geopolitics of West Asia to examine how international relations developed as a field of knowledge. Palestinian scholar Edward Said offered one of the most influential critiques of this process in his book Orientalism. Said argued that Western scholarship has historically portrayed Eastern societies as irrational, emotional, dangerous, and fundamentally distinct from the West, which is portrayed as rational and civilised. These representations functioned not merely as stereotypes but as a system of knowledge that helped justify dominance. The ability to characterise a country often correlates with the power to control or discipline it. This pattern persists in contemporary debates about Iran and the wider Islamic world. Iran is often presented not simply as a strategic rival but as a civilisational threat. The regime is often described as irrational or fanatical rather than as a state pursuing strategic interests similar to other states. Once this image becomes dominant, military action can be framed as necessary protection rather than aggression.

Why the narrative persists Critics of U.S. foreign policy



often highlight a fundamental contradiction. The U.S. presents itself as the guardian of international law. Yet, in practice, it has often acted outside those very rules. The 2003 invasion of Iraq, conducted without UN Security Council authorisation, exemplifies this inconsistency. Similar concerns arise in relation to targeted killings, covert operations, and support for armed groups in various regions.

The ongoing war against Iran raises similar concerns. Air strikes have targeted infrastructure and high-ranking officials, resulting in civilian casualties. These operations are at odds with the UN Charter, which permits the use of force only in self-defence or with Security Council approval. However, these actions are seldom characterised as violations of international law in mainstream Western discourse. Instead, they are framed as preventive self-defence or stabilising interventions. This contrast highlights the power of narrative. The same act can be interpreted as either aggression or a security measure, depending on the actor. When Western powers employ force, the prevailing narratives emphasise deterrence and order. In contrast, when others use force, the discourse shifts to terms such as "terrorism" and threats posed by "rogue states".

This disparity is related to how knowledge about international politics is produced. Most of the institutions that shape global debates are concentrated in North America and Europe. They set the terms. Ideas that emerge from Western political debates often become global norms. Scholars and policymakers in the non-Western world may challenge these ideas, but they often have limited ability to reshape the intellectual frameworks developed elsewhere. The result is a subtle but powerful imbalance. Western states possess not only superior military and economic power but also discursive power. They shape the narrative through which global politics is understood.

The narratives of the Iran war The war on Iran shows this clearly. It is not only about missiles and strikes. It is also about legitimacy. Iran is accused of destabilising the region through its nuclear and missile programmes and support for proxy forces. Conversely, American and Israeli strikes are being presented as preventive or defensive measures. Both sides claim legitimacy, but only one narrative tends to dominate the global discourse. This does not mean Iran is beyond criticism. The Iranian regime has its own record of repression and regional interventions. The point is about the unequal standards through which violence is judged. Language, therefore, becomes part of the mechanism of power. It shapes how wars are interpreted and whose actions appear legitimate. Terms such as "terrorism", "rogue state", and "security threat" are shaped by power. Chomsky has argued that the term "rogue state" serves less as an objective description and more as a political weapon. It is often applied to those who resist American power, not necessarily to those who violate international law more consistently. Once a state is labelled a "rogue state", extraordinary measures become easier to justify. Sanctions appear as discipline.

## Building the information backbone for India's drinking water future



Data and its management are the backbone of any system, and any differences in that may appear technical but have real consequences. When definitions differ and data sources conflict, states spend valuable time reconciling spreadsheets instead of solving problems on the ground. Engineers struggle to prioritise repairs and progress slows down, not because of lack of effort, but of absence of a holistic picture.

As India undertakes one of the world's largest rural water supply transformations, this challenge needs urgent attention. Since the launch of the Jal Jeevan Mission in 2019, household tap water coverage in rural India has increased from 16.72% to over 81%. This achievement is not just about pipes and connections. It is about lives changed, saving over 5.5 crore hours of daily drudgery (largely for women), and preventing nearly four lakh deaths from diarrhoeal diseases. But building pipes and pumps is only one part of the journey. The real test is ensuring water flows regularly, safely, and sustainably for years to come. That requires constant monitoring of infrastructure, early detection of problems, and coordinated action across multiple institutions. This is where India has begun laying the foundations for Digital Public Infrastructure for the drinking water sector. A key building block in this effort is the creation of a unique digital identity for every drinking water scheme through Sujalam Bharat IDs and Sujal Gaon IDs. A Sujalam Bharat ID establishes a comprehensive digital record of hydraulically connected assets from source to tap. Integrated with platforms such as the Sujalam Bharat App, it enables the creation of Sujal Gaon IDs and provides a clear view of how water systems are interconnected. This enhances monitoring, promotes transparency, and contributes to building a technologically empowered Viksit Bharat @2047. Scheme performance

Infrastructure data alone are not enough. For drinking water systems to remain reliable, digital systems must also capture how these schemes perform over time. Data on the regularity of water supply, water levels in sources, water quality indicators and the financial sustainability of schemes are equally important. When such information flows regularly into digital systems, governments and com-

munities can better understand whether schemes are functioning as intended and where attention is needed. Reliable operational data can transform how the sector responds to challenges. Declining source levels and irregular supply patterns can be detected early. Water quality risks can be flagged before they become public health concerns. Timely financial planning for operation and maintenance can ensure that systems continue to deliver their intended benefits.

Equally important, this visibility strengthens community governance. Gram panchayats and village water and sanitation committees play a central role in managing rural drinking water systems, with a close understanding of local needs and seasonal water realities. When local institutions can see both the physical infrastructure and how it is performing, they gain a clearer understanding of their water supply systems. Information on pipelines, pumps and tanks, combined with data on supply regularity, water levels, water quality and financial sustainability, provides village institutions with a simple but powerful view of their systems. With this data, communities can spot problems early and resolve them with engineers. For gram panchayats and village water and sanitation committees, this transparency strengthens local water management and Jan Bhagidari. As this infrastructure evolves, states can share information more easily using common formats. They retain control of their systems while enabling collective learning on what works and where improvement is needed.

These foundations can enable data- and AI-driven innovations. Frontline workers can capture images of pumps and pipelines, and AI can assess supply, detect damage, and flag maintenance needs. Analytics can identify risks and patterns that need attention. All of this depends on one thing: trusted, reliable information flowing through the system. Pipes and pumps will deliver water, but trusted, shared information will keep them working well for years. When communities understand their water systems, they care for them. When local institutions have the right information and tools, they manage them with confidence. And when digital infrastructure supports people on the ground, safe and sustainable drinking water for every rural household can be ensured. When communities understand their water systems, they care for them. When local institutions have the right information and tools, they manage them with confidence. And when digital infrastructure supports people on the ground, safe and sustainable drinking water for every rural household can endure. The Jal Jeevan Mission has connected millions of rural households to tap water. The next phase is ensuring these systems remain functional over time. The recently concluded Jal Mahotsav 2026 reflected this shift, recognising communities across the country for their role in managing drinking water assets, showing that this spirit is already taking root at the grassroots and must now be strengthened to ensure systems remain functional over time.

## 'Operation Chabutra' sparks debate over safety and freedom on Hyderabad streets



A late-night policing drive targeting groups 'loitering' on city roads has triggered a split in public opinion, with residents and netizens sharply divided over whether it enhances safety or encroaches on personal freedom. The initiative titled Operation Chabutra is being carried out across Hyderabad, particularly in the south and Old City areas, where police say complaints of harassment, intimidation and petty crime tend to surface after midnight. Teams patrol identified stretches, questioning those found sitting on roadside platforms, street corners and relatively isolated locations.

Police officials maintain that the operation is aimed at deterrence rather than indiscriminate action. DCP, Golconda Zone, G. Chandra Mohan said the questioning is based on behaviour rather than mere presence. "The motive behind the questioning is that whoever is loitering on streets, or sitting in isolated places, will be pulled up, not all. When some are found catcalling couples, women, and indulging in extortion, we counsel them in front of their parents or elders. If they are involved in crime against women, teasing, or property offence, that will be a case. Minor scuffle will be dealt with counselling," he said. An officer from the Charminar zone said the timing and approach are calibrated based on past incidents. "The operation usually starts after midnight. If found roaming without a purpose, we cross check them once, but roaming after 1 a.m. is dealt with strictly. Recently, there were incidents of a couple being assaulted, and a delivery boy robbed. The South and South-West range get more of such cases."

He added that the drive is intended to remain largely non-confrontational. "It is a peaceful operation, mostly counselling. There is a misconception of using lathi by police. That happens in isolated cases when a group tries to escape or evade questions. If there is a complaint about it, we will surely take action." The term 'chabutra' itself reflects a long-standing social culture in parts of the Old City, where

residents, particularly youth, gather on raised platforms or 'arugu' during summer nights. Advocate Vasudev Raju from Nampally Criminal Court said that such spaces have traditionally been part of community life. "I am basically from a place called Aliabad in Old City, south of Charminar near Rajanna Bowli. Life here has to be experienced, not just witnessed. Youth can really enjoy summer nights on an arugu or chabutra. But they should not run away when patrol vans or police come, should avoid vices and always be in a place covered by CCTV to establish that nothing nefarious is done."

However, legal concerns have also been raised over the manner of enforcement. Advocate Rama Rao Immaneni criticised the operation, calling it an overreach. "Innovative humiliation in the name of a new device called Operation Chabutra turned out to be a source of public humiliation. Powers of police with regard to surveillance are limited to erstwhile AP Police Standing Orders 601 and 744 adopted by Telangana after reorganisation. It forms no part of their duty to publicly thrack the citizens by branding them. Crime control cannot be under unconstitutional methods as we are living in a democracy," he said. Videos of the operation, particularly from Mailarevally and surrounding areas, have circulated widely online, drawing contrasting reactions. Some users have welcomed the move, arguing that stricter enforcement is necessary to address nuisance. One comment described the action as a "good job", adding that certain groups take advantage of perceived leniency and need to be controlled to maintain order.

Others have raised concerns over the manner of policing. A user questioned why people were being 'harassed' instead of simply being asked to disperse, while another replied that such an approach often fails. Questions have also been raised about freedom of movement on public roads and the use of force in certain instances. At the same time, there is support from residents in other localities who say similar nuisance persists in their areas. Some have called for such drives in places like Balapur, citing disturbances through the day and night. Sai Sagar, a resident from Maruthi Nagar, said, "I often reach home around 2 a.m. and see boys ganged up with beer bottles in the end of my lane. There is definitely a need for such vigilance to ensure public safety," he said. Police also clarified that individuals returning from work or with valid reasons are not targeted. In recent checks, youth allegedly driving under the influence of alcohol were counselled, 81 bikes were seized, and small quantities of marijuana cigarettes were found in a few cases. Officials added that no one was detained unnecessarily, countering claims circulating online.

## Uttar Pradesh top performer under PM's solar power scheme: UPNEDA



Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the top-performing State under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojna, in March 2026, setting a new national benchmark in rooftop solar deployment. With 52,729 installations in a single month, the State has outperformed leading States such as Gujarat and Maharashtra. The State has consistently remained among the top two States since July 2025, with the government arguing that it reflects sustained momentum, strong execution, and robust field-level governance. "Under PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, Uttar Pradesh has surged ahead with more than 1,524 MW of rooftop solar capacity, generating approximately 6.8-7.0 million units of green energy daily and enabling households savings on electricity bill. This progress positions Uttar Pradesh as a national leader in

sustainable energy adoption, while also creating more than 60,000 jobs across the State," said Inderjit Singh, Director of the Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA). "The March 2026 installations in Uttar Pradesh represent the highest monthly deployment achieved by any State since the inception of the scheme, underscoring the State's leadership in accelerating decentralised solar adoption.

As per the national portal, Uttar Pradesh has achieved 4,48,233 cumulative rooftop solar installations, placing it third in India. However, given the current growth trajectory, the State is well-positioned to surpass Maharashtra and move to second place in the coming months. The State also recorded multiple operational milestones during the month, including a record 3,188 installations in a single day on 31 March 2026, marking the highest-ever daily achievement. The total installed capacity has now reached 1,524.61 MW. Additionally, approximately ₹4,000 crore in subsidies have been disbursed, including ₹2,985 crore from the Central government, directly benefiting lakhs of households," reads an official statement. This large-scale solar expansion is delivering measurable socio-economic and environmental benefits. Rooftop solar adoption has resulted in an estimated saving of more than 6,000 acres of land, which would otherwise be required for ground-mounted plants. The installed capacity is generating approximately 6.8-7.0 million units of free electricity per day, translating into direct consumer savings of ₹4 to ₹4.5 crore daily.

## Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Rajnath Singh's remarks: 'Response to any attack would be 'swift, calibrated and decisive'



Mr. Asif took to X to respond to remarks by his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh, who earlier said that any "misadventure" from India's neighbour in the prevailing situation would invite an "unprecedented and decisive" action. Speaking at an event in poll-bound Kerala, Mr. Singh on Thursday (April 2) said that following the April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives, India had destroyed the terrorist hideouts and infrastructure in Pakistan. He contended that during Operation Sindoor, Indian forces brought Pakistan to its knees within 22 minutes.

"Repeated rhetoric reflects not strength, but visible strategic anxiety as the anniversary of the Pahalgam attack approaches, Mr. Asif said. Mr. Asif further said: "Such threat-mongering is not new; it is part of a predictable pattern - externalising internal fragility, and attempting to provoke escalation under the garb of unsubstantiated allegations for vested political interests." Recalling the four-day conflict in May, the Pakistani Minister said that history was

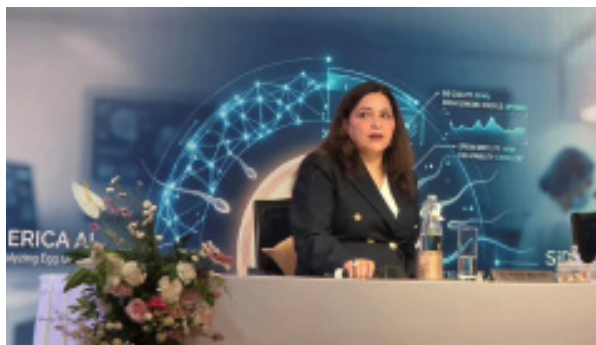
a stark reminder that miscalculation has consequences. "The next time our response will be even more forceful and decisive. Let there be no ambiguity: Pakistan remains committed to peace and regional stability, but its resolve to defend sovereignty is absolute, its preparedness complete, and its response will be swift, calibrated, and decisive," he said. The Pahalgam attack that took place on April 22 last year resulted in a brief conflict between the two countries.

## Congress, BRS gear up for crucial civic polls

Hyderabad: A high-stakes political contest is set to unfold on Saturday as elections for Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons in three municipalities including Ibrahimpatnam, Kyathanpally, and Khanapur, are held following weeks of legal battles and political manoeuvring. With both the ruling Congress and the opposition BRS mobilising top leadership, the contest assumed significance, emerging as a prestige battle.

Despite the BRS winning majority seats in all three municipalities, the ruling Congress allegedly used all tricks including alleged attack on the BRS councillors, intimidation and also enticements, to turn the election in its favour. The State Election Commission postponed the elections amid disruptions, allegations of interference, and lack of quorum.

## AI tools to increase IVF success rate and reduce patient costs



Artificial Intelligence (AI) can help reduce patient costs by achieving pregnancy faster during IVF (In vitro fertilisation) process, said Dr. Manika Khanna, Chairperson and MD at Gaudium IVF, while introducing two new AI tools — SID (Sperm Identification Device) and ERICA (Embryo Ranking Intelligent Classification Assistant) — in New Delhi on Wednesday (April 1, 2026). These AI tools have been developed by the IVF 2.0, a UK-headquartered embryology innovation organisation, founded by embryologists Dr. Jacques Cohen and Dr. Alejandro Chave.

SID is an AI system designed to optimise sperm selection during fertility treatments. It identifies the most viable sperm for fertilisation, which can lead to better-quality blastocyst formation. While ERICA supports embryologists

in embryo selection, provides objective, data-driven ranking of embryos. It is done by analysing static images of blastocysts based on key morphological and developmental characteristics. They have been data-fed by the genome sequencing data from India as well, said Dr. Khanna. The newly introduced technologies are designed to enhance critical stages of the IVF process.

Together, these non-invasive tools assist embryologists in improving decision-making and reducing variability. Early clinical observations suggest that the integration of these AI systems can significantly improve fertilisation and blastocyst development rates. Dr. Khanna said that nearly 15% Indians (male and female, both) are infertile now. She attributes it to increasing stress and exposure to pollutants, consumption of preservative-rich food, use of tobacco and unverified fitness supplements. By improving precision and consistency, the adoption of AI has the potential to reduce the need for repeat cycles, thereby lowering the emotional, physical, and financial burden on patients while inspiring confidence among clinicians and stakeholders, added Dr. Khanna. She said that these AI tools analyse the sample on 2.5 million parameters and help embryologists choose the best sperm and embryo. Dr. Khanna added that AI increases first-cycle IVF success rate by 5-7%. While these AI tools help reduce time and money, the base price for an IVF cycle begins around ₹2,00,000 at Gaudium IVF, with additional costs for complex cases.

## Belagavi entrepreneur helps commercial units overcome LPG shortage using alternative energy sources

Since the war in West Asia began a month ago, hotels and industries in Belagavi have been facing the shortage of commercial LPG cylinders. However, a third of them have switched to biomass-based stoves, water heaters and steam generators, thanks to Sameer Kanabargi, an innovator and entrepreneur who runs Phoenix Industries. For over 35 years, this small unit in the Udyambag Industrial Estate in Belagavi has been silently working in the field of alternative energy sources and disseminating technology developed by premier institutions like IIT, IISc, TERI and others. Phoenix Industries has designed and produced a range of equipment for the Indian Army and the Border Security Force. Some of the over two dozen tools and implements produced by Mr. Kanabargi are his own inventions. Phoenix produces biomass-based stoves, water heaters, gasifiers, steam generators and other equipment. They can be used to feed a small family of two to a crowd of two lakh. They use inputs, including agriculture waste like bagasse, stems, leaves and other farm residue, twigs, tree branches, coconut shells or other waste, paper, cardboard and plywood. "The input can be any inflammable waste material. There is no need to modify any of our equipment," Mr. Kanabargi said. It is estimated that around 150 of the 350 hotels and around 100 small and medium industries in Belagavi and Maharashtra have switched to biomass-based stoves and burners. Some of them have made the switch now while those that had stopped using them have returned to the renewable and low-cost energy source. The current LPG shortage has increased the demand by multiple times and the factory is working in three shifts to meet the demand. "I think the demand and inquiries we have got in the last 10 days is equal to the demand we received in the last 10 years," he said. "While we need to rely on foreign countries for LPG supply, biomass is easily available all around us. In rural areas, it is virtually free, while in the cities, it costs around ₹5-₹7 per kg. Three kilograms of biomass gives the same amount of heat energy as one kilo of LPG. But then, the final cost works out to be 40%-50% cheaper. Industries that use our products have recovered the cost in 30-100 days," he said. Mr. Kanabargi was



among the earliest adopters of the ASTRA Ole no smoke chulha designed by IISc's Centre for Application of Science and Technology for Rural Areas. "We produced over 20,000 model ASTRA Ole that were given to rural poor by the government and other agencies. He was among the few industrialists invited by IIT Bombay for a feasibility study of biomass-based gasifiers and other tools. He mass produced biomass stoves designed by TERI under its extension programme. He designed a portable room heater that runs on pine needles for BSF personnel working in sub zero temperatures and transferred the technology free. Mr. Kanabargi says he has this streak of "think differently" from the crowd. "It all started when I was in ninth standard," he recalls. He designed a multi-purpose kitchen stove that can cook rice and generate hot water at the same time. He won a State-level award for the project. He still keeps the working model in his office. He inherited a factory from his father Surendra Kanabargi but soon shifted focus to innovation-based products. He designed and produced sheep shearing kits and modern Charkhas using bicycle wheels that were faster and needed less labour. These units were commissioned by the India Development Society founded by activists S.R. Hiremath and Shyamala Hiremath. Dayanand Appayyanavarmath, owner of Shri Basaveshwara Khanavali, has introduced biomass-based stoves and heaters in all his eateries."

# Do not disturb! Exploring the curse of the pharaohs



Anyone out there who has seen the action-packed adventure movie 'The Mummy'? If you have (and jumped in fear at the sight of the awakened mummy!) then take a seat! You must know that, similar to what you saw on screen, regarding the consequences of awakening a mummy, there are believed to be repercussions for the action of disturbing the tomb of an ancient Egyptian. Only, instead of the mummy coming to life, this consequence comes in the form of a curse!

The land of Egypt is one that holds historical marvels, mysteries, and knowledge. Here, the rulers are referred to as 'pharaohs'. This term first came into use during the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt (1550 BC–1292 BC). Pharaohs were more than just the rulers. They were also the divine mediators between the gods and the people. It is strongly believed by the Egyptians that if a pharaoh's body is properly preserved (mummified) following their death, then they would receive a luxurious and pleasant welcome in the afterlife. The resting places of pharaohs are filled with a great amount of wealth as offerings to the gods to provide the deceased with a calming and blissful path to the next world. The curse of the pharaohs is said to be cast upon anyone who disturbs the mummy and tomb of an Egyptian ruler. The curse will cast misfortune upon the intruder, which will lead to a great deal of bad luck, ranging from illnesses to even death! Warnings were inscribed into the ancient tombs to ward off robbers with the fear of a future filled with bad luck. Each warning was phrased differently, with one warning that the robber or archaeologist would be faced with a disease that no doctor can cure, while others provide a curse of misfortune in the form of metaphors and expressions.

A gold inlaid coffinette of Tutankhamun is pictured during a press visit of the Tutankhamun, Treasures of the Golden Pharaoh exhibition, displaying more than 150 original artefacts, at the Grande Halle de la Villette in Paris, France, March 21, 2019. While the curse of the pharaohs was seen as a means to induce fear into the hearts of grave robbers, people only started to hold genuine belief for the curse after the famous and horrifying incident in 1922, when egyptianologist and archaeologist Howard Carter and his team of excavators, opened the tomb of the thirteenth pharaoh, Tutankhamun, 3,300 years following his passing and burial. Tutankhamun was one of the few pharaohs to have been fully worshipped as a deity during his reign. However, this ruler had died at the young age of 18. His tomb's location had been lost since it was buried under debris. The journey to discovering it was a long one, as Carter and Lord Carnarvon (The Earl who financed the excavation) spent many digging seasons with no luck. It wasn't until the 4th of November (When Carnarvon had agreed to fund the excavation for one last season), that the excavators uncovered the first step of the discovery, literally! This step served as the entrance to the staircase into the tomb! Howard Carter described his experience of first stepping into the tomb in his book 'The Tomb of Tutankhamun'. He spoke of the sensation of amazement and marvel he experienced the second he entered the space. "As my eyes grew accustomed to the light, details of the room within emerged slowly from the mist, strange animals, statues, and gold - everywhere the glint of gold. For the moment - an eternity it must have seemed to the others standing by - I was struck dumb with amazement, and when Lord Carnarvon, unable to stand the suspense any longer, inquired anxiously, 'Can you see any-

thing?' it was all I could do to get out the words, 'Yes, wonderful things.'" Howard Carter. The Tomb of Tutankhamun. The golden sarcophagus of King Tutankhamun in his burial chamber is seen in the Valley of the Kings, in Luxor, Egypt, on November 28. The discovery and opening of Tutankhamun's Tomb was a historical event. However, what followed this were incidents of shock and widespread discussion. A short time after the pharaoh's tomb was opened, Lord Carnarvon had been bitten by a mosquito. This may not seem like a big problem; however, the chain of events that followed could only be described as terrifyingly unfortunate.

One day, when Carnarvon was shaving, he accidentally cut open the mosquito bite, causing it to become infected. And soon, blood poisoning followed this, causing immeasurable pain until he died of pneumonia in Cairo on April 5, 1923, which was only slightly longer than one month after the tomb had been closed on February 26! The death of the Earl created speculation that the cause of his passing was more than just an illness. This was during a time when fiction works displayed stories where reanimated mummies would seek revenge on those who disturbed their sleep. Tropes of mummy curses and real-life incidents involving the bad luck they caused, sparked and instilled the curse into the minds of society. It is said that a psychic had warned Carnarvon of the danger he would face prior to his death. Carnarvon's son, Henry Herbert, had mentioned that at the moment of his father's death, Cairo had experienced a power outage. According to Carter, the team had also witnessed a snake consuming a bird they had brought with them. Egyptians considered this an ill omen, connecting the snake to the Uraeus, the royal cobra that normally rested on the crown of the pharaoh to strike enemies. The misfortune didn't stop there! The 'curse' (as referred to by a majority of the public) continued to take effect even after the Earl's passing. Following this, financier George Jay Gould visited the same tomb and died in the month of May of that year. People with connections to Carnarvon, like his half-brother and secretary, had also passed away. Another member of the excavation team, A. C. Mace, also died of pneumonia in the year 1928. While causes were listed, the public attributed their deaths to the curse! If anything seems mystical or enigmatic, it just means that another path has opened in the field of science! Similar to the excavation at Tutankhamun's Tomb, there have been many other incidents where archaeologists and explorers faced unusual deaths following their trips into pyramids, and research on the texts. The deaths, despite having natural causes, were reported by the media as connected to the curse. At that time, exaggerated claims were made by the press on the existence of curses and vengeful spirits.

This was not taken well by Egyptianologists, including Howard Carter, who claimed: "all sane people should dismiss such inventions with contempt." Research has been done on the strange deaths that followed when people entered tombs. Based on incidents and studies conducted, researchers have discovered that ancient tombs give out highly radioactive energy. It was further observed that all the victims had symptoms attributed to radiation sickness. Some of the pathogens included toxic fungi, known as Aspergillus flavus, which, when disturbed, could release spores that would effect respiratory systems and those with weak immune systems. In a study published in the Journal of Scientific Exploration, Scientist Ross Fellowes found that the toxic materials and nuclear waste may be the core cause of the deaths, and exposure to this radiation could lead to health problems like cancer. "All sane people should dismiss such inventions with contempt." Howard Carter

The Unlucky Mummy There is an ancient Egyptian artefact that quite literally goes by the name "Unlucky Mummy", which is presented in the form of an unidentified woman. Despite the name, this artefact is a painted inner coffin lid that was found at Thebes. There were many myths surrounding this artefact based on the misfortune it caused (including deaths and illnesses). There was even one story that claimed that it was being transported to New York on the RMS Titanic when it sank!

## Supreme Court asks Centre if disabled cadets can be treated as ex-servicemen



The Supreme Court has asked the Centre if military cadets who become unfit due to disabilities sustained during training can be given ex-servicemen status, enabling them to avail reservation benefits in government and semi-government jobs. A Bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan said a majority of the military cadets were below the age of 30 and would need employment.

"During the course of submissions, one of the aspects that was discussed was as to whether the boarded-out cadets could also be considered as ex-servicemen or ex-military personnel for the purpose of having the benefit of reservation for such persons in various governmental and semi-government jobs and posts," the Bench said. "Learned ASG to seek instructions on this aspect, so that the scope of the ex-military personnel could also include the boarded-out cadets, since a majority of them are in their 20s, 30s", it said. Additional Solicitor General N. Venkataraman, appearing for the Union of India, said it would give a comprehensive response to the issue.

The top court was hearing a suo motu case related to the difficulties faced by cadets who were boarded out due to injury or disability during training. On August 18 last year, the apex court said it wants defence forces to have "braveheart cadets" who should not be deterred by injuries or disabilities suffered during training, and directed the Centre to explore the possibility of providing them with insurance covers for such exigencies. It sought the response of the Centre and the defence forces in a suo motu case on difficulties faced by cadets, who were medically discharged from military institutes on account of disabilities suffered during training programmes. The court said the Centre should explore the possibility of granting an insurance cover like group insurance to the cadets undergoing rigorous training in different military institutes to deal with any exigency of

death or disabilities. It also asked the Centre to seek instruction on enhancing the current lump sum amount — ₹40,000 for cadets disabled during the training programme — to meet their medical needs. The top court was informed that a file relating to granting them Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) cover had been cleared by the defence ministry, but not implemented. The top court asked the Centre to explore a scheme for the rehabilitation of the disabled candidates into desk jobs or any other work related to defence services, after their treatment was over. On August 12 last year, the top court had taken suo motu cognisance of a media report, which flagged the issue of these cadets. They were stated to be once a part of training at the nation's top military institutes, such as the National Defence Academy (NDA) and the Indian Military Academy (IMA). According to a report, there were around 500 officer cadets who were medically discharged from these military institutes since 1985, due to varying degrees of disability incurred during training, and are now staring at mounting medical bills with an ex-gratia monthly payment that's far short of what they need.

## ASI officials held in CBI bribery case

The agency said a monument attendant and a conservation assistant posted at the ASI's Sub-Circle at Jantar Mantar were booked after a complaint that the former had demanded "illegal gratification/undue advantage of ₹3,50,000 on behalf of the accused conservation assistant from the complainant for revoking the notice" and allowing him to continue the work.

Following negotiations, the accused agreed to accept ₹3.10 lakh and directed the complainant to pay ₹1 lakh as part payment, a statement said. Acting on the complaint, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) laid a trap on April 1 and caught the monument attendant "red-handed, while demanding and accepting the illegal gratification/undue advantage of ₹1,00,000 from the complainants as part payment of the demanded bribe of ₹3.10 lakh." During the operation, "the role of the conservation assistant, Archaeological Survey of India, Sub-Circle-Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, also surfaced," following which both officials were arrested, the agency said.

# What is ethical hacking?



You must have heard of hacking and how social media accounts, devices and even security systems often get hacked. But did you know there is an ethical side to hacking which helps us all in ways we do not often realise? Ethical hacking or white-hat hacking is a legal cybersecurity practice where experts try to imitate cyberattacks to find and fix weaknesses in systems before anybody can exploit them. This practice, vital for modern digital security, helps strengthen systems against real threats like black hat hackers.

Black, white or grey hat! Hackers are of multiple types, and the main ones are black-hat, white-hat and grey-hat hackers. Do you know why such arose, though? Back in the 1950s, western movies often portrayed the "bad guys" or villains as wearing black hats while the "good guys" or heroes wore white hats. The same analogy was picked up while categorising hackers back in the day, leading to white hat and black hat hackers, and later grey, blue, and even red hat hackers as well. The white hat saviours Ethical hack-

ing emerged around the 1990s when businesses and organisations recognised a need for proactive security measures to protect their systems amidst rising cyber threats. Unlike black-hat hackers who act illegally for personal gain, ethical hackers work with explicit permission and follow strict rules to mirror malicious techniques. Since the aim is to protect rather than harm, it often follows with detailed reports with remediation steps on how to solve the problems. How does it work?

Ethical hacking mostly follows a structured five-phase methodology: reconnaissance, scanning, gaining access, maintaining access, and covering tracks — though ethical hackers skip the last two to avoid real damage. 1. Reconnaissance, hackers gather public data via various tools to profile targets without direct interaction. 2. Then they scan to detect open ports, services, and vulnerabilities like unpatched software. 3. After locking a target, they try to gain access through steps like password cracking, privilege escalation, or man-in-the-middle attacks. 4. Finally, they analyse the findings and recommend fixes, ensuring systems are hardened. When is it used? Ethical hacking is used in various industries like finance, healthcare and e-commerce, to even the government services and facilities. Companies often hire or have in-house tech experts who help with ensuring their security system is safe. Cyber threats often cost trillions annually, and ethical hacking helps in mitigating this by identifying flaws beforehand. It saves organisations millions in breach recovery while building trust with customers by ensuring their data is safe. Through ethical hacking, all findings remain confidential, and the safety of the system and data is ensured — one of the main differences between white-hats, grey-hats (semi-legal) and black-hats (malicious) hackers.

## Why the university of 2030 is a playground for human skills



As a senior educational administrator, my mornings usually begin with a cup of strong filter coffee. The rest of the day is a fruitless attempt to explain to legacy regulatory bodies why testing a student's ability to memorise calculus formulas is officially a waste of taxpayer money. Today, we live in a transformed era where artificial intelligence has completely commoditised knowledge. Information, once the ultimate premium that dictated university admissions and high-paying campus placements, is now as cheap and ubiquitous as the air we breathe, whether you're in the neon-lit corridors of Bengaluru's tech parks, the bustling mandis of Ludhiana, the backwaters of Kerala, or the university towns of the Northeast.

So, an 18-year-old coming out of a government school in rural Bihar or a private, international school in Hyderabad, or a coastal town in Goa, has a fascinating, but slightly scary choice to make. They can either go to a traditional college, get into debt while a human teacher reads slides that an AI could have summarised better in three seconds, or they can use advanced AI tutors to learn a huge number of technical skills at a quarter of the cost and a fifth of the time. The classic Indian parental mandate of "become an engineer or a doctor" has spectacularly imploded. AI algorithms can now write flawless code and diagnose illnesses with frightening precision across the swaths of states in India. The existential crisis of a university is not just looming; it has firmly arrived and is demanding a comfortable seat in the vice-chancellor's office. If we are to justify our existence as educational institutions, we must fundamentally reimagine what a college actually does. We can no longer act as rigid gatekeepers of textbook information or mere sorting mechanisms for corporate recruiters. We must become the incubators of human exceptionalism that thrives in India's unique and diverse environment. The End of default degrees

The first hard truth we face squarely is that the traditional university degree is no longer the default ticket to middle-class stability. For decades, the Indian education system operated on the assumption that simply possessing a stamped piece of parchment proved you were employable. Today, global and domestic employers do not care where you learned to build supply chain models or design user interfaces, because an AI is likely doing the heavy lifting anyway. So, the question is: Will universities still need to attract students for degrees? The short answer is YES. But the target audience has drastically shrunk. The sweeping, generalised B.A. or B.E. degree is going the way of the inland letter. It is clunky, painfully slow, and mostly unnecessary for the average young professional trying to enter the modern workforce. Instead, full fledged degrees are only being pursued by learners who want to do deep academic research, advanced graduate studies, or study highly regulated fields like clinical medicine and structural engineering. For everyone else, the future belongs to the micro-credential and the skill-sprint. A student wanting to enter digital marketing or logistics does not need four years of sprawling electives and compulsory attendance tracking. They need six months of intense, AI-assisted skill acquisition, followed by a lifetime of continuous, micro-learning updates that adapt to India's relentless pace of change. This means that University 2030 needs to stop selling a strict four-year timeline and start selling a lifetime subscription to students who want to build skills. Now, I wonder if government universities are even starting to understand that they need to become dynamic hubs where students can come to receive intensive, immersive experiences, get their credentials, and then go back to work. They will then come back when their industry changes again, whether that change is due to policy changes in Delhi or monsoon patterns in the dry Vidarbha region. Thinking about the 2030 Campus again: What are we bringing to the table if the degree is no longer the main attraction? The answer is in the physical, social, and wildly chaotic environment of the campus itself, an environment that must mirror India's incredible variety. We are transitioning our institutions from "knowledge dispensaries" into "experience laboratories" that thrive on the tension between tradition and tomorrow. No more passive consumption — that is the rule educational institutions must follow. When students enter a classroom, the experience is completely different. The classroom is now a collision space designed for productive friction; a space where the quiet student from a tribal village in Jharkhand can engage as fiercely as the debater from a Delhi convent

school. A professor is but a master orchestrator of chaos. If an AI can generate a perfect market entry strategy for a new agro-tech startup in ten seconds, the classroom exercise is to defend that strategy against a room full of hostile, emotionally complex human peers who can simulate local problems and tension and say, "How will this work in my village?" We are changing the mix of our curricula to put more emphasis on human traits than on mechanical recall. This change respects India's deep philosophical traditions while also meeting the needs of the future. The new academic recipe is about 20% foundational knowledge (taught with AI efficiency), 30% technical skill application (tailored to the needs of local industries, from silk weaving in Bhalgalpur to drone mapping in Ladakh), and a huge 50% dedicated to behavioural skills, ethical reasoning, and human-centered problem solving — skills that thrive in India's dense web of relationships. Teaching the magic that hasn't been taught: This brings us to the most important question I get from worried parents in Patna and sceptical policymakers in Gandhinagar: Is it possible to teach creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration? Can a formal institution instill the very traits that machines currently lack and that are so important for dealing with India's complicated social realities? The answer is a resounding yes, but it requires a sense of humour and a willingness to let students fail spectacularly in public. We teach critical thinking by deliberately feeding students AI-generated content that contains subtle, dangerous biases or logical fallacies. It could be an algorithm appraising a dam project without mentioning displacement concerns in the Northeast, or favouring cash crops over food security in Vidarbha, forcing them to become intellectual detectives. We are no longer testing their ability to find the "correct" answer, but their ability to ruthlessly question the premise of the question itself. We teach communication and collaboration through intense, high-stakes group dynamics that mirror the vibrant reality of Indian society. You cannot learn to read a diverse room or mediate a petty conflict between two oversized egos in a family-run business. We throw students into complex project-based learning where their grade depends entirely on their ability to navigate the frustrating, glib mess of human interaction: negotiating with auto-rickshaw unions, building consensus among farmer cooperatives, or coordinating relief efforts across language barriers during a cyclone in Odisha. This is where the true magic of 'Samyukta Karanam' or collective action comes alive.

The people only club AI is getting better at analytical tasks, but there are still some skills that only humans have that are very Indian and very beautiful. These are the tasks that machines find completely illogical, endlessly tedious, or impossible to compute because they require understanding the lived reality of a civilisation built on empathy and values. First and foremost is the mastery of cultural nuance and contextual intelligence. India is not a monolith; it is a thousand Indias coexisting. A machine might struggle for hours to parse the shifting power dynamics in a negotiation based on a subtle change in tone, the strategic use of silence, or the famous Indian head bobble, which means agreement in Gujarat, consideration in Bengal, and polite dismissal in Tamil Nadu. A trained human mind picks up on these cues in milliseconds. We excel in environments of high ambiguity and low data. From understanding the emotional weight of a Diwali bonus for a worker's family in Kanpur, to the significance of offering cool water to a guest in a Rajasthan Dhaba, analysis could make a world of difference between sealing a deal and sparking a strike. Next is the ability to truly understand and lead morally in the workplace. This is an area where India's civilizational wisdom can be very helpful. An AI can easily look at a company's balance sheet and suggest a 20% reduction in workforce to make a profit. But it can't sit across a dusty charpai, look a worried employee in the eye, and tell them that news with the compassion it needs. It also can't come up with a different, more humane solution that respects the joint family system or the obligations to an ageing parent in a village. To be a good leader here, you need a heart that understands that an employee's worth isn't just in their output, but also in their role as a son, daughter, or breadwinner for an extended family. We are also teaching our students the higher, more moral version of jugaad, not as a cheap hack, but as a creative way to solve problems that comes from a need. An AI optimises for perfection using endless digital resources, but it is the human who innovates to survive using whatever broken parts are lying around — in a farm using bicycle chains to power a grain mill, or in a village turning plastic bottles into floating gardens for fields that have been flooded. This kind of innovation does not come from a desire for efficiency, but from a deep desire to help one's kith and kin, who are clearly struggling. Finally, humans have the unique ability to rebel against what is wrong or stand up for what can be seen as NOT good for a community. Algorithms always work to reach their goals, but they don't care about the bigger picture. One can look at a perfectly optimised, AI-driven supply chain and say, "This is incredibly efficient, but it is fundamentally exploiting our minor forest produce gatherers, and therefore it is wrong."

## Who wins the science prize when AI makes the discovery?



In 1974, Antony Hewish won the physics Nobel Prize for discovering pulsars. His graduate student, Jocelyn Bell Burnell, had actually spotted the first one in the data; she'd also built parts of the telescope herself, analysed the charts, noticed the anomaly, and helped confirm that it was real. But she didn't win the prize. At the time, the Nobel committees argued that Hewish had designed the telescope and directed the research programme. The fact that Bell Burnell's eyes and judgment were the ones that caught the signal didn't register as the decisive contribution. In fact, in the committee's apparent view, she was doing what graduate students do: executing a senior scientist's vision. Let's reimagine this scenario by replacing Bell Burnell with an AI, and the question stays the same: when a crucial insight or calculation emerges from something that isn't the senior scientist's own brain, how do we decide who 'made' the discovery?

Suppose an AI system solves a longstanding problem in mathematical physics — say, the existence and smoothness of the Navier-Stokes equations — and produces a proof. Human mathematicians confirm the proof is correct. Who should win the Nobel Prize?

On February 13, OpenAI announced that its AI model GPT-5.2 had helped a group of scientists "derive a new result in theoretical physics". The (human) scientists posed the original question. GPT-5.2 suggested a potential solution. Then OpenAI built an internal model that fleshed the solution out as well as — this is important — provided it. The scientists finally verified it (verifiability is also important), and voila. The first instinct might be to say it should be the humans who asked the question, set up the problem, and knew what would count as a solution. The AI model is just a powerful calculator. When Andrew Wiles proved Fermat's Last Theorem using computer verification, nobody suggested the computer should share credit; it was only checking cases Wiles had fully specified. But if an AI generates a proof humans can verify but not fully reconstruct, they're more like curators than coauthors and shouldn't win the prize. Discovery implies understanding.

So then let's award the prize to someone that can actually do that. The humans who didn't just prompt the AI but who supplied the constraints, the sanity checks, the conceptual ideas that made the solution legible as mathematics, etc. That sounds reasonable... right? The problem is if that sounds reasonable to you, you've also admitted there's a clear line between the intellectual work undergirding the solution and the infrastructure that makes it possible. Why did Hewish alone receive the Nobel Prize instead of the technicians who built the radio receiver? Or the engineers who figured out how to filter atmospheric noise? Because, the story goes, they were all part of the necessary conditions, not of the discovery itself. The discovery was in noticing that the signal was anomalous, something new. That was an intellectual act whereas building the telescope was engineering.

Fine. \* But then what about the theoretical physicists in the 1930s who first calculated that neutron stars should exist? Without their work, Hewish and Bell Burnell may not have known what they were looking at. Should they have been co-laureates as well? "Of course not," you say. Their work was foundational but it was already part of the scientific background. And the Nobel Prizes reward only the final step, not the whole ladder.

Noticing the arbitrariness. However, even this final step is an artefact of how we tell stories. At some point we have to draw a line and say, "these people count as discoverers and all those other people are in the background". And we

need to be mindful that this line will always be arbitrary — a convention rather than some sort of natural joint in reality.

So finally the question becomes: how do we draw this line? People usually draw it in a way that favours those closer to the end of the chain, working in wealthy institutions, in countries with strong intellectual property regimes, and established scientific bureaucracies. The people whose labour is distant — in time, space, and/or the social hierarchy — get written out as the conditions of possibility. Crucially, when an AI makes a discovery, this arbitrariness becomes impossible to ignore because all the normally invisible labour is evident in the model's workflow. Hundreds of machine-learning researchers built the model, in the process practically inventing a way to explore mathematics that didn't exist before. If a new technique to prove something usually gets you credit — mathematicians have won Fields Medals for such work — why doesn't inventing a machine that invents techniques count? Then there are the training data and computing resources: the former is accumulated human knowledge from textbooks and research papers annotated by poorly paid data workers whose names appear nowhere, and the latter has been made possible only by a few organisations that can afford to train models at such large scale.

Stories about achievement. The Nobel committees might say all of that matters but it's not the discovery; that would be only the specific science result. And that the people who should get the prize are the ones who can explain it and take intellectual responsibility for it. But this just pushes the problem back. Taking "intellectual responsibility" is also a social role we've invented: in practice it means to be the person who gives talks, writes the papers, gets invited to conferences, has the PhD, and has the faculty position. It means occupying a place in the prestige economy that lets you speak for a result as being "yours". And this position is itself the product of truckloads of background labour that we've already agreed to not count. But here's the thing: the Nobel Prizes are already arbitrary. They always have been, less in the sense that they reward the wrong people (though sometimes they do) and more in the sense that the category of 'primary discoverer' is a fiction we've all agreed to believe in. Science is not done by individual geniuses who've had flashes of insight in isolation. It's done by big, diffuse networks, networks stretching across generations and continents. Every discovery is underwritten by thousands of people whose contributions are individually small but collectively indispensable. So when we give a prize to one person, or three people, we're just telling a story that makes reality easier to process and reward rather than describing reality itself.

This isn't necessarily bad. Stories about individual achievement can motivate others to do better. They give people something to aim for. And maybe that pretense is useful even if it's not exactly true. But it comes at a cost. The story of individual genius erases the infrastructure that makes genius possible. It treats labour as either 'creative' and thus deserving of prizes or as mechanical and thus just a cost of doing business. It takes the last person to touch the result and calls them the author, as if the result just popped out of their head with no other dependencies.

Too useful as a signal. The problem may be unfixable since it's baked into how we think about achievement. We want to be able to say "this person did this thing" but the world doesn't actually work that way. And maybe that's just how it has to be. Maybe there's no way to give out a 'scarce' prize without replicating the inequalities that produced the discovery in the first place. Or maybe the prize itself is the problem. Maybe the whole idea of singling out individuals is a mistake — a 19th century relic from back when we could still pretend science was done by lone polymaths working in labs rather than by sprawling global supply chains of human and machine cognition. But we can't get rid of the Nobel Prizes: they're too embedded, too useful as a signal, and — yes — too good at generating headlines. We're stuck with them and we have to make them work somehow, so the best we can probably do is use the prize as an occasion to talk about everything it doesn't capture. Every time someone wins a Nobel Prize, we can make it a moment to foreground all the people who didn't, and not in a "let's indulge our guilt" way but more in a "here's how knowledge actually gets made" way. It's not a solution but at least it's not a lie.

## What are bio-based chemicals and enzymes? | Explained

The story so far: Bio-based chemicals are industrial chemicals produced using biological feedstocks like sugarcane, corn, starch, or biomass residues, often through fermentation or enzymatic processes. Examples include organic acids (such as lactic acid), bio-alcohols, solvents, surfactants, and intermediates used in plastics, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals. Enzymes are biological catalysts widely used in detergents, food processing, pharmaceuticals, textiles, pulp and paper, and increasingly in biomanufacturing. Enzymes often work at lower temperatures and pressures, reducing energy use and emissions.

Why does India need such chemicals?

India has strong fundamentals for scaling bio-based chemicals and enzymes: a large agricultural base, deep expertise in fermentation from pharmaceuticals and vaccines, and a growing manufacturing sector. Expanding this space could reduce import dependence on petrochemicals, create new markets for agricultural produce, and position India as a competitive supplier of sustainable industrial inputs. For example, India imported roughly \$479.8 million worth of acetic acid in 2023.

Where does India stand today?

India has prioritised bio-based chemicals and enzymes as a priority area under the Department of Biotechnology's BioE3 policy. In the bio-based chemicals segment, companies such as Praj Industries and Godrej Industries are leading. Other firms such as Godavari Biorefineries are pioneering ethanol-based, bio-derived chemicals in India, while Jubilant Ingrevia produces "acetyls" intermediates (for example, acetic anhydride/ethyl acetate). Emerging companies such as StringBio are using novel microbial strategies to develop such chemicals. The India enzymes market is consolidated in nature with top players accounting for more than 75% of the market share. Companies such as Novozymes India, DuPont, DSM, Advance Enzyme Technologies, BASF SE, and Ultrazyme Enzymes Private Limited are key players in the Indian market.

What are other countries doing?

The EU Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan provides coordinated support for bio-based chemicals as part



of circular bioeconomy goals. It links industrial transformation to climate goals, waste reduction, and sustainable growth. In the U.S., the USDA BioPreferred Program mandates federal procurement preference for certified bio-based products, including chemicals and enzymes, creating early markets for producers. China's bioeconomy development plans explicitly prioritise high-value bio-based chemicals and enzyme technologies as strategic sectors. In Japan, priority projects funded through METI/NARO integrate bio-based chemical research with manufacturing readiness.

What are the risks?

A key risk in developing the bio-based chemicals sector is the comparative cost of bio-based products relative to petrochemical alternatives. While this cost disadvantage may be temporary and limited to early stages of scale-up, it nonetheless creates a significant entry barrier for private investment. A second risk relates to the availability of reliable feedstocks and supporting infrastructure required to produce different categories of bio-based chemicals at scale. A third challenge lies in market adoption — specifically, whether bio-based chemicals can seamlessly substitute existing inputs in manufacturing pipelines and whether downstream manufacturers are willing to switch, even when costs are comparable. Scaling shared biomanufacturing infrastructure — such as biofoundries, pilot plants, and demonstration facilities under BioE3 — can reduce capital risk for firms. Clear standards, certification, and procurement policies can help create build investor confidence.

## How district cooling can ease India's climate and urban planning troubles



With rising temperatures, longer heatwaves, and a rapidly growing urban economy, cooling in India is rapidly shifting from a lifestyle choice to a basic need, driving up air-conditioner use in homes and workplaces. This surge is now a major part of cities' power demand, in turn raising concerns about blackouts and higher emissions and about keeping urban areas livable. In this context, planners and experts are looking at district cooling as a way to keep people comfortable while using less electricity and emitting less carbon.

A central cooler. District cooling is a centralised system that supplies air-conditioning to a cluster of buildings, like a shared air-conditioner for an entire neighbourhood or campus. Instead of every building running its own chillers or rooftop units, one large plant makes chilled water and sends it through insulated underground pipes to many buildings, much like a public utility such as piped natural gas or electricity.

Inside each building, this water passes through heat exchangers, cools the indoor air by absorbing heat, then returns slightly warmer to the central plant, where it's cooled again and sent back into the network. Buildings therefore don't need to install or operate large cooling systems. They simply draw 'cooling as a service' from the network. Like other utilities, district cooling usually follows a multi-part tariff: a one-time connection charge to join the network, a fixed demand charge based on the maximum cooling capacity, and a consumption charge based on actual cooling energy used.

Efficiency gains. District cooling plants use large, high-efficiency chillers and cooling towers to deliver more cooling from each unit of electricity than individual building systems. They typically supply chilled water at about 6-7°C and receive it back at around 12-14°C, after it has absorbed heat. Many systems use thermal storage so that 20-40% of the cooling can be produced at night, when demand and tariffs are lower.

Together, these choices allow well-run systems to operate roughly twice as efficiently as many stand-alone building chillers, cutting electricity use for cooling by 30-50% and reducing peak demand on the grid by 20-30%. These efficiency gains translate into important environmental benefits. Lower electricity use means greenhouse gas emissions can fall by roughly 15-40% while concentrating equipment in a one unified plant can cut refrigerant volumes in buildings by up to 80%, reducing leak risks. At the street level, fewer small outdoor units spewing hot air outside can also mitigate the urban heat-island effect. Some districts abroad have already reported local temperature drops of 1-2°C where such systems operate. Water use is often raised as a concern, especially in water-stressed cities. In district cooling systems, the chilled water circulating between the plant and buildings runs in a closed loop and consumes very little water. A district cooling plant of about 10,000 tonnes of capacity typically requires a little over one kilolitre of make-up water during cooling tower operation. Because these systems are built at scale and centrally managed, they can also be designed to use treated sewage or wastewater.

Making sense. All of this connects directly to India's

## The UAE-India corridor is sparking a growth story

Something remarkable has happened in the economic relationship between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). When the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was signed in 2022, both sides had set a target of \$100 billion in bilateral trade by 2030. That milestone was reached five years ahead of schedule. In January this year, leaders set a new target of \$200 billion by 2032. Few economic corridors in the world today are moving with the speed and ambition of this one.

The scale and direction

The numbers tell part of the story. Non-oil trade between the two countries grew nearly 20% last year to reach \$65 billion, demonstrating that this partnership has moved well beyond its energy origins. UAE entities have invested over \$22 billion into India since 2000, while Indian companies have invested more than \$16 billion into the UAE. Nearly five million Indian nationals live and work in the Emirates, forming its largest diaspora community and the human backbone of a corridor that now supports over 1,200 flights a week between the two countries — one of the busiest air routes on earth.

But what excites the most is not just the scale. It is the direction. This corridor is being reshaped by advanced manufacturing, financial services, technology, and logistics. Reliance Industries has partnered with TA'ZIZ on a \$2 billion-plus investment in low-carbon chemicals manufacturing in Abu Dhabi. Ashok Leyland has relocated its electric bus production from the United Kingdom to the UAE. Larsen & Toubro has been selected as preferred contractor for one of the world's most ambitious solar-plus-storage projects in Abu Dhabi. Indian banks, technology firms, and health-care companies are building real operational presence across the Emirates. These are not tentative first steps. They are confident long-term industrial commitments.

Investment is flowing with equal conviction in the other direction. DP World has committed an additional \$5 billion to Indian infrastructure, expanding its already extensive network of ports and logistics parks across the country. Emirates NBD's acquisition of a majority stake in RBL Bank represents the largest single foreign direct investment in Indian banking history. ADNOC has signed long-term LNG supply agreements with Indian Oil Corporation Ltd and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited worth billions of dollars. Mubadala has deployed over \$4 billion across Indian health care, renewables, and technology platforms. Abu Dhabi Investment Authority became the first sovereign wealth fund to establish a base in India's GIFT City.

National Cooling Action Plan. Using less power for cooling and shifting part of the load to the night eases pressure on the grid, improving energy security and reducing the risk of outages during heatwaves, when people most need cooling. Lower emissions and easier use of low/zero global warming potential refrigerants in central plants support India's climate goals and its Kigali commitments to phase down hydrofluorocarbons while reliable, high-quality cooling underpins the growth of services, IT, hospitals and data centres in dense urban areas. By freeing up rooftops and indoor space otherwise taken up by cooling equipment, district cooling can also help cities use urban land better, making it a tool of comfort as much as climate action and smarter urbanisation.

District cooling works best where cooling demand is high, dense, and predictable. This makes it suitable for commercial districts, transit-oriented corridors, airports and aerocities, hospitals, universities, and IT parks. In India, Navi Mumbai, Hyderabad's financial districts, Ahmedabad's GIFT City, and parts of Bengaluru are often cited as strong candidates because they combine new development, dense commercial loads, and planned infrastructure. Business case. For operators, district cooling is a utility-style business with revenue typically coming from a one-time connection charge, a fixed demand charge, and a variable consumption charge. The model can be financially attractive if there are enough long-term customers and city planning offers certainty about future demand. For customers, cooling can account for 30-50% of electricity use in many commercial buildings, and by using energy more efficiently and sharing infrastructure, district cooling can cut operating costs by about 20-40% over the life of a project.

Not having to install separate chillers and cooling towers in each building can also save developers 5-10% of project cost and unlock 1-2% extra usable or saleable space. Utility-grade reliability (often above 99.9%) is also a major plus for hospitals and data centres. The main concern is the fixed demand charge: customers pay for reserved capacity even if the building is partly empty.

If they over-estimate their needs or have inefficient internal systems that waste chilled water, bills can feel high, making good building design and right-sizing of contracts crucial. For electricity utilities, the primary benefit is lower peak load from air-conditioning during hot afternoons. District systems use large, efficient chillers, benefit from diversity where different buildings peak at different times, and often include thermal storage to shift 20-40% of cooling production to the night, helping flatten daytime peaks. This allows utilities to avoid or defer new peak load plants and reduce purchases of expensive peak power. Economy of scale. To move to a real network of district cooling systems, many players need to work together. Urban authorities should demarcate district cooling zones in master plans, set aside land for plants and pipe corridors, and coordinate underground utilities. Municipal bodies need to be empowered and strengthened to introduce clear concession rules, service standards, and long-term frameworks so private players know how they will recover investments. Likewise, state electricity regulators and DISCOMs can consider shifting loads from day to night as a formal demand-side resource, link it to tariff design, and recognise the value of avoided peak capacity. Central agencies can also issue standard technical guidelines and model PPP contracts while developers design new buildings with ready connection points and compatible internal piping. GIFT City in Gujarat has already demonstrated district cooling. Studies here have suggested full deployment could reduce power demand by around 6,100 MW, save about 7,850 GWh annually, and avoid roughly 6.6 million tonnes of CO2 emissions each year. With effective coordination and clear governance frameworks, Indian cities can replicate and expand such examples, transforming cooling from a climate vulnerability into a cornerstone of sustainable, resilient urban infrastructure.

It is for the long term. What underpins all of this is trust built over decades, reinforced by human connections, and supported by a policy architecture — the CEPA, which eliminated tariffs on roughly 90% of tariff lines, the 2024 Bilateral Investment Treaty, and now a strategic defence partnership — that gives businesses the certainty to make long-term bets. The ambition is now extending into third markets. Bharat Mart, currently under construction in the UAE, will serve as a wholesale hub for Indian goods targeting Africa, West Asia and Eurasia, aiming to help double India's exports to these regions. India and the UAE are also exploring joint digital infrastructure and capacity-building initiatives across Africa. The corridor is becoming a platform not just for bilateral exchange but also for global reach.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is emerging as the next major frontier for this corridor. India this week hosts the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi (February 16-20, 2026) — the first global AI summit held in the Global South. It is a powerful statement of India's growing role in shaping how this technology develops and is governed. The UAE, which appointed the world's first Minister of State for AI back in 2017 and has invested heavily in AI infrastructure and research ever since, is a natural partner in this space. The UAE and India are already exploring cooperation on advanced computing capacity, data centres, and AI-driven innovation. In a technology that will reshape every sector of every economy, the countries that lead will not be those that build fastest alone, but those that build the smartest partnerships. The next chapter. India's global moment is here. As the world's fourth-largest economy, with GDP at around \$4 trillion, it is powered by entrepreneurial energy, manufacturing ambition, and digital infrastructure that are genuinely world-class. In conversations with Indian business leaders, there is one theme that is coming through consistently: the appetite to scale internationally has never been stronger. The question is no longer whether Indian enterprise will go global, but how effectively the right corridors can accelerate that journey. This is also part of a wider realignment. The recent Delhi Declaration between India and Arab Foreign Ministers outlined an ambitious programme of cooperation across politics, economy, energy, technology, and security through 2028. The India-UAE corridor is at the vanguard of that broader convergence. The UAE and India are demonstrating what becomes possible when two countries align policy, capital, and execution around a shared vision. The first \$100 billion came faster than anyone expected. The next chapter will be defined not by the numbers alone, but by how deeply their economies integrate — and how far that integration reaches.

## For India, AI a 'stress test' of state capacity; must align tech adoption with mass employability: CEA Nageswaran



Sounding a note of caution that India risked higher inequality at the time of greatest technological change, Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said on Monday that while artificial intelligence (AI) is a plus for advanced economies facing demographic decline, it is "a stress test of our state capacity".

Speaking via video on the first day of the AI Impact Summit 2026 being held in New Delhi, the government's top economist also said that foresight, institutional discipline, and "relentless execution" could help India become the first large society to show that human abundance and machine intelligence can reinforce, and not undermine, each other. However, this required an urgency, political will, state capacity, and a "clear national commitment" to align technological adoption with mass employability. And this will not happen "by drift".

"Every year we must generate millions of productive dignified jobs or livelihoods; every year of delay compounds pressure, every year of drift narrows our options. If we do not move decisively, such as strengthening foundational education, scaling high-quality skilling, expanding labour-intensive service sectors, removing the regulatory bottlenecks that hinder the expansion of labour-intensive services, and if we do not ensure calibrated AI deployment, we will not merely miss an opportunity, we will create unavoidable social and economic instability," Nageswaran said in a panel discussion on the theme 'Future of Employability in the Age of AI'.

While experts say that the use of AI can, in the long-

term, create new types of employment, thousands of job cuts have been announced in recent times as more and more companies globally integrate AI and its applications in their processes. In an interview to British daily Financial Times last week, Mustafa Suleyman, tech giant Microsoft's AI Chief Executive Officer, said most, if not all, tasks in white-collar jobs will be automated by AI in the next 18 months or so. Microsoft itself has announced thousands of layoffs over the last year or so, including around 9,000 in July 2025. Closer home, software major Tata Consultancy Services last year announced that it would let go of more than 12,000 employees as part of a restructuring exercise.

In India, shares of tech and software companies have been pummelled in recent days amid fears that AI tools and bots could hit business orders and profits. Shares of Fractal Analytics — which only debuted on the National Stock Exchange on Monday after its Initial Public Offering (IPO) last week raised more than Rs 2,800 crore — closed 4.4% lower at Rs 837.7. The IPO price of the enterprise AI company's shares was Rs 900. On the whole, the sectoral Nifty IT index ended 0.2% higher on Monday. However, over the last week-and-a-half, the index has tanked nearly 6,000 points, or more than 15%, after AI firm Anthropic launched a legal plugin for its chatbot, Claude, which can automate work such as review of contracts.

Monday, Nageswaran referred to the Economic Survey for 2023-24, which said India needs to create at least 8 million jobs every year. Terming this as the scale of "our employment challenge year after year", the Chief Economic Advisor expressed concern that only a small proportion of India's workforce has received formal skill training. This, he said, is a "structural vulnerability". "If AI displaces faster than we can skill humans and if productivity rises without employment elasticity, if institutional reform lacks technological adoption, we risk squandering our demographic window. We risk widening inequality at precisely the moment of greatest technological change," he warned. As such, he called on policymakers, the private sector, and academia to "act now" as it was a question of the future of growth, social stability, and cohesion. According to Nageswaran, the first step is to reform India's education and pedagogy by imparting foundational skills. "And that is where the path to co-creating prosperity with AI and employability in the age of AI and that is where the path begins".

## 'AI could be game changer for distributed RE'



Artificial intelligence (AI) can be a game changer for India's rapidly expanding distributed renewable energy, said JVN Subramanyam, Joint Secretary at Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) at India AI Impact Summit at Bharat Mandapam on Monday. His comments came during a discussion titled 'Global Mission on AI for Energy Scaling through citizen-centric India Energy Stack'. The event saw participation from Hemang Jani, who represents India, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at the World Bank, and Henri Verdier, director general of the INRIA Foundation in France. Distributed renewable energy (DRE) refers to small-scale, decentralised power generation systems — typically ranging from a few kilowatts to megawatts — that produce electricity from renewable sources directly at or near the point of use, such as rooftop solar, small wind turbines, or biomass.

Subramanyam said 52% of India's total installed power capacity is currently sourced from non-fossil fuel sources. That is around 272 gigawatts. Out of this, at least 140 gigawatts of India's installed capacity is solar. Within this, 38 gigawatts comprises DRE. Over the last 15 months, India has added almost 18 gigawatts to the distributed renewable energy space both under the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, the rooftop solarisation programme, and the Pradhan Mantri Kusum Yojana, he said. "We spent close to 9 billion USD on rooftop solarisation and about 4 billion dollars on PM Kusum Yojana," he said. He said this scale-up in the past year was enabled by technology solutions that have been incorporated and which benefit consumers, field workers, vendors, banks and DISCOMs alike. Looking ahead, Subramanyam said AI will play a transformative role in managing the next stage of distributed renewable energy growth.

Pointing to structural constraints in the distribution network, Subramanyam noted that transformers were originally designed for unidirectional power flow, but now must accommodate millions of 'prosumers' — consumers who also generate electricity. As distributed renewable energy

expands, demand response management and asset maintenance across geographies will become increasingly important.

"Can we build predictability into this? There are a lot of generators who require weather forecasting, predictive analytics. Can we get this onto the AI tool? Lastly, as a consumer, as a prosumer, whether I know it is my rooftop system, is my solar pump generating enough when compared to my peers? Can I be able to sell my electricity to the other peers, which the B2B is trying to enable? So, these are enabling decisions," he said. "So, if you ask me what the AI is going to do in the future, it will not just make us react, but it will make us act. So, that is the story that we are looking forward as far as DRE and AI convergence is concerned," he added. AI as Development Infrastructure Hemang Jani said AI must be treated not merely as a technological tool but as development infrastructure itself. "The way we look at the grid, the way we look at discoms, and the way we look at meters, we have to look at AI. That is also one of the infrastructure layer that we need to create. And that is where I think the game will change," he said.

He also emphasised that countries cannot afford to treat AI as a pilot exercise but must deploy it at scale, citing the India Energy Stack as an example of thinking big. He said India should aim to become "the Google of AI for energy, for the world," positioning itself as a global leader in AI-driven energy systems. Henri Verdier underlined that the accelerating energy transition — marked by rising renewable penetration, decentralisation and growing consumer expectations — is making power systems far more complex, and artificial intelligence may be essential to managing that shift. However, he cautioned that innovation does not automatically mean progress, pointing to past digital missteps such as poorly regulated social networks that enabled Big Tech dominance.

Open standards like TCP/IP spark wide innovation and teamwork in diverse ecosystems, while strong rules and open-source AI prevent a few giants from ruling via subsea cables or models — favoring local solutions for energy, farms, and more. "We cannot afford a world with a few AI giants controlling the effects of the economy," he said. On what would constitute success in the near term for AI in energy, Jani said it is a fast-moving and evolving technology, and policymakers should not look for short-term wins but long-term transformation. Meanwhile, Subramanyam said in the next two to three years time, he sees the success in AI and RE convergence would mean "where overall cost of power to the consumer goes down and our industrial competitiveness goes up and consumer empowerment becomes prosumer empowerment and our grids become ready for energy transition."

## Bill Gates' AI Summit attendance uncertain, conflicting reports emerge

New Delhi: Confusion prevailed on Tuesday over Microsoft Co-Founder Bill Gates attending the high-profile AI Impact Summit with government sources saying he will not attend the meeting while a spokesperson of his foundation contradicted, saying he is. Gates featured among the tech moguls, industry leaders, policymakers, founders, and technologists listed as speakers on the official website of the AI Impact Summit, under way in the national capital from February 16-20. The summit website on Tuesday, however, did not show his name among the key speakers. Government sources said Gates will not be attending the Summit. A spokesperson for his foundation in an emailed response to PTI said, "Bill Gates is attending the AI Impact Summit. He will be delivering his keynote as scheduled." He was listed as a keynote speaker on February 19 at 11.50 hours. Government sources suggesting that Gates will not attend the Summit may be due to his name figuring in files relating to the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. While

Gates has not been accused of wrongdoing by any of Epstein's victims, records released by the US justice department include an allegation by Epstein that Bill Gates caught a sexually transmitted disease. Gates's spokesperson has previously called the claim "absolutely absurd". Late last week, Nvidia said its CEO Jensen Huang will not travel to India to attend the Summit. Huang was one of the biggest attractions at the Summit. While the company had not given any reason for the move, some had linked it to presence of Gates at the event. Gates arrived in India on Monday. His first stop during the visit was Vijayawada where he met Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan, and senior state government officials. Ministers Nara Lokesh, Vangalapati Anitha, K Archanna, and Y Satya Kumar had welcomed Gates at the Vijayawada international airport on Monday.

## 'If my blood sugar goes above 220 mg/dL but I can bring it down to normal within a few hours through exercise and cinnamon, am I still at risk of serious damage?'



We have been trying to get you verified answers to a diverse range of questions about blood sugar, insulin, diabetes, HbA1C, and more. As such, when we came across this question on Quora — 'If my blood sugar goes above 220 mg/dL but I can bring it down to normal within a few hours through exercise and cinnamon, am I still at risk of serious damage?' — we once again turned to experts for help.

Dr Vijay Negalur, HOD, diabetology, KIMS Hospitals, Thane, affirmed that such a person is at risk because a tiny drop does not erase the damage caused by those spikes. "Blood sugar readings over 220 mg/dl indicate hyperglycemia. Even if you manage to normalise it within a few hours, your body has already experienced 'glycemic stress.' This can silently harm blood vessels, nerves, kidneys, and the eyes if it happens often. The real danger is in such repeated spikes and dips; they trigger oxidative stress and inflammation, which increase the long-term risk of complications like heart disease and neuropathy," said Dr Negalur. According to Dr Aarti Ullal, physician and diabetologist, Gleneagles Hospital, Parel, Mumbai, one or two rare spikes may not cause major harm, but if this happens often, it can silently damage the body over time.

So, does exercising and having cinnamon help in such situations?

Exercise is one of the most effective and natural ways to lower high blood sugar. Dr Negalur explained that your

muscles use up glucose for energy, helping insulin work better. "Brisk walk, light yoga, or strength training can bring numbers down within hours. Cinnamon may improve insulin sensitivity slightly, but it is not a substitute for medical treatment. Its effect is modest and should be seen only as a dietary aid, not a quick fix," said Dr Negalur. Adding, Dr Ullal stressed that the key is to prevent blood sugar from spiking too high in the first place. "Consistently high spikes increase the risk of diabetes complications. It is essential to keep track of your readings, discuss them with a doctor, and follow a proper plan for food, exercise, and medicines if needed. Prevention and stability are more protective than short-term fixes," said Dr Ullal.

She also contended that natural remedies cannot be a magical fix. "Please understand this. It is necessary to consult the doctor and initiate timely intervention. If overdone, natural remedies can do more harm than good. Exercise caution when it comes to your health and don't opt for any DIYs promoted on social media," said Dr Ullal.

What should people do if they frequently cross the 200 mark?

If your sugar often crosses 200 to 220, it signals that your baseline control isn't enough, said Dr Negalur. "Don't ignore it just because you can bring it down occasionally. Keep a log of your sugar levels, food intake, exercise, and stress patterns; this helps doctors fine-tune treatment," said Dr Negalur. Additionally, avoid overexerting yourself when sugar is high, as this can sometimes push levels even higher.

What can truly help in the long run?

Consistency is the real game-changer. Dr Negalur recommended following a balanced diet, taking medicines on time, monitoring sugars regularly, and using exercise as a daily tool, not just as a correction. "Think of lifestyle changes as preventive maintenance for your body. Most importantly, work with your doctor instead of self-managing high sugars. With the right approach, you can prevent complications and live a full, healthy life," said Dr Negalur.

## Lisa Ray recalls struggling with 'chemo-induced menopause' at 37, fighting stigma, shame: 'I was completely unprepared'



Lisa Ray, 53, a cancer survivor, recently opened up about her struggle with menopause at 37, during her cancer treatment in 2009. "I went into chemo-induced menopause at 37 because of my cancer treatment. I was completely unprepared. I suffered for many years silently. I also had shame and stigma. And I couldn't even explain to myself and imbibed the shame of hitting menopause," she told the BBC in an interview.

On Instagram, she wrote: "I survived cancer. But menopause? That was the chapter I faced in silence. At 37, chemo pushed me into early menopause. I was told — almost casually — that the treatment saving my life would also end my fertility. No roadmap. No conversation about HRT. No emotional support. Just headlines screaming fear about hormones and cancer, and a body I suddenly didn't recognise. So I did what so many women do. I normalised the symptoms. The exhaustion. The sleepless nights. The hair loss. The quiet grief. After going public about cancer — a disease still wrapped in stigma — I somehow shut down when it came to menopause. The shame surprised me. The isolation is even more." Revealing why she is opening up about it now, the actor continued, "But here we are. And I'm speaking now because no woman should feel alone, uninformed, or afraid in mid-life. Not after everything we survive. Not after everything we carry. This is about reclaiming voice. Choice. And power — at every age."

Explaining the link, Dr Richa Bharadwaj, a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist at Wockhardt Hospitals, Mumbai Central, said that some cancer treatments directly

affect the ovaries. "Chemotherapy can harm ovarian function, leading to a sudden drop in hormones and triggering menopause much earlier than expected. Unlike natural menopause, this process is abrupt, leaving the body little time to adjust," said Dr Bharadwaj.

Menopause mainly happens between the ages of 45 and 55, said Dr Mansi Sharma, consultant, obstetrician and gynaecologist, Motherhood Hospitals, Kharadi, Pune. "But for some women, cancer treatment like chemotherapy can lead to menopause much earlier. When this happens before the natural age, it is known as chemo-induced menopause. During chemotherapy, strong medicines are used to kill cancer cells," elucidated Dr Sharma.

According to Dr Bharadwaj, women may deal with intense fatigue, sleep problems, hair thinning, mood swings, hot flashes, and feelings of emotional loss related to fertility. "These symptoms are often dismissed as 'after-effects' of cancer treatment, causing many to suffer in silence without support," said Dr Bharadwaj.

Why is menopause after cancer emotionally complex?

After surviving cancer, menopause can feel like a second shock. Many women think they should feel grateful to be alive and hesitate to talk about feelings of exhaustion, grief, or changes in identity. "Concerns about hormone therapy and mixed messages add to the confusion and silence." "It is essential to ask clear questions about hormonal health, bone strength, heart health, and long-term well-being. "Menopause care involves more than managing hot flashes; it impacts sleep, metabolism, mental health, and overall quality of life," said Dr Bharadwaj.

What can help?

Regular exercise, strength training, enough protein, calcium-rich foods, good sleep habits, and stress management are important. Emotional support, counselling, and community discussions can be just as healing as physical care. Emotional support is very important. "Counseling, support groups, and open discussions with your doctor can help you cope better. Though chemo-induced menopause at 37 is challenging, with proper medical care and support, women can manage symptoms and lead healthy, fulfilling lives," said Dr Sharma.

## Why 90% of people give the same answer

After learning how to solve shape-based riddles and some optical illusions, we decided to learn about the psychological trick of priming or the way patterns play out in our minds. A viral social media reel shows a few easy mathematical additions and then asks the user to name a vegetable. According to the Instagram reel, about 90 per cent of people pick 'carrot.' "This phenomenon, known as priming, occurs when the brain is subtly influenced or prepared to produce a specific response. In this case, performing simple mathematical calculations steers the mind toward a straightforward and conventional thought process, leading most people to choose carrot", it read.

However, naming a different vegetable means thinking remains "independent" and resistant to external cues, showcasing cognitive flexibility and strong autonomous decision-making, which can be path-breaking, while thinking outside the box is required. Recognising how these tricks work can offer valuable insights into how we make decisions and how external influences subtly shape our thoughts without us even realising it. So, we decided to decode the trick with the help of an expert. At its core, this technique works by planting a seed in the participant's mind before they make a choice, said Dr Chandni Tugnait, MD (A.M.), psychotherapist, coach, and healer, and founder and director of Gateway of Healing.

"Through subtle cues, such as words, images, gestures, or even tone of voice, the subconscious is nudged toward a specific outcome without the person realising it. This technique capitalises on the brain's tendency to take shortcuts, making decisions based on the most recent or most prominent information," said Dr Tugnait. A key element of this trick is expectation and influence. "The person performing it carefully crafts a sense of inevitability, making the final choice feel like it was naturally arrived at. This could involve guiding someone toward a specific number, colour, or object by subtly introducing it beforehand. Human beings are wired to recognise patterns even when they aren't consciously aware of doing so. When presented with an ambiguous decision, the brain automatically fills in the gaps based on previous exposure to similar stimuli," explained Dr Tugnait. This trick is so effective because it doesn't rely on actual mind-reading but rather "manipulates cognitive biases and decision-making shortcuts." "It tends to work best on open and responsive individuals, as scepticism or active resistance can disrupt the flow of influence. Subtle body language and vocal modulation contribute significantly as people unconsciously mirror or react to these cues, further reinforcing the desired outcome," said Dr Tugnait. Beyond entertainment, these psychological techniques have practical applications in various fields.

## India top the list of suspended track and field athletes due to doping, surpasses Kenya



India have the most number of athletes in the latest Athletics Integrity Unit's (AIU) list of ineligible athletes due to doping violations, with 148 suspended track and field athletes surpassing the African nation Kenya. The latest updated list is for the period up to April 1 this year. Russia took the third spot with 66 suspended athletes.

The Athletics Integrity Unit is an independent anti-doping watchdog established by World Athletics. It has jurisdiction over international-level athletes and their support persons. The list features some prominent Indian names, such as 100m national record holder Dutee Chandigarh, middle distance runner Parvej Khan, and sprinter

Dhanalakshmi Sekar. While Dutee is serving her four-year suspension from 2022, Parvej is banned till July 2030 serving a six year suspension. Dhanalakshmi has an eight-year suspension after she was caught for the second time last year during the Inter-State National Championships.

The list includes persons serving a period of ineligibility as a result of national-level cases and decisions. It also includes persons who have committed non-doping violations such as tampering, evading testing, trafficking, or missing whereabouts, which carry the same penalties as a doping offence. Last year in December when World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) released their annual report for the year 2024, India featured on the top of the list with 260 athletes tested positive for prohibited performance-enhancing drugs. To put it in context, no other country in the world had dope cheats in triple digits. At 3.6 per cent, India's positivity ratio, too, was among the highest in the world. The National Anti Doping Agency (NADA) collected 7,113 urine and blood samples of which 260 returned positive. After 2024 Paris Olympics, the Athletics Federation of India has decentralised the national camps. Currently, the AFI is only conducting national camps for relay teams. All other elite athletes have chosen private organisations like Reliance, JSW, Tatas or government departments like Army, and Navy for training

## 'Starting to get a little bit long in the tooth': Legendary Australian pacer praises Virat Kohli's white-ball form amid IPL 2026

Legendary Australian pacer Glenn McGrath has heaped praise on Virat Kohli, praising him for his recent white-ball form and how he has remained consistent in coloured clothing, when his career seemed like sliding away. The 37-year-old began his IPL 2026 campaign by scoring an unbeaten 69 not out to help Royal Challengers Bengaluru chase down Sunrisers Hyderabad's target of 201 runs in the season opener. "Virat Kohli, you think he is starting to get a little bit long in the tooth, but his white-ball form of late has been absolutely incredible. 69 again not out, got Royal Challengers home, chasing 201," McGrath said on "The Fast Bowling Cartel" podcast.

The 56-year-old also noted how teams have been opting to chase after winning the toss in the IPL so far, and added how the par scores have risen exponentially since the time he played in the league. "It has been a funny start to the IPL. The one thing I have noticed is that every team that has won has won the toss and fielded first." "I played the first two seasons of the IPL. 165-170 was like a par score. You felt you could defend it. Now 220, you are thinking, 'Have I got enough runs on the board?' Scoring rates in the IPL has definitely changed. The team batting second just back themselves," McGrath said. The former Australian pacer admitted that he was a fan of Gujarat Titans pacer Prasidh Krishna and expressed surprise at how Shubman Gill used him in the match against the Punjab Kings. "I am a fan of Prasidh



Krishna. We saw a little bit of the last Test in Australia, where India were here. I have done a little bit of work with him in India at the MRF Pace Foundation. 3/29, but they brought him on like the fifth bowler of something, I think they just let it get away a bit." "When he was at the MRF Pace Foundation, where he is now, he has come along in leaps and bounds. I just think he is stronger, bowls at a good pace. He bowls a lot shorter, more hit-the-deck type of length, a little bit short of a length in the IPL I was watching last year. He (Krishna) is a handful. I think he is an exceptional bowler," McGrath said.

## Why Suresh Raina's 87 in IPL 2014 is still the greatest T20 Powerplay innings



Suresh Raina blasted 87 off only 24 balls in the Powerplay in the Chennai vs Punjab Qualifier 2 match in IPL 2014. (BCCI) Suresh Raina blasted 87 off only 24 balls in the Powerplay in the Chennai vs Punjab Qualifier 2 match in IPL 2014. (BCCI) Powerplays have never been more frenetic than they have been in the last few years in the IPL since the introduction of the Impact Sub rule in 2023. The new-ball phase, with only two fielders outside the 30-yard circle, has become the most conducive platform for teams to go all gung-ho and set the stage for gargantuan scores. Sample this: Across all 18 previous editions of the IPL until 2025, the overall tournament strike rate in a season crossed the 150-mark for the first time in 2024. That moved to an all-time high at 152.39 in 2025 across 73 matches, with 7887 Powerplay runs coming at a staggering 151.96 strike rate. Yet, none of them can match up to the chilling effect Suresh Raina produced 12 years ago in an emphatic Powerplay innings, single-handedly. The IPL 2014 Qualifier 2 match at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai between Chennai Super Kings and Kings XI Punjab first had Virender Sehwag roll back the years and carve a career-best 122 before Raina played an all-timer knock, ranking among

the very best in IPL history.

Interestingly, Raina's stunning assault on a quality Punjab attack continues to find relevance to this day in 2026, for it continues to be the benchmark of Powerplay batting in all IPL and T20 cricket across the globe. Raising all possibilities in CSK's pursuit of a 227-run target that evening in Mumbai, Raina came ever so close to batting perfection in the format. Walking in at 1 for 1 in the third delivery of the innings, Raina played 24 of the remaining 34 deliveries in the Powerplay. He clubbed 18 of them for boundaries - 12 fours and six sixes - and only played out four dot balls. The 84 runs through boundaries were more than every IPL team score in the Powerplay up until that point. And while teams have moved past that mark, Raina's 87, which ended in anticlimatic run-out off the first ball after the Powerplay, is still the highest knock by a batter in a Powerplay innings.

Highest T20 Powerplay scores by a batter Three of the best individual scores by a batter in a T20 Powerplay have been etched in the IPL. Australians Travis Head and Jake Fraser McGurk had put on blinding starts of 84 and 78 respectively, in 2024, still falling behind Raina. One can understand how singularly supreme Raina's knock from the fact that there have only been 141 instances of a batter producing at least 50 runs in a Powerplay innings in all T20 cricket history. The number dwindles to 32 in all of IPL history with Raina standing firmly on top. Such blitzes are still a rare feat, even for the modern-day aggressors in India. There have only been 22 instances of a 50-plus Powerplay score by an Indian batter in all T20s, interestingly involving 22 different batters each. As another Chennai-Punjab contest comes around in IPL 2026, a battalion of batting marauders are present on both sides. Yet, matching up to Raina's famous 87, still the Powerplay benchmark across over 16,000 T20 games, will take some doing.

## Nikhat Zareen, Priya and Preeti Pawar enter semifinals as India assures three medals at Asian Boxing Championships

Hyderabad: India confirmed three medals at the Asian Boxing Championships 2026 as Nikhat Zareen, Priya, and Preeti Pawar registered impressive victories to advance to the semifinals on Friday in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Leading the charge, Nikhat Zareen was in complete control in the women's 51kg quarterfinal, sealing a first-round RSC victory over Xian Baguhin (PHI) in a dominant outing. She now faces her toughest test yet against China's Wu Yu, the Paris 2024 Olympic gold medalist, in the semifinals.

In the women's 60kg category, Priya showcased composure and tactical maturity to defeat China's Chengyu Yang by 4-1, continuing her impressive run in the tournament. She will next take on Mongolia's Namun Monkhor for a place in the final. Meanwhile, in the women's 54kg category, Preeti Pawar, the gold medalist at the World Boxing Cup Finals, delivered one of the most clinical performances of the day, outclassing Munguntsetseng (MGL) with a 5-0 unanimous decision victory. Preeti is set to face a formidable opponent



in Korea's Im Aeji, the Paris 2024 Olympic bronze medalist and 2025 World Championships bronze medalist, in what promises to be a gripping semifinal clash. In the men's 70kg category, Deepak exited the competition following a 1-4 defeat to Jordan's Zeyad Eashash in the quarterfinals.

## '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 karoo 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. The dogs. 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 imandari se mehnat karo. Game enjoy karo. Shortcuts mat dhoondho." 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. The boy who slipped away from the family enclosure to sit with the ball boys is still in there somewhere — choosing, when he has the choice, to be among ordinary people doing ordinary things.

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

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. "Love Rafa, the best there ever was, certainly on clay! Also, respect Francisco Roig! I have met him many times and love talking tennis with him. Good choice Iga!!!" Becker wrote on X. 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. I don't want to go into details. It's definitely not something someone like me decides to do after one failure. I wouldn't make such a decision lightly." "I felt it was simply time for a change. Yes, it wasn't a decision made in Miami — it was a longer process during which I carefully considered everything," the 24-year-old said.

## Ashwin roasts KKR after second IPL 2026 defeat: 'Not even one bowler who can guarantee four overs'



After Kolkata Knight Riders conceded a second 200-plus score in back-to-back IPL 2026 defeats at the start of their campaign, India spin legend R Ashwin made a scathing assessment of the team's bowling weaknesses. Opting to bowl first at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Thursday, Ajinkya Rahane's men ended up conceding a whopping 226-run total to SRH. Led by the brutal Powerplay onslaught from Travis Head and Ishan Kishan, none of the KKR bowlers were spared. With Heinrich Klaassen backing up the openers' attack with a half-century, KKR were left reeling in a tall pursuit, eventually losing by 65 runs.

Ashwin observed that KKR's bowling department is facing major issues with no bowler looking secure and stable to run through a four-over spell. Of the four bowlers who bowled as many overs on Thursday night, veteran Sunil Narine was the most economical even as he conceded nearly 10 runs per over. "KKR are going to have a lot of problems this season. Forget about their batting, bowling, and all of that. The way they played this game and the last game, I think that they don't have one bowler whom they can bank on for four overs. Many times you have one or two weak links whom you look to support, but you don't have even one bowler who can guarantee you four overs," Ashwin said on "Ash ki Baat". KKR's woes have been compounded with mystery spinner Varun Chakaravarty confronting one of his worst phases in T20 cricket. After being welcomed to the attack with a six from Abhishek, Chakaravarty ended up conceding 31 runs in only two overs during another for-

gettable outing. "What happens with a bowler, when they get hit a lot, this is a time for Varun that he has never seen before. This is a massive blow for him. When I look at him, I feel his confidence is very low. If you are under so much pressure, there are methods to improve your practice. I feel he needs to take some time," observed Ashwin. "He has to increase his hand speed and try all this in the nets. You cannot just go to the nets and do spot bowling on your own. This stage comes to everyone, where bowlers will pick you easily and even score runs. The game is pushing you to find a method and move forward. He will have to find answers," he explained.

## Hyderabad's Hruthik Katakam to lead India in Junior Davis Cup qualifiers

EMS News Agency, April 4 Hyderabad: Hruthik Katakam of Hyderabad has been selected as the No.1 player to represent India in the Junior Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Final Qualifying event 2026.

The other two members of the team are Ribhav Saroha and Tavish Pahwa while Rana Banerjee will be the coach.

For the record, Hruthik, who trains at Trinity Challengers Tennis Academy (Habsiguda) here under the Henry Praveen and Ramakrishna with former Davis Cupper Vishnuvardhan as the mentor, has won all the five matches in the selection trials. Hruthik defeated Tavish of Haryana 6-4, 6-3, Paranjay of Haryana 7-5, 6-1, Ribhav of Chandigarh 6-2, 6-0, Lakshya of Andhra Pradesh 6-4, 6-2 and Divey of Haryana 6-0, 6-2. The young talent from the City recently won the ITF Juniors singles and doubles title in Gurugram.

## Ramayana teaser earns OG Sita Dipika Chikhliya's approval after earlier doubts; calls it 'grand' and 'beautiful'



Describing the Ramayana teaser as "very beautiful," Dipika Chikhliya said she's now awaiting the Ranbir Kapoor-starrer's release. Ranbir Kapoor as Rama in Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana; Dipika Chikhliya as Sita in Ramanand Sagar's iconic television series Ramayan. Amid the Dhurandhar frenzy that has revitalised an ailing Bollywood, the makers of director Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana have unveiled an enchanting teaser for the epic action-adventure franchise, introducing Ranbir Kapoor as Rama and heralding the industry's potential return to its glory days. Although the teaser was crafted to offer a closer look at the actor's portrayal of Rama and how he has handled the character, the promo video also provided a sneak peek into the expansive world of the two-part film franchise, promising an experience unlike anything Indian cinema has offered thus far. Dipika Chikhliya praises Ramayana teaser

While the teaser drew polarising reactions online, actor Dipika Chikhliya has now stepped forward to share her thoughts on it. For the unfamiliar, Dipika is best known for

her portrayal of Sita, opposite Arun Govil's Rama, in Ramanand Sagar's iconic television series Ramayan. "I watched the teaser, and it's very grand," she shared during a conversation with India Today. Ramayana teaser breakdown: Ranbir Kapoor's Rama immersing ashes, King Dashratha's last words, Ravana's Pushpaka Vimana. Dipika added, "Bahut rich lag raha hai. Unhone bahut achhe se banaya hai (It looks very rich. They have made it well). So, now I'm awaiting the film, and it's looking very beautiful, there's no doubt about it."

When Dipika was apprehensive about Ranbir's Ramayana. Previously, however, she had expressed apprehension about the Hindu epic's adaptations, mentioning her belief that no other iteration of the Ramayana will be as popular as Ramanand Sagar's series. Interestingly, actor Arun Govil, who played Rama opposite her, is playing Dashratha in the Ranbir Kapoor-starrer. During an interview with Siddharth Kannan last year, she was asked if she would be willing to be part of that project if the makers offered her a role. The actor pointed out that a couple of years ago, she was offered the character of Kausalya in another serial based on Ramayana. While she was initially "confused," Dipika said her brother told her, "You are known as Sita, and you should die as Sita." She noted, "I clearly understood that people have known me as Sita ji and nothing will become as popular as Sagar's Ramayan. Then why should I fiddle with my image? I am Sita, I have accepted it. For 35 years, I have taken the responsibility of being Sita. Then why should I try to be something else." Bankrolled by Namit Malhotra at a reported budget of Rs 4,000 crore, Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana features Sai Pallavi as Sita, Yash as Ravana, Sunny Deol as Hanuman, and Ravie Dubey as Lakshmana. The movies feature music by Oscar-winning composers Hans Zimmer and AR Rahman. While Part 1 is set to hit the screens during Diwali 2026, the next installment will release around the same time in 2027. Talking about the ambitious project, Ranbir Kapoor said, "I don't think I'm here to represent Rama. I'm here to learn from him. There is a simplicity and purity to him that is very rare; and trying to understand and imbibe that has been a deeply humbling experience." Nitesh Tiwari added, "Ramayana's greatness lies in its emotional richness. At its heart, it is not just about good and evil, but about choices, consequences, and the weight of doing what is right. Rama's journey is deeply human, and that is what we have tried to stay true to."

## 'He led a very positive, unique life': When Amitabh Bachchan paid tribute to his 'senior' Vinod Khanna at Screen Awards



As the industry gears up for the highly anticipated Chetak Screen Awards 2026, set to take place in Mumbai on April 5, it is worth revisiting a poignant moment from nearly a decade ago. At the 2017 edition of the Screen Awards, the film fraternity came together to pay a heartfelt tribute to late actor Vinod Khanna. The moment was made even more special when his contemporary, often seen as his immediate competitor, Amitabh Bachchan took the stage to reflect on their shared journey and remember the late legend.

Taking to the stage, Amitabh said, "He was one of my earliest friends when I came into the film industry. He was my senior, but he never made me feel that I was his junior. We did several films together. Vinod has always had a mind of his own, never cared about what others thought about

him, and always led a very positive, unique life. He was accepted as a leading man, as a hero. After gaining immense popularity and success, he switched to politics. This is a very rare phenomenon for an actor."

He added, "I believe there are very few examples in the field of acting that can be compared with this kind of achievement. Vinod left us too early, and we all miss him today. We will remember you, Vinod, and we shall always remember you with great fondness." The tribute also saw Kavita Daftary, Vinod Khanna's second wife, being invited on stage by Amitabh Bachchan. She took a moment to remember her husband, saying, "I want to take this opportunity to thank the entire film industry. I want to thank Vinod's fans, because together you gave him a platform to do what he was really passionate about. The day he took his last breath, to me, he was the most beautiful I had ever seen him. He was a man of peace, enveloped with love, and I think the film industry really enabled him to do this." At the peak of their careers, Vinod Khanna and Amitabh Bachchan were often compared, with frequent reports suggesting a rivalry between the two. Some even claimed that Vinod was "jealous" of Amitabh's rising stardom. However, Vinod himself addressed such speculation in an interview with News24, offering a measured perspective: "He must steal the show. I don't feel bad. I think I got the due I deserved. I don't think those films could have been made without me. I was the only contender to Amitabh Bachchan. There was nobody else. Why should I have thoughts of not being successful? The media always kept the competition alive and healthy. These are just media things; if you will do a poll of 100 people, 50 will vouch for Amitabh and others for Vinod Khanna."

## The Drama movie review: Zendaya and Robert Pattinson are terrific in Kristoffer Borgli's wedding satire

The Drama movie review: It's apt that this film about love and marriage, which is mostly unlike anything you may imagine, calls itself The Drama. For, as the week before their wedding brings Emma (Zendaya) and Charlie (Pattinson) face to face with all the fears of the unknown that is marriage, this film peels the layers off the theatre that sometimes overwhelms life. Helmed by its terrifically charismatic leads, with a script that in fact never loses sight of their ordinariness, The Drama woos you over one gentle step at a time.

So what happens when days before the wedding, one discovers a thing about one's partner that one can't put behind? They have just had a conversation, which seems too pointless at first but falls into perspective later, about the rush to judge, and judge harshly. The person being judged in this case is the wedding DJ, whom they have caught snorting heroin. In the light of the "secret" now known about the partner, every present moment takes on a different colour: the reason for the deafness in one ear; the flashes of anger; the red spots on a white lily; the coffee mug with the picture of a gun; even that too-laugh-out-loud laugh.

Emma and Charlie are acutely aware of how things have changed, even as events and wedding preparations and friends (a good Athie, a forceful Haim) hurtle on regardless. Even a wedding photographer, performed by Winters to plastic, toothy perfection, can sense that the vibe is off. Writer-director Kristoffer Borgli orchestrates the tension beautifully, one wedding formality at a time. Even the wed-



ding speeches are a running gag and climax on D-Day. Ironically, the thing that keeps tripping up the film is also Borgli's doing, who is also the co-editor. The non-linear cuts in the storytelling are jarring and disconcerting. These are incessant and, interspersed with products of Charlie's imagination that is now running wild, can make following the story difficult. While the basic idea of how a relationship can easily wobble is strong, some of the set-ups seem to be staged more for laughs than real insight. However, the distractions notwithstanding, it's hard to keep eyes off Zendaya and Pattinson. Though Robert's artsy, angsty, uppity mop does come in the way.

## Why Abhishek Bachchan is never insecure of Aishwarya Rai's success: 'My mother was the bigger star than my father'



Despite growing up with icons like Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan, and being married to global star Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Abhishek Bachchan says he has never felt insecure, crediting his upbringing for it. In a recent conversation, the actor explained how his upbringing and belief in partnership helped him view success in relationships differently. In a conversation with Lilly Singh, Abhishek Bachchan said that the idea of equality in a relationship was ingrained in him from the beginning. "I had that at home as well, to get that out of the way. When my parents got married, my mother was the much bigger star than my father was. So it was not an unnatural thing. I wasn't brought up to think that you have to be the dominant one; it was always about partnership." Talking about his equation with Aishwarya Rai, Abhishek recalled that their bond began as a friendship long before it turned into a relationship.

"I have known Aishwarya from the start of my career. The second film I did was with her, and she is the one actress that I have worked with the most. We weren't in a relationship then—we were buddies, we were always friends." He explained that this foundation made their transition into a relationship seamless, and their marriage has always been rooted in equality. "When we finally did come together, and throughout our courtship, engagement, and marriage, it was always about partnership. It was never, 'I am going to bring the food and you take care of the house.' It's not even dis-

puted, it flows very naturally." Abhishek Bachchan also spoke about how his sense of self and "ego" has shaped his approach to both work and relationships. For him, ego is not about dominance, but about self-earned respect. "I am not somebody who wants to win because somebody else laid down and let me walk over them. I was brought up with the belief that you have to earn your wins. My father didn't launch me. Till date, he hasn't made a film for me. In fact, I produced a film for him. Whatever I am today, at least I can say that I did it my way, on my own merit." He made it clear that he does not believe in a relationship where one partner has to step back for the other to feel secure. "I have never been a person who believes that somebody has to give up or stop running for me to win the race. I don't want to be in a partnership, in a marriage, where my wife has to stop doing something for me to feel more like a man. Thankfully, my wife is someone who doesn't think that way either." No rigid parental roles

Speaking further about parenting, Abhishek Bachchan shared that neither he nor his wife believe in rigid parental roles. Abhishek said, "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. The couple welcomed their daughter, Aaradhya Bachchan, on November 16, 2011.

## Tanuja calls Aditya Dhar the 'real hero' of Ranveer Singh-starrer Dhurandhar 2: 'No moment was boring'

Ranveer Singh-starrer Dhurandhar: The Revenge has been receiving widespread praise from both audiences and the film fraternity. Now, Tanuja, mother of Kajol, has shared her views on Dhurandhar 2, saying that its director, Aditya Dhar, is the "real hero" of the film. In a video shared by her daughter, actor Tanishaa Mukerji on X, Tanuja could be seen appreciating the spy thriller. When asked if she liked the film, she replied candidly, "Amazing, outstanding movie." When Tanishaa asked who she thought was the real hero of Dhurandhar 2 – Ranveer Singh or director Aditya Dhar, Tanuja had a clear answer in her mind as she instantly said, "The director, 110 per cent."

The veteran actor also praised Aditya Dhar's "excellent" storytelling, describing Dhurandhar 2 as a "well put-together" film. Tanuja added that "everybody did well," calling it a perfect example of a team effort. "The whole cast, the way they were cast. And they are all real-life characters. The way they played. Ranveer was looking the part. He was outstanding. He was good." Ok so I did it again! I took mom for Dhurandhar the Revenge finally & totally worth it & here is our honest review! #adityadhar @RanveerOfficial #Dhurandhar2?TheRevenge While many viewers felt that the runtime of Dhurandhar: The Revenge was too long, Tanuja begged to differ. "The director is fabulous. Good director. Excellent. Very well put together, considering it's such a long film. No moment which was boring," she said in the clip. Meanwhile, Dhurandhar The Revenge has been unstoppable at the box office. In fact, it has already crossed the Rs



1500 crore mark worldwide. Besides Ranveer Singh, the film also features Sanjay Dutt, R. Madhavan, Arjun Rampal, Rakesh Bedi, Danish Pandor and Sara Arjun.

## Kamal Haasan questioned Geraftaar director after Amitabh Bachchan, Rajinikanth joined the film: 'What am I doing?'

Kamal Haasan questioned Geraftaar director after Amitabh Bachchan, Rajinikanth joined the film. Kamal Haasan questioned Geraftaar director after Amitabh Bachchan, Rajinikanth joined the film. Director-writer Prayag Raj and superstar Amitabh Bachchan collaborated on several hit films in the 1980s and '90s, including Amar Akbar Anthony, Naseeb, and Coolie. After Coolie, the duo teamed up again for another blockbuster, Geraftaar (1985). The action drama, which also starred Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan, went on to become the third-highest-grossing film of that year. In a recent interview, Prayag revealed that Amitabh had initially agreed to only a guest appearance in the film. He also shared that once Rajinikanth and Big B came on board, Kamal questioned him about his role in the project.

During a conversation with Shemaroo Lifestyle, Prayag Raj said, "There was a film from Madras, called Geraftaar. So, after Coolie, I begged in front of Amit ji again. He initially said that he can only do a guest appearance, but when I insisted, he agreed to give me 10 days to shoot the film."

Raaj further added, "Back then, Amitabh Bachchan giving 10 days meant that you can almost complete the entire film in that much time. Rajinikanth had a guest appearance. He came on board only because Amit ji was in the film. So, I had gotten two top stars to join the movie." The director also revealed that Kamal Haasan had doubts about his role after his fellow superstars joined Geraftaar. "Kamal Haasan was the hero of the film. When these two (Rajinikanth and Amitabh Bachchan) agreed, he asked, 'What am I doing?' So, I turned the story in a way that hero stays as it is and one should be the hero's brother, while the other one can play the friend's role," he shared. After releasing in theatres, when these stars came in screen one by one, the audience used to throw money, balloons on them, applause and whistle in Madras theatres," Raaj concluded. Geraftaar also



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featured Kader Khan and Ranjeet in pivotal roles. Directed by Prayag Raaj, the film collected around Rs 7.50 crore worldwide, against a budget of Rs 1.78 crore.