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## TGHRC warns of crop loss, directs water release from Singur

Hyderabad: The Telangana Human Rights Commission (TGHRC) directed the State government to urgently release irrigation water to farmers under the Ghanapur Anicut in Sangareddy district, where nearly 20,000 acres of paddy are at risk.

In an interim order, the Commission, headed by Justice Shameem Akther, expressed concern about the non-release of water, posing a threat to farmers' livelihoods and dignity under Article 21.

## Four SSC exam personnel, one invigilator removed over negligence

Hyderabad: Four examination personnel and one invigilator were removed from the SSC Public Examinations 2026 duties over their negligence during the conduct of the examination on Tuesday. One malpractice was booked in Bhadrachali Kothagudem district. City & Local Guides

A total of 5,24,578 candidates registered and 5,22,387 appeared for the biological science paper. The major Class X exams will conclude with the social studies subject, which is scheduled for April 13.

# Fast Breeder Reactor Attains Criticality, Gives India Nuclear Freedom

From Our Staff Reporter  
New Delhi, April 7

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday announced that indigenously designed and built 500 megawatt Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam has attained criticality — which means that it is producing more nuclear fuel than it consumes. This makes India only the second country to run breeder reactors after Russia.

Criticality means the start of controlled fission chain reaction: In the PFBR, it means producing more nuclear fuel and electric power. The PFBR runs on a mix of Plutonium-239 (the 'fire') and Uranium-238 (the 'breeding ground'). This mix fires atomic particles (neutrons) at a 'blanket' of Thorium-232, converting it into Uranium-233 that can be used for Stage 3 nuclear reactors. Several countries including the US and China have failed to achieve this so far.

"It is a decisive step towards harnessing our vast thorium reserves in the third stage of the programme," Modi posted on his X handle, congratulating scientists and engineers.

The fast breeder reactor (FBR) is the cornerstone on which India's nuclear energy policy rests. It is part of the

three-stage nuclear programme laid out by Homi J. Bhabha in 1954, which seeks to overcome lack of uranium reserves in the country by harnessing abundant thorium reserves. India, according to an estimate, has one-fourth of the world's thorium reserves.

As per the department of atomic energy (DAE), the technology development and design of PFBR was indigenously done by the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research.

Anil Kakodkar, former secretary of the DAE, said that the "historic" development was very important from the point of view of India's energy security. In view of India's dependency on other countries for fossil fuels, the move assumes significance, especially at a time when the crisis in West Asia has impacted the supply of oil and natural gas, he said.

Unlike other nuclear reactors, the fast breeder reactor not only produces energy but also produces fuel, Kakodkar said. This is why it is called a 'breeder reactor', he added.

According to the DAE, the PFBR uses Uranium-Plutonium Mixed Oxide (MOX) fuel. The core of PFBR is surrounded by a blanket of Uranium-238. Fast neutrons convert fertile Uranium-238 into fissile Plutonium-239,

enabling the reactor to produce more fuel than it consumes. The reactor is designed to eventually use Thorium-232 in the blanket. Through transmutation, Thorium-232 will be converted into Uranium-233, which will fuel the third stage of India's nuclear power programme.

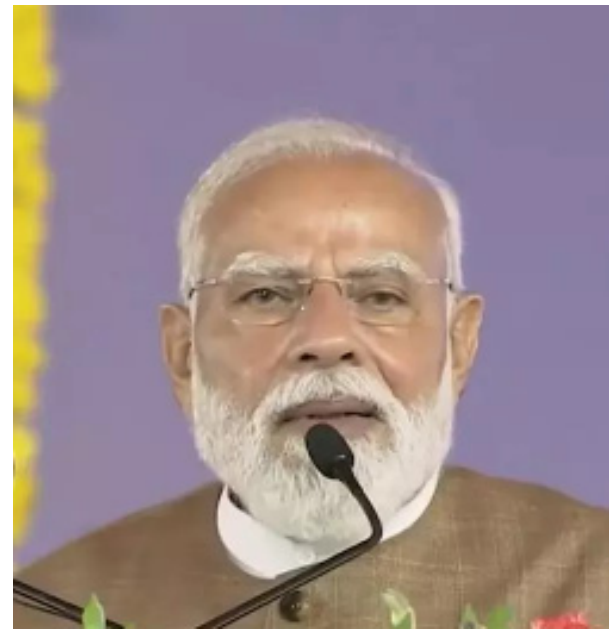
K.N. Vyas, former secretary of the DAE, said the development was significant as the technology involved is very advanced. However, the reactor will not start producing electricity immediately and will undergo a variety of tests, he said.

Countries like France and the US were unable to scale up their breeder reactors, Vyas said.

Concurring with Vyas, Kakodkar said that after Russia, which is the only country to run two breeder reactors with a capacity of 600 MW and 800 MW, India is the only country to develop a reactor with a capacity of 500 MW. France and the US operate breeder reactors but not at this scale, he said.

Rajeshwari Rajagopalan, resident senior fellow at Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, said the development was impressive despite the huge delays.

Kakodkar said that as in the case of pressurised heavy water reactors technology, which Indian scientists have mastered over decades and ramped up the con-



struction of nuclear plants, the next step will be to make the Fast Breeder Reactor technology more robust and scale up the reactors. In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha last month, Jitendra Singh, minister of state in the Prime Minister's Office, had said that the government had accorded approval to carry out pre-project activities for 2 x 500 MWe twin unit of FBR 1&2 project at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu. On attaining first criticality of PFBR, the government will be approached for financial sanction of FBR 1 and 2 projects, Singh had said.

# Trump warns whole civilisation will die tonight if deal with Iran isn't reached

From Our Staff Reporter  
Tehran, April 7

US President Donald Trump warned on Tuesday that a "whole civilisation will die tonight" if Iran does not meet his latest deadline for the Islamic Republic to agree to a deal that includes reopening the crucial Strait of Hormuz.

The warning came as airstrikes hit two bridges and

Iran's president said 14 million people, including himself, have volunteered to fight.

It was not clear if the latest airstrikes were linked to Trump's threat to attack bridges. At least two of the targets were connected to Iran's rail network, which Israel earlier signalled it might attack.

Israel has increasingly carried out strikes that it says are aimed at delivering a blow to Iran's economy.

Iran, meanwhile, fired on Israel and Saudi Arabia, prompting the temporary closure of a major bridge.

While Iran cannot match the sophistication of US and Israeli weaponry or their dominance in the air, its chokehold on the strait is causing major damage to the world economy and raising the pressure on Trump both at home and abroad to find a way out of the standoff.

Officials involved in diplomatic efforts said talks were ongoing - but Iran has rejected the latest American proposal, and it was unclear if a deal would come in time to head off Trump's threatened attacks.

World leaders and experts warned that strikes as destructive as Trump threatened could constitute a war crime. AP

Baghdad: The powerful Iran-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah said in a statement on Tuesday that it will release American journalist Shelly Kittleston, who was kidnapped from a Baghdad street corner last week. The group said its decision came "in appreciation of the patriotic stances of the outgoing Prime Minister" Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, without giving more details. It added that "this initiative will not be repeated in future". Kataib Hezbollah had not previously acknowledged that it was the one responsible for Kittleston's abduction, although both US and Iraqi officials had pointed fingers at the group. AP

# Cabinet reshuffle possibility leaves many jittery in Telangana

Speculation over a cabinet reshuffle in Telangana has put Ministers on edge despite A. Revanth Reddy ruling out immediate changes. Political calculations around social representation and upcoming elections continue to fuel uncertainty within the ruling Indian National Congress. AP news updates

Hyderabad, April 7

With elections in Kerala and other States just a few days away, speculation over a possible cabinet reshuffle

could have to factor in social equations to avoid dissent. At present, there are two vacancies in the cabinet, and there is talk that some existing Ministers could be asked to step down to accommodate new faces. Among the front runners for a cabinet berth are Munugode MLA Komatireddy Rajgopal Reddy, Ibrahimpatnam MLA Malreddy Rangareddy and Parigi MLA Rammohan Reddy.

However, the cabinet already has significant representation from the Reddy community. Any fresh induction from the same group would likely require an existing member to step aside. Leaders from Munnuru Kapu and Yadav communities have also been pressing for representation.

There is also no representation from the Lambada community in the current cabinet. Devarkonda MLA Balu Naik and Dornakal MLA Ramchander Naik are among those seeking a berth. Amid these developments, a section of Ministers remains concerned about their positions. Despite the ongoing speculation, A Revanth Reddy has publicly ruled out any immediate plans for a cabinet reshuffle or expansion.

Meanwhile, a section of leaders at Gandhi Bhavan has dismissed the speculation. They say such leaks in a select media are meant to keep leaders and cadre engaged. Without that sense of anticipation, they argue, participation in party programmes may decline.



and expansion has left several Ministers on an edge. Many are waiting to see if changes will follow once the polling process concludes.

The buzz has persisted since February, when Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy met the All India Congress Committee leadership in New Delhi. Soon after that meeting, the government appointed whips in both the Assembly and the Legislative Council, adding to the speculation.

Political observers believe that any cabinet exer-

# Hyderabad police warn against IPL betting scams, 600 plus links blocked

Hyderabad Police have warned about rising IPL-related online betting scams. Fraudsters are using fake match predictions to lure users. Authorities blocked hundreds of ads and urged people to report scams by calling 1930 or using the cybercrime portal.

Hyderabad, April 7

Amid the ongoing IPL season, Hyderabad Police has issued a strong warning against the rising number of online betting scams being promoted under the guise of 'IPL predictions.'

Taking to social media, City Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar on Tuesday said that cyber fraudsters were exploiting cricket fever on social media platforms by posting misleading advertisements and claiming to predict match outcomes, including toss results and winners.

"These fake claims are used to lure unsuspecting users into subscribing to their channels and eventually push them into illegal betting activities," he said.

He cautioned that several influencers and pages are deliberately spreading such deceptive content for financial gain, putting the public at risk of losing their hard-earned money.

The Hyderabad Cybercrime Department has intensified its crackdown on these activities. In the past month alone, authorities have blocked 494 paid advertisements and taken down 129 social media profiles involved in



promoting such scams.

Officials said that strict legal action will be taken against those responsible for running or endorsing these fraudulent schemes.

Anyone who encounters suspicious betting promotions or becomes a victim of cyber fraud should dial 1930 or lodge a complaint through the official cybercrime portal immediately.

# ACB nabs PJTSAU Associate Dean for taking Rs 1 lakh bribe

Hyderabad, April 7

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) caught Dr. M Goverdhan, Associate Dean of Agronomy at Professor Jayashankar Telangana Agricultural University (PJTSAU), Rajendra Nagar, when he was allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 1 lakh on Tuesday.

According to ACB officials, Goverdhan had initially demanded and accepted Rs 25,000 from a complainant for issuing a seed licence to his firm. He later sought an additional Rs 1 lakh as a reward (bribe) and to ensure that no hurdles would be created by Agriculture Department officials in the complainant's seed business.

Acting on a complaint, the ACB City Range-II unit laid a trap and caught the official while accepting the bribe. The tainted amount was recovered from his possession.

Officials stated that the tainted officer misused his official position to obtain undue advantage. He was produced before the court and remanded in judicial custody.



# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Back to the moon and beyond

Amid the turbulent geopolitics, marked by raging wars and nagging trade tensions, an ambitious space mission has brought a sense of collective purpose to a divided world and rekindled scientific curiosity to expand the horizons of knowledge. The successful launch and the progress of NASA's Artemis-II, a flyby mission to the moon, came as a whiff of fresh air in the midst of disturbing reports of military conflicts around the world. Artemis-II, carrying four astronauts of diverse ethnic backgrounds, is more than just a trip around the moon. It is part of a larger plan to return humans to the lunar surface, establish a permanent base, and eventually prepare for missions to Mars. It envisages using the moon as both a laboratory and a launchpad for future expeditions deep into space. Coming nearly 54 years since the last manned mission left the lunar surface in December 1972, Artemis-II has several firsts to its credit. While moving around the moon, the Orion spacecraft will travel to a distance of about 6,500 km from the far side of the moon. This will be the farthest that humans have ever ventured into space. The SLS (Space Launch System) rockets being used for the Artemis missions are the most powerful launch vehicles available to NASA right now. This is the first time that the SLS rocket and Orion spacecraft are being used to carry astronauts. The long-dormant dream of establishing a permanent lunar base draws one step closer, with the launch of Artemis-II. It will not land on the moon but circle it and return to Earth after a 10-day journey. A successor mission, planned for 2028, is scheduled to make a moon landing with another set of four astronauts. Artemis II is sort of a test-ride mission, meant to test and validate all systems before astronauts finally make the landing on the moon. Amid the ongoing battle of one-upmanship among the space-faring nations, particularly between the United States and China,

# MLC Anji reddy launches 5K Run in Sangareddy



"Sangareddy, April 7, Indian Chronicle Correspondent Sunil: MLC Anji reddy and District Collector P. Pravinya jointly flagged off the 5K Run program organized by the Government Medical College on Tuesday on the occasion of World Health Day. This 5K run program continued from the Medical College to IB." "Speaking on the occasion, District Collector P. Praveenya said that as part of the 99-day activity of the Public Administration-Progress Plan, various health programs were organized under the auspices of the Health Department for a week. He said that personal and social development is possible only through a healthy lifestyle. He said that attention to health usually increases only after 40-50 years, but it is a good development for the current youth to focus on health earlier. He suggested that doctors should provide guidelines on a proper lifestyle for future generations. As suggested by the World Health Organization, a balanced diet, exercise, cleanliness, and mental peace are the main elements for health. He said that the youth should set an example for future generations by following these points." "MLC Anji Reddy said that every person should live with a scientific attitude and change their lifestyle to be healthy. He said that health problems can be prevented by following a scientific lifestyle. He suggested that health can be maintained by reducing problems like stress and irritation in daily life. He called on the youth to move forward in terms of health." "Local Bodies Additional Collector Pandu, Government Medical College Principal Dr. Prakash Rao, District Medical Officer Dr. Vasantha Rao, DSP Sattaiah, officials, public representatives, youth organizations, medical students and the public participated in this program.

# Cultural Anniversary Celebration at VDO's Colony Resonance Info School



"The cultural anniversary celebration of Resonance Info School in VDOs Colony, Khammam city was held at Punshan Hall, the venue." "Khammam Additional DCP Admin B. Ramanujam was the chief guest of the program. Resonance Directors Shri R.V. Mr. Nagendra Kumar, Mr. K Sridhar Rao, Mrs. Neelimagaru participated as chief guests and lit the Jyoti." "The Chief Guest B. Ramanujam said that parents are the form of God, no matter how great the parents are, they should spend some time with their children. He also informed that the students will achieve anything with discipline, perseverance and concentration, have a good future and reach higher heights, and bring good name to the country, parents and teachers. He informed that all the students should reach the desired goals and bring good name to our country." "R.V. Nagendrakumar addressed the children and said that every student should not rest until they reach their goal. He wants to be known as a great person. He said that by imparting value-based education, we develop students in all fields and develop them in such a way as to increase social awareness. He said that the knowledge learned in school helps a student to grow higher in his life. He exhorted every student to develop patriotism and respect parents and teachers to be responsible towards the society. Parents should spend time with their children to know how they are studying and ensure that children stay away from mobile phones." "Director of the school Mr. K. Sridhar Raogaru said that they are preparing their students so that they can be ahead in all fields, not just limited to books but also games. He told the students to face any difficulties and overcome them with courage so that they can reach success. School Director Mrs. Neelima Garu said that school life and childhood are very sensitive and precious and the foundation laid at the school stage will be useful for the next life. He hoped to gain the reputation of the school where he was educated and educated with moral values." "With traditional clothes, cultural programs, small children taking small steps, the stage of Punction Hall was transformed." "School principals, teachers and non-teaching staff, students and parents participated in this program with great enthusiasm.

# 6.20 Crore Sanctioned for Development Works in Venkat Reddy Nagar Division by Chief Minister



"— Arun Patel and Congress leaders perform milk abhishekam to portraits of CM Revanth Reddy and Paramesh Reddy." "KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 7 (Indian Chronicle): "Funds amounting to ₹6.20 crore have been sanctioned by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for development works in Venkat Reddy Nagar Division, with the initiative taken by Uppal Constituency Congress President Parameshwar Reddy." "Expressing gratitude, a milk abhishekam was performed on the portraits of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Parameshwar Reddy under the leadership of Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President Aakaarapu Arun Patel on Tuesday. Sweets were also distributed on the occasion." "Speaking at the event, Arun Patel stated that under the leadership of Revanth Reddy, who is consistently working towards the development of the constituency, Uppal will continue to progress further. He also detailed the development works to be undertaken in Venkat Reddy Nagar Division: ₹1.50 crore for road construction from Shivaji statue to Venkat Reddy Nagar" ₹90 lakh for road work from Vishal Mart to Polytechnic College Gate No. 2" ₹1.20



crore for road development (Phase-I) covering Gandhi Nagar Road No. 2, Srinagar, Satyanagar, Kamakshipuram, Vivek Nagar, Ram Reddy Nagar Main Road up to Amberpet STP" ₹2.60 crore for road work from ADRM Hospital, Old Ramanthapur to Srinagar Colony He mentioned that these funds will significantly improve basic infrastructure and that the works will commence soon." "The event was attended by Billakanti Yadaiah, Upender Reddy, Shankar, Youth Congress Medchal District General Secretary Kishore, Balayya Srinivas Chary, Gaddam Narasimha, K. Swamy, Galusula Swamy, Kasim Goud, Mallaiiah, Komuriah, Ashok, Sachin, Vinesh, Raghu, Ali, Nagachari, Krishna, Satish, Nagaraju, Kanakayya, Venkatanna, Matta Anjaiah, Gangaram, Narayana, Somayya, Billakanti Yadagiri, Ashok, Naveen, Devayya, Mallesh, Lingam, Pala Balayya, Rajesh, Bharu, Ali, Basha, Nani, Shiva, Srikanth, Chiru, Bhaskar, Nagamallaiah, Rajesh, Nani, Suresh, and others. Women Congress leaders Lakshmi Munagala, Sandhya, Govinda, Dhanalakshmi, Pavani, Vijaya, Sunitha, Pravina, Shobha, Dhanushree, Madhavi, Pallavi, along with other Congress leaders and local residents, also participated in the program.

# Setting up of Summer Water Booth Appreciated Nacharam



Indian chornical, April 7: The arrangement of summer water booths (Chalivendram) to quench the thirst of passersby is highly commendable, said the chief guests of the program, BJP Mahila Morcha State President Dr. Mekala Shilpa Reddy and State Spokesperson Tadoori Srinivas. "On the occasion of the BJP Foundation Day, a summer water booth was set up at the HMT Nagar main road bus junction in Nacharam under the aegis of Ragiri Jyothi Mohan Reddy Seva Organization. The booth was inaugurated by BJP ST Morcha State President Ravi Naik, along with Organization Chairman Ragiri Mohan Reddy, President Jyothi Reddy, and General Secretary Pawan Kanth Reddy." "Speaking on the occasion, the leaders emphasized the need to undertake more service-oriented activities that benefit society. The organizers stated that the water booth was established with the aim of providing cool drinking water to the public, especially considering the intense summer heat." "Division President Naveen Kumar, former President Malka Prakash, district leaders Mallela Narsing Rao, Bekkari Ravinder Reddy, Katipalli Ravinder Reddy, contested corporator Empala Anita Padma Reddy, Abhishek Goud, Virupaksha Naveen Reddy, Pratap Reddy, Uday Kiran Reddy, Padam Venkatesh, Ramesh Goud, K. Srinivas Yadav, Balu, Senior Citizens Association President Prem Kumar Goud, Ramakrishna, Erra Srinivas Reddy, Bhupal Reddy, Bhaskar, Varalakshmi, Dimple, Kalpana and others participated in the program.

# Major Boost to Uppal Mudiraj Community Hall – Development Works Worth 62 Lakhs Launched



— Works inspected by Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge Parameshwar Reddy and Former Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy." "KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 7 (Indian Chronicle): "Uppal Mudiraj Community Hall is set to witness significant development, said Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy. He stated that funds amounting to ₹62 lakhs have been sanctioned for the development of the community hall." "Parameshwar Reddy, along with former Uppal Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy,

inaugurated and inspected the ongoing development works at the Mudiraj Bhavan. Speaking on the occasion, he said that community halls and caste association buildings in various colonies are being constructed and upgraded comprehensively." "He further added that pending works from previous phases are also being completed. In the coming days, efforts will be made to secure additional funds to further enhance and beautify the Uppal Mudiraj Community Hall. With the support of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, crores of rupees are being brought in for the development of the area. Infrastructure works such as roads, drainage systems, and other essential civic amenities are being taken up to put Uppal on the path of development, he said." "The event was attended by Uppal Mudiraj Association President Eega Anjaneyulu Mudiraj, Borampet Ramesh, Mahankali Krishna, Eega Lakshman, Eega Eshwarayya, Pittala Sailu, Gangadevi Karunakar, Eega Babu, Manda Shekhar, Borampet Ramu, Talari Vinay, Kavali Ramu, Rangula Shekhar, Aratikayala Mallesh, Kanche Meedi Ravinder Mudiraj, Kanche Meedi Shivayya, Kokonda Jagan, Rapaka Nursing, Eega Murali, Kayala Sheenu, Mahankali Venu, Mahankali Raju, Kavali Hari, Eega Rajesh, Borampet Ravi, Talari Jahangir, Kasturi Lakshman, Dadi Nagarjuna, and others.

# Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District SP Akanksha Yadav met Bar Association President Nisangi Vidya Sagar

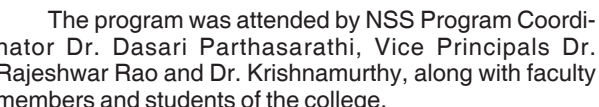
"(Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. April 7):- The newly elected President of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bar Association, Nisangi Vidya Sagar, met Superintendent of Police Akanksha Yadav at the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District SP office, politely honored him with a shawl and presented him with a flower. Speaking on this occasion, Bar Association President Nisangi Vidya Sagar asked for the resolution of the cases pending in the district. Executive members including General Secretary Medaboyina Yadagiri, Joint Secretary Udatala Suresh, Executive Member Gaddam Srinivas, Senior Advocates Bomma Venkatesh, Goda Venkateswarlu, Pasham Sridhar, Jangiti Siva Kiran and others participated in this program.



PRESS NOTE "Hyderabad 01 April, 2026 : A review meeting with Private Marketing Companies (PMCs) dealing with Auto LPG was held on 07.04.2026 under the chairmanship of Sri M. Stephen Raveendra, IPS, Commissioner of Civil Supplies, as a follow-up to the earlier meeting conducted on 01.04.2026. "During the previous review, it was observed that a large number of private Auto LPG outlets had ceased operations, leading to significant inconvenience among auto drivers. The PMCs were instructed to take immediate and proactive measures to source Auto LPG from all possible avenues and ensure an uninterrupted supply at retail outlets." "In the review held on 07.04.2026, it was noted with satisfaction that the PMCs have made considerable progress over the past week. A total of 363 MTs of Auto LPG was sourced and supplied during the week, and 17 previously non-operational (dry) outlets were restored to functioning status. "The Commissioner appreciated the efforts of Super Gas, Go Gas, Total Energies, and Prime Fuel for their proactive role in augmenting supplies and re-viving operations at multiple outlets. "However, concern was expressed regarding the limited or negligible progress made by certain other PMCs. They were issued stern instructions to intensify their efforts in sourcing Auto LPG and to ensure consistent supply across all their outlets without fail. "Sri M. Stephen Raveendra, reiterated that maintaining an uninterrupted Auto LPG supply is critical to safeguarding the livelihoods of auto drivers and directed all PMCs to remain fully committed to this objective. "The Department will maintain strict vigilance, and PMCs are expected to sustain and further build upon these supply levels, ensuring continuous fuel availability to prevent any disruption to public transport. "The Civil Supplies Department will continue its daily monitoring of running outlets and product receipts, working in close coordination with Oil Marketing Companies to ensure the impact of international supply constraints remains fully mitigated in Hyderabad. "Citizens facing any issues can directly contact the toll-free Helpline Number: 1967 .

# Homeo Walk Held Ahead of World Homeopathy Day Celebrations

— Principal Dr. N. Lingaraju flags off Homeo Walk." "KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 7 (Indian Chronicle): "As part of the preparatory celebrations for World Homeopathy Day, a "Homeo Walk" was organized on Tuesday at JSPS Government Homeopathy Medical College. "The walk was flagged off by the college Principal and AYUSH Additional Director, Dr. N. Lingaraju. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Lingaraju called upon young homeopathy doctors to dedicate themselves to serving the nation through homeopathic medicine. "He stated that Dr. Samuel Hahnemann introduced homeopathy as a medical system considering the limitations of allopathy during his time, aiming to provide effective treatment without side effects and at an affordable cost for all. "Dr. Lingaraju also noted that World Homeopathy Day is observed every year on April 10 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, who was born in Germany on April 10, 1755. The program was attended by NSS Program Coordinator Dr. Dasari Parthasarathi, Vice Principals Dr. Rajeshwar Rao and Dr. Krishnamurthy, along with faculty members and students of the college.



# Habsiguda Leaders Perfor Milk Abhishekam to CM Revanth Reddy's Portrait— 21.60 crore allocated to Habsiguda under CRMP



— Leaders express special thanks to Uppal In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy... KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 7 (Indian Chronicle):... As part of the CRMP program, the government has allocated ₹21.60 crore for road repairs and construction of new roads in the Habsiguda division. The funds include ₹12 crore for the stretch from Habsiguda Cross Road to Uppal Cross Road, ₹2.10 crore for internal roads near Uppal Cricket Stadium, ₹3.20 crore from NGRI Metro Station to Madhura Restaurant, ₹2.60 crore from Ek Minar Masjid to Ramanthapur Road, and ₹1.70 crore from Hyderabad Public School to Sai Baba Temple. On this occasion, following the instructions of Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, leaders of the Habsiguda division expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy by performing a milk abhishekam to his portrait. The program was organized under the leadership of the Habsiguda Division Committee at Street No. 8, near Swathi

Tiffins, and witnessed the participation of a large number of Congress leaders and party workers. Speaking on the occasion, former Medchal-Malkajgiri District Youth Congress President Kandi Shraavan Kumar Reddy stated that such a large allocation of funds to Habsiguda is unprecedented. He thanked Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, District In-charge Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, R&B Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, and especially Uppal Constituency Congress In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy for their efforts. The event was attended by District Vice President Boppanapalli Sudhakar Reddy, District ST Cell President Ganesh Naik, Division President Gannaram Vijay Kumar, senior leaders Laxma Reddy, Murali Krishna Mudiraj, Gundu Rajanna, Bhukya Kishan Naik, Raju Naik, Ramesh Naik, Malu Naik, Division Youth Congress President Vasu Naik, Suman Naik, Lakshmi Narayana, Shiva, Ranjith, Madhu, Venu, Sai, Ganesh, Rahul, Rahul Naik, B. Shiva, and several others.

# Tractor Union Protests Against Online Sand Policy – Appeals to MLA Kova Lakshmi

“Indian Chronicle. Jade Srinivas. April, 07.” Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district, members of the Tractor Union have expressed strong concern over the newly implemented online system for sand excavation and transportation. The union representatives met Asifabad constituency MLA Kova Lakshmi and explained the difficulties they are facing due to this new policy. The union members stated that earlier, they used to transport sand smoothly by paying ₹1400 through a Demand Draft (DD) system. They said this method was simple, practical, and free from technical issues, allowing them to carry out their work without any interruptions. However, with the introduction of the online system, they are now facing several challenges. They highlighted that in rural areas, poor internet connectivity, frequent server issues, and technical glitches are creating major obstacles in booking sand online. Due to these problems, the booking process is often delayed or fails completely, affecting their daily work. As a result, tractor drivers and laborers, who depend on this work for their livelihood,

are facing financial difficulties and struggling to support their families. The Tractor Union has requested MLA Kova Lakshmi to continue the old DD-based system until the online system becomes fully reliable and efficient. They emphasized that their primary demand is to reinstate the previous system to ensure uninterrupted work and income. The union members also warned that they would halt all sand transportation activities until their issues are resolved. They stated that they would not carry out any loading or transport (“push work”) as a form of protest, urging the government to respond immediately. MLA Kova Lakshmi reportedly listened to their concerns and assured them that she would bring the issue to the notice of the government and work towards a suitable solution. The union members expressed hope that their problems would be resolved soon. This issue has now become a topic of discussion locally, with many people urging the authorities to address the problem quickly, as it directly affects the livelihoods of many rural workers.

# Jadi Praveen Kumar Appointed as REF District Vice-President

“Kumuram Bheem Asifabad, Jadi Praveen Kumar from Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district has been appointed as the District Vice-President of the Reservation Employees Federation (REF). The state leadership of the organization officially issued the appointment letter confirming his position. Praveen Kumar, a resident of Kanargao village in Vankidi mandal and son of Jadi Lakshman, is well known for his active involvement in social service activities and has earned a good reputation in the district. Leaders expressed confidence that his appointment would further strengthen the organization at the district level. As part of his responsibilities, he has been entrusted with working for the welfare, empowerment, and protection of the rights of SC, ST, BC, and Minority employees. He is also expected to actively promote social justice through the platform of the organization. His term in office will be effective from April 6, 2026, to April 6, 2028. The State President and General Secretary of REF expressed full confidence in Praveen Kumar's leadership abilities and hoped that his services would contribute significantly to the growth and development of the organization. Leaders, friends, and people across the district have expressed happiness over his appointment and extended their heartfelt congratulations.

# Encroachments on Mallikarjun Nagar Sewerage & SWD Trunk Line Must Be Removed Immediately: Former Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen



— New sewerage and SWD trunk line should be constructed without causing inconvenience to the public: Former Corporator Bannala Geetha... KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 7 (Indian Chronicle):... Former Corporator of Chilkanaigar Division and GHMC Standing Committee Member, Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj, has urged authorities to immediately remove encroachments on the sewerage and SWD (Storm Water Drain) trunk line in Mallikarjun Nagar. On Tuesday, she submitted a representation to Deputy Commissioner Shailaja at the Uppal Circle office, explaining the issue in detail. Along with residents of the Bodrai area in Mallikarjun Nagar, she highlighted the need for a new sewerage pipeline and storm water drain (SWD) system. She explained that an old pipeline currently carries sewage and rainwater from Chilkanaigar hill and the Bodrai area. However, some private property owners have encroached upon this pipeline and constructed buildings over it. She demanded that these encroachments be removed

immediately and that the old pipeline be replaced with a new trunk line, which should be connected to the irrigation canal. She also presented photographs to the Deputy Commissioner to support her claims. Geetha Praveen further stated that due to constructions over the pipeline, sewage and rainwater are unable to flow properly, leading to stagnation of dirty water in front of houses. This has caused severe inconvenience to residents and is creating serious public health concerns. Responding to the issue, Deputy Commissioner Shailaja assured that she would visit the area along with Water Works Executive Director Pankaj and take necessary steps to construct a new pipeline at the earliest. She also made it clear that constructions over the pipeline will not be tolerated and will be removed immediately. The program was attended by D.E. Vennela Goud, BRS State leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, senior leaders Edulla Kondal Reddy, Jalli Mohan, Moulaali, Shyam, Banti Goud, and a large number of local residents.

# Make the preparatory meeting of the invitation committee to be held in Ramannapet on the 11th of this month a success:



- Telangana Agricultural Workers' Union District General Secretary Kondamadugu Narasimha... (Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. April 7):- On the occasion of the 3rd general meeting of the Telangana Agricultural Workers' Union District being held at the Ramannapet Mandal Center, all political parties, agricultural laborers, employment guarantee workers, leaders of public associations, farmers and democrats should participate in large numbers in the preparatory meeting of the invitation committee to be held at the Sangam

Mandal Office in Ramannapet on the 11th of this month and make it a success, said Telangana Agricultural Workers' Union District General Secretary Kondamadugu Narasimha in a statement. Telangana Agricultural Workers Association Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District 3rd Congress He said that the 3rd Congress of the district is being held on May 18 and 19 in Ramannapet Mandal Center, which played a key role in the Telangana Armed Peasant Struggle. He said that it is the center of many labor and land struggles. He said that it is the home of poets, artists and folk art forms. He said that the Agricultural Workers Association, formed in 1936, has organized many movements to distribute government lands for the landless poor and distributed lands to the poor on a large scale. He said that it has organized many movements to increase the wage rates in line with the rising prices of laborers and has stood by the laborers by increasing the wage rates. He said that it will also continuously fight for the sake of wage earners and palers. He said that it has organized many agitations, struggles and movements across the country to prevent migration and provide work to all and played a key role in bringing the National Rural Employment Act in 2005. Narasimha urged people from all walks of life to participate in large numbers in the preparatory meeting of the Invitation Committee being organized on the occasion of the 3rd Congress of the Telangana Agricultural Workers' District, which has a history of struggles, and to ensure victory.

# Famous pilgrimage sites.. Government Whip, Aleru MLA Birla Ayilaiah, who visited Srisailam Mallikarjuna and Raghavendra Swamy



“MLA Government Whip Birla Ayilaiah wished that all the people of Telangana State should be happy and contented... (Mandava Srisailam.. Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. April 7):- Telangana State Government Whip, Aleru Constituency MLA Birla Ayilaiah has been on a spiritual tour for the past two days. On this occasion, he visited several famous shrines in South India and performed special pujas. He visited Alampur Jogulamba Ammavar, which is famous as a Shakti Peeth in Jogulamba Gadwal, and performed special pujas with devotion. Mantralayam: Later, he visited the Brindavan of Sri Raghavendra Swamy in Mantralayam and received special blessings. As part of his visit to Somasila, he visited two Shiva temples located on the banks of the Krishna River at Somasila and performed abhishekams. He visited Bhraramamba Mallikarjuna Swamyvar in Srisailam Kshetra and prayed for the prosperity of the people of the state with good health and happiness. He also visited the Umamaheswara Temple, which is the northern gate of

Srisailam. After the spiritual tour, the MLA visited the power generation center located in the Srisailam Dam under tunnel. They inquired about the functioning and power generation process of the authorities. Speaking on the occasion, Beerla Ayilaiah said that he wanted all the people to participate in the development of the state and that everyone should live happily with the grace of God.

# Symbol of Kakatiya sculptural heritage – Thousand Pillar Temple



“... We are committed to the development of the temple... MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy, MP Kadiyam Kavya... (Devulapally Srinivas, Warangal Bureau, April 7 (Indian Chronicle): West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy and Warangal MP Kadiyam Kavya stated that they are committed to the development of the historic Rudreshwara Swamy Thousand Pillar Temple. On Tuesday, they visited the temple and offered special prayers to the deity. Later, temple EO Anil Kumar and chief priest Uperndra Sharma presented them with sacred offerings and ceremonial cloths of the deity. Officials explained the utilization of recently released funds of ₹14.14 crore from the Central Tourism and Archaeology Department. With these funds, works such as underground drainage systems, central lighting, garden development, restoration of the temple tank, and providing facilities for devotees will be undertaken. They also mentioned that development works will be carried out in the Nandishwara Mandapam area. On this occasion, MLA Nayini criticized the previous government for not giving adequate importance to this temple. He expressed happiness over the release of funds from the central government and stated that they would be used transparently for further development of the temple. He said that all MLAs of the erstwhile Warangal district, under the leadership of MP Kadiyam

Kavya, met the Union Minister in Delhi and requested proper importance and funds for the development of historical temples in the district. He remarked that it is ?????????? (ridiculous) for BJP leaders to claim that they themselves brought these funds, questioning why such funds were not secured during the past ten years when the BRS governed the state and the BJP was in power at the center. He alleged that for every rupee given by the state government to the central government in the form of taxes, only about 30 paise is returned. He criticized that in ten years of governance, there was no instance of leaders meeting central ministers in Delhi to request development funds. He clarified that under MP Kavya's leadership, they have collectively made efforts by repeatedly meeting ministers in Delhi to secure the funds due to the region. He said that ₹30 crore has been allocated for the beautification of the temple's front area, and some of the work has already been completed, with the remaining to be finished soon. He added that they are working with the goal of developing the temple to achieve UNESCO recognition in the future. He appealed to local homeowners to cooperate in the development of the surrounding temple area. Officials, public representatives, devotees, and others participated in the program.

## Sudden inspection at the district hospital (MGM)



“Patients must be cared for like the apple of the eye...” MLA Nayini Devulapally Srinivas, Warangal Bureau, April 7 (Indian Chronicle): On Tuesday, West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy conducted a surprise inspection at the MGM government hospital, which is a major healthcare center for the united Warangal district. He personally reviewed the medical services being provided to patients in the hospital and inspected several departments. First, he visited the General OP (Out Patient) department and spoke directly with patients who had come for treatment. He inquired about the medical services they were receiving, the problems they were facing, and the available facilities. After patiently listening to the patients’ issues, the MLA instructed officials that there should be no shortcomings in services. “Later, he held a meeting with the doctors on duty and discussed the quality of services being provided to patients in the hospital. He sought detailed information on the challenges faced by doctors, the required staff, equipment, and availability of medicines. In view of the increasing number of patients, he suggested that services need to

be further improved. In a meeting held in the superintendent’s chamber, there was an extensive discussion on recent developments in the hospital. The MLA expressed anger, especially over negligence in the medicine department, and directed that issues be identified and resolved immediately. He also suggested preparing a comprehensive plan regarding the required funds and submitting it to the government without delay. “The MLA stated that this hospital is like a wish-fulfilling tree for the poor and urged every doctor and staff member to work with dedication and provide the best services to patients. He warned that negligence in matters concerning people’s lives will not be tolerated. “He also instructed officials to continuously monitor cleanliness in the hospital, supply of medicines, availability of medical equipment, and staff attendance, and to improve the quality of services. He made it clear that immediate steps should be taken to ensure that patients do not face any difficulties. Floor leader Thota Venkateshwarlu, the hospital superintendent, doctors, staff, and other officials participated in the program.

## Karimnagar observes World Health Day with awareness initiatives Additional Collector flags off rally; emphasis laid on reducing mortality rates.

Khaja Sikander Mohiuddin Staff Reporter, Indian Chronicle Karimnagar, April 07: World Health Day was observed in the district on Tuesday with an awareness rally and a series of health initiatives aimed at promoting scientific approaches to healthcare and improving maternal and child health outcomes.

The rally was flagged off by Additional Collector Ashwini Tanaji at the District Medical and Health Office, marking the beginning of the day’s events. Officials said the programme was organised in line with this year’s theme, “Together for Health – Stand with Science.” As part of the programme, medical check-ups were conducted for staff of the Medical and Health Department. A special “Arogya Mahila Clinic” was also organised for women employees, providing targeted health screenings and consultations. Later, addressing a meeting chaired by District Medical and Health Officer Dr. Venkataramana, officials underscored the importance of prioritising maternal and child health. Dr. Venkataramana noted that World Health Day has been observed every year on April 7 since 1948, each time with a specific theme to address pressing global health concerns.

He emphasised that ensuring safe pregnancies and access to quality maternal healthcare is a fundamental right of every woman and a shared responsibility of both the government and society. “A healthy mother leads to a healthy child, and their well-being has long-term implications for the nation’s future,” he said. Highlighting key indicators, he said the maternal mortality rate stands at 97 in India and 43 in Telangana, while the infant mortality rate is 35 in India and



21 in the State. He expressed confidence that these figures could be reduced further through improved access to quality healthcare services. Among those present were Additional District Medical Officer Dr. Sudha, Dr. Umashree, Dr. Sajida, Deputy DMHO Dr. Rajagopal, Dr. Sana Javeria, DEMO Srinivas, Administrative Officer Rajagopal, Health Educator Kaika, DPM Swami, and other staff members. “[

## Awareness Rally Organized by Uppal Primary Health Centre on the Occasion of World Health Day



-- Rally Flagged Off by Medical Officer Dr. Saushilya Rani “KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 7 (Indian Chronicle): “On the occasion of World Health Day, an awareness rally on public health was organized on Tuesday under the aegis of the Uppal Primary Health Centre.

The rally was flagged off by the Medical Officer of the centre, Dr. Saushilya Rani. “Speaking on the occasion, she emphasized the need to stand united for health and support scientific knowledge. She stated that World Health Day is observed every year on April 7 under the leadership of the World Health Organization. She explained that this year’s theme highlights the importance of evidence-based decision-making and scientific collaboration in addressing health challenges. Focusing on the “One Health” approach, she noted that human, animal, and environmental health are closely interconnected. She further said that the main objective of World Health Day is to combat misinformation and build a healthier future through scientific awareness. The day also aims to raise awareness about public health issues and ensure access to quality healthcare for all. Community Health Officer Shyamsundar, pharmaceutical staff member Nagesh, medical staff of Uppal, ASHA workers, and others participated in the program.

## Health Camp for Sanitation and Transport Workers Held at Kapra Circle Office



NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR) Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, April 7 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “KAPRA: As part of the 99-day Praja Palana Progress Programme, a health camp was organized at the Kapra Circle Office for sanitation, entomology, and transport workers. The camp was arranged by Prasad Hospital, Nacharam. MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy attended the inauguration of the programme. Deputy Commissioner Srihari,



Chief Medical Officer Padma, Medical Officer Mamatha, Management Representative Ravi, Nacharam DEE Ravichand, and Sanitary Supervisor Sudarshan were present. Doctors Harshavardhan and Raman Rao from Prasad Hospital, along with paramedical staff, also participated in the camp.

## Free Medical Camp Held in Shapur Nagar on World Health Day-Puppala Bhaskar



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR) Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, April 7 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “A free medical and health camp was organized today at Sanjay Gandhi Nagar in Shapur Nagar Division of Quthbullapur Constituency on the occasion of World Health Day. The camp was conducted by Poppala Foundation with support from Malla Reddy Nursing Institutions. The initiative was led by GHMC Division BRS Party President Puppala Bhaskar. BRS Party Whip and MLA KP Vivekananda and former corporator Mantri Satyanarayana attended the programme as chief guests. Speaking at the event, the MLA said that although safeguarding public health is the responsibility of the government, the present administration has failed to fulfill this duty. He stated that due to government negligence, people are facing several health issues. In this situation, voluntary organisations like Puppala Foundation coming forward to conduct service activities is appreciable. He added that the dengue awareness programme conducted by students of Malla Reddy Nursing Institutions will help increase public awareness. He advised residents of the division to make use of the camp, undergo health check-ups and remain cautious about their health. He also criticised the government for failing to implement comprehensive



health policies and for not providing even basic facilities to the people. He stated that serving the public remains the main objective of the BRS Party. Division General Secretary Siddiq, Vice Presidents Madhumohan and Feroz, Women’s President Hemalatha Reddy, Basheeruddin, Mukunda Rao, Sajid, Satyanarayana, Ravi, Vara Prasad, Prashanth, Ravi Teja, Lakshminarayana, Badrappa, Ramana Reddy, Sanjeev Reddy, Anil, Lavanya Ashok, along with local leaders, party workers, medical staff and a large number of residents participated in the programme.

## Police catch thieves who caused a stir in Tandur

“Indian Chronicle Babar Tandur (April 7) “Police acted swiftly and caught a robbery gang that targeted lone women in broad daylight this morning in Tandur town, Vikarabad district. “In Green City area of the town, three robbers together snatched a gold chain from a woman’s neck. From there, the thieves were waiting in Adarsh Nagar near Pata Kunta for lone women to pass by. They spotted a woman heading to her duty as a bus conductor and all three tried to snatch the gold jewelry from her neck. When she screamed, the frightened thieves fled. “The victim, who is a conductor, immediately dialed 100 and also lodged a complaint at the police station. Alerted, the police quickly launched a search. After checking CCTV cameras in the surrounding areas, they found clear footage of three men roaming with bags. Police then tracked them. “The trio boarded a bus from Tandur bus stand to Hyderabad. Noticing this, the police immediately informed the bus depot manager with the thieves’ details. The depot manager discreetly passed the information to the bus driver and conductor. Tandur police then alerted Moinabad police, who waited for the bus to arrive. “As soon as the bus reached the police station, of-



ficers surrounded it. Moinabad police caught the three robbers and are interrogating them. Meanwhile, Yalal mandal police are said to be heading to Moinabad police station to question them as well. “Locals are appreciating the police for their swift, skillful action in nabbing the thieves quickly, and also thanked the Tandur bus depot manager, bus driver, and conductor for their cooperation.

## Public Sanitation Issue Identified at AS Rao Nagar: Proposal for Toilet Facility Initiated



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR) Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, April 7 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “KAPRA: As part of the Praja Palana – Pattana Pragathi programme, officials inspected a public sanitation concern in AS Rao Nagar following a request from the local Residential Welfare Association. The issue was identified in the area between HUDA Park and the Government Basti Dawakhana, where frequent open defecation has led to foul smell and serious public health and sanitation problems. Additional Commissioner (Health and Sanitation) of Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation, Raghu Prasad, visited the site and reviewed the situation. During the inspection, a government land parcel was identified as suitable for constructing a public toilet. The Welfare Association expressed willingness to take up construction and maintenance of the toilet facility using CSR funds. The official directed that a proposal be immediately sent to the head



office for necessary approvals to proceed with the construction. Kapra Deputy Commissioner Srihari, DEE (Solid Waste Management) Ravi, DE Balakrishna, Sanitary Supervisor Sudarshan, and members of the association were present during the inspection.

## Doctor Dasari Parthasarathi Receives Prestigious Service Award from State Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha

“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 7 (Indian Chronicle): “As part of the Telangana Government’s Public Governance Progress Health Week celebrations, Dr. Dasari Parthasarathi from JSPS Government Homoeopathic Medical College, Ramanthapur, Hyderabad, was honored with the State Government’s prestigious “Highest Service Award.” The award was presented by the State Minister for Medical, Health and Family Welfare, Damodar Rajanarsimha, during the World Health Day celebrations held at Ravindra Bharathi by the Telangana Government. Principal Dr. N. Lingaraju congratulated Dr. Parthasarathi, expressing happiness that the award was conferred upon the college’s Department of Medicine.



## Gang war in Nanded leaves 3 dead, victim hunted down inside ward



GNS News Agency, April 7

According to the police, the clash stemmed from an ongoing feud between two gangs vying for dominance in the city. According to the police, the clash stemmed from an ongoing feud between two gangs vying for dominance in the city. In a shocking escalation of gang rivalry in Nanded, three members from two rival groups were killed after a violent clash in the early hours of Friday, with one of the victims later murdered inside a hospital. Police have arrested six accused so far and launched a wider manhunt. According to the police, the clash stemmed from an ongoing feud between two gangs vying for dominance in the city. All the accused and deceased have criminal backgrounds, with several having prior police records and some previously exterminated from the district.

"Two FIRs have been registered against members of both gangs under charges of murder and other relevant sections of the BNS. Six accused have been arrested so far, and further investigation is underway. Forensic evidence

has been collected," said Santosh Tambe, Police Inspector at Bhagyanagar Police Station. The incident took place around 1:30 am in the E-Square area on Canal Road near a D-Mart outlet. Members of the two gangs—led by Arijit Singh Chavan and Sai Singh Deepak Singh Grehwal alias Sai Lala—came face-to-face after Chavan exited a late-night film screening.

Police said Chavan was associated with a gang previously run by Sada Deshmukh, who died a few years ago. Acting on information that Chavan was at the theatre with minimal support, members of Sai Lala's gang—including Avez Mohammad, Arbaaz Mohammad Farooq, and Sayyed Avez Sayyed Khalil—waited outside armed with knives and swords, avoiding entering the premises due to CCTV surveillance. As Chavan and his associates stepped out, they were attacked. In the ensuing clash, Chavan and Arbaaz were killed on the spot. Khalil sustained critical injuries, while one of Chavan's associates was injured and another managed to escape. Bystanders rushed the injured to the Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), where Chavan and Arbaaz were declared dead on arrival. Khalil was admitted in critical condition.

In a further escalation, police said Chavan's father and brother, upon learning that Khalil was being treated at the same hospital, allegedly entered the facility armed with knives. They located Khalil and fatally attacked him inside the hospital premises. Police teams reached both the crime scene and the hospital, recorded statements from witnesses and family members, and registered two separate FIRs against members of both gangs. Six individuals have been arrested, and efforts are ongoing to apprehend others involved in the case.

## Bengal BJP files complaint with EC over TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee's 'derogatory' remarks against Amit Shah

GNS News Agency, April 7

The West Bengal unit of the BJP filed a complaint with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Sunday, seeking urgent action against Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Kalyan Banerjee for allegedly making "derogatory, provocative, and hateful" statements against Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The BJP alleged that Banerjee's remarks constitute a gross violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) in place ahead of the West Bengal Assembly elections. Accompanying the complaint was a video clip in which the TMC leader is reportedly seen and heard making the alleged comments during a public address.

In its letter to the CEO, a copy of which is with The Indian Express, the BJP claimed that the statements were part of a "coordinated strategy" by the TMC leadership to fuel hostility, fear, polarisation and hatred. "The statement is made calculatedly to demean, provoke and incite hostility, creating tension, animosity and polarisation within the electoral environment. The subject statement is not an isolated incident, but a part of a continuing and escalating pattern of provocative and intimidatory rhetoric by TMC leadership and its functionaries," it said. "The repetitive, frequent, similar statements by TMC functionaries targeting the BJP leadership and party strongly indicate the TMC leadership's intent to tarnish the BJP's reputation," the letter added. The BJP's letter alleged that Banerjee's statements were made under the command, direction, and tacit approval of party



leadership, reflecting a systemic disregard for the MCC. The Bengal BJP has urged the Election Commission to hold Banerjee guilty of violating the MCC, direct the immediate removal and censorship of the video content from all public platforms, issue a strict restraining order against Banerjee and other TMC functionaries to prevent further inflammatory speeches, and initiate appropriate criminal proceedings under applicable laws. The escalating war of words comes as West Bengal prepares for a high-stakes election. On March 15, the Election Commission of India announced that the state will vote in two phases on April 23 and April 29. The results are scheduled to be declared on May

## How a boy who sold flowers at dawn to afford school became the voice for thousands of teachers as a top Mumbai lawyer



The Teachers' Association for Non-Aided Polytechnics (TAFNAP) recently honoured Senior Advocate Suresh Pakale with a Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by former Chief Justice of India Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud.

GNS News Agency, April 7

A boy who once aspired to become a chartered accountant, today stands as a senior advocate in the Bombay High Court, marking over four decades in law. Suresh Pakale never planned to become a lawyer. Growing up in Pedhe Parshuram, a small village in Ratnagiri's Khed taluka, he dreamed of becoming a chartered accountant. Life, as it often does, had other plans. Pakale's early years were marked by hardship and resilience. At the time, school was held in a temple, and he studied there. Later, he enrolled in a Zilla Parishad school, where irregular teaching and a missing bridge over the Vashishti River made attending classes a daily challenge. To support his family, he sold flower garlands and lotus flowers before school each morning. A turning point came when a dedicated teacher, Samant Guruji, revived the school's learning environment and reignited the students' will to learn. Pakale eventually moved to Mumbai in search of better opportunities. In 1978, he joined the National Insurance Company. While working there, he turned to law not by grand design, but by circumstance. Balancing a full-time job with studies, he completed his LLB in 1980 and LLM in 1982. He began his legal career under labour lawyer A J Deshmukh, navigating financial pressures alongside professional ones. By 1985, he had shifted to the Bombay High Court, and within two years, he was handling significant cases, mentored by eminent figures including Dr Y V Chandrachud and K K Singhvi. What followed was a four-decade career defined by fighting for the underdog and winning.

In the 1980s, Pakale took on one of the most consequential cases of his career. Between 1983 and 1989, nearly 70,000 teachers across Maharashtra had been appointed on an ad hoc basis through local selection committees, by-

passing the legally mandated selection board process. When the government formalised six regional selection boards in February 1989 and began replacing these teachers with newly selected candidates, thousands of livelihoods were at risk. Pakale began with a case involving 54 teachers, secured a stay, and soon found teachers from across the state knocking on his door. The Bombay High Court's Division Bench eventually directed the government to issue a single general order rather than address each case individually. The resulting government resolution extended relief to all affected teachers – approximately 70,000 people.

Around the same time, he represented 153 teachers, mostly from SC, ST, and backward communities, who had been appointed under a government scheme to address a teacher shortage in Pune's remote tribal and hilly areas. The scheme allowed 12th-pass candidates to teach while completing their DEd qualification within five years. Within months, all 153 were terminated. Pakale challenged the terminations before the Bombay High Court, which ruled in their favour, ordering reinstatement and allowing them time to complete their qualifications. Many of those teachers have since retired from long and stable careers. Perhaps his most dramatic case involved around 950 teacher candidates in Pune who had scored below the cutoff in a selection board examination and been denied appointments. Pakale filed petitions on their behalf in batches before Chief Justice T K Thakker and Justice Y V Chandrachud, securing orders in their favour – orders that the authorities refused to implement.

When Pakale filed a contempt petition, he received an anonymous phone call, wherein a person introduced himself as from one of the highest political offices, suggesting he was misleading poor people, as even the topmost authorities could not grant such appointments. His response was measured, "I am not giving the appointments. These are being granted under the orders of the High Court." He stood firm. The matter went to the Supreme Court, where he prevailed, and all 950 candidates finally received their appointment orders. Behind this steady professional life stands his wife, Aruna, whom he married in 1985. "She is a homemaker and a constant source of support throughout my demanding career. My daughter, Gargi, is based in the United States, where she works in a finance company, and my son, Saurabh, is also a lawyer," said Pakale. For over 40 years, Suresh Pakale built his career not on privilege but on persistence: one stay order, one petition, one teacher at a time. Recently, the Teachers' Association for Non-Aided Polytechnics (TAFNAP) honoured him with a Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by former Chief Justice of India Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud, also a close friend. For a boy who once sold flowers at dawn to afford school, it was a fitting tribute.

## EC suspends sector assistant in Bengal's Panihati over video of 'involvement in BJP campaign'



GNS News Agency, April 7

The Election Commission (EC) has suspended a sector assistant for the Panihati Assembly constituency following allegations that he helped prepare campaign materials for the BJP. The action against the official, Atanu Chakraborty, was triggered by a social media post featuring a video clip that purportedly showed him helping to prepare BJP campaign materials. The video was highlighted by TMC candidate Kunal Ghosh, who posted it online just hours before the EC's intervention. Chakraborty is an assistant teacher at Choudhurypara Prathamik Vidyalaya.

According to a notification issued by the returning officer, Chakraborty's alleged close association with a political party and his participation in campaigning constitute a

"serious violation" of the Representation of the People Act 1951. Authorities said such actions represent a gross dereliction of duty and compromise the impartiality required of election personnel. Besides being immediately relieved of his responsibilities as a sector assistant, Chakraborty has been suspended and served a show-cause notice, requiring him to explain within 24 hours why further penal action should not be initiated against him. During the suspension period, he is prohibited from leaving his headquarters without prior permission and must remain available for the ongoing inquiry.

"This action has been taken in the interest of maintaining the integrity, neutrality, and transparency of the electoral process and to ensure the conduct of free and fair elections," the notification stated. The Panihati constituency has emerged as a key battleground in the 2026 West Bengal elections, primarily due to the BJP's decision to field the mother of the victim of the RG Kar Medical College rape and murder. She has framed her campaign as a quest for justice for her daughter, vowing to challenge the ruling TMC on its record regarding institutional accountability and the handling of the 2024 protests over the incident. The TMC has nominated Tirthankar Ghosh, son of the outgoing MLA and veteran leader Nirmla Ghosh, aiming to retain its stronghold. The CPM has fielded Kalatan Dasgupta, seeking to reclaim the Left's traditional influence in this industrial belt.

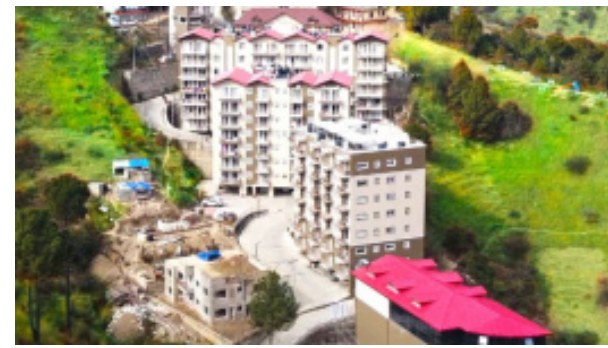
## A 'shadow developer' and Rs 47 crore: The explosive probe shaking Himachal's top bureaucracy

GNS News Agency, April 7

A 25-page investigative report by SDM Solan, Poonam Bansal, has triggered a political and administrative firestorm in Himachal Pradesh. The report alleges a massive circumvention of Section 118 of the HP Tenancy and Land Reforms Act, 1972, involving a multi-crore gated housing project named Chester Hills. The controversy has escalated into a standoff between field officers and the state's top brass, with allegations of corruption reaching the office of the Acting Chief Secretary. Registered with the HP Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) in 2019, Chester Hills is a luxury housing brand located in Solan. While the project is promoted by NG Estate (partners Sudershan Singla and Megh Raj), the legal "promoter" on record is Hans Raj Thakur, a Himachali agriculturist from Mandi. The probe focuses specifically on Chester Hills-2 and Chester Hills-4, which comprise 228 flats. The core of the dispute is whether Thakur is a genuine developer or merely a "front" for non-agriculturist real estate players. The allegations: A 'benami' arrangement?

In August 2025, local resident Rajiv Shandil and an Allottees Association filed complaints alleging Section 118 violations. Using a local agriculturist to bypass the ban on non-locals buying agricultural land. He also alleged that non-agriculturist partners (Aditya Singla and Arpit Kumar Garg) exercise actual financial and administrative control over the project. Marketing and sale proceeds flow to non-agriculturist entities despite the land being in Thakur's name, he claimed. The findings: 'A structured device to evade the law'

SDM Poonam Bansal's report, submitted on November 13, 2025, highlights several red flags discovered during field inspections and revenue audits: The shadow developer: While the title remains with Hans Raj Thakur, the report concludes that "substantive control, development, and marketing" are handled by the non-agriculturist firm Chester Hills. Disproportionate assets: Between 2015 and 2023, Thakur and his family acquired 275 bighas of prime land in Solan and Kasauli. The project value is estimated at Rs 47.09 crore, a figure the SDM noted is wildly inconsistent with Thakur's modest income tax returns (ITRs). Cancellation tactic: A Joint Development Agreement (JDA) between the parties was abruptly cancelled in January 2025, replaced by a General Power of Attorney (GPA). The SDM termed this a "colourable device" intended to mask the illegal transfer of proprietary rights.



Financial links: The probe found that Sudershan Singla (NG Estate) acted as a guarantor for an Rs 8 crore loan taken by Thakur in 2017, further proving a deep financial nexus. Under Section 118, only "Himachali agriculturists" can own agricultural land in the state. Non-agriculturists require stringent government permission for specific projects. The SDM's report argues that by using Thakur as a "benami" owner, the developers bypassed the need for these state-level clearances. The report's recommendations, which include the state taking over (vesting) the land and referring the case to the Income Tax Department and enforcement authorities, were met with immediate resistance from the top.

Acting Chief Secretary Sanjay Gupta issued a letter setting aside the SDM's recommendations. He termed the probe "violative of the law" and argued that acting on it would "hurt the interests of (local) agriculturists" who had rightfully taken bank loans. On March 24, 2026, Advocate Vinay Sharma filed a police complaint against Gupta, alleging he was shielding the developers and preventing the Solan Deputy Commissioner from filing an FIR. Gupta has denied the allegations, telling The Indian Express that he was not the RERA Chairman at the time the permissions were granted. He claims he is the victim of a "bureaucratic lobby" trying to derail his service extension by dragging his name into the scandal. The matter has now turned into a major political tool. BJP and CPI(M) MLAs have demanded a Special Investigation Team (SIT) and the intervention of Chief Minister Sukhu. Meanwhile, the original complainants have reportedly withdrawn their pleas, adding another layer of mystery to the ongoing investigation into one of Himachal's largest land-use scandals.

## Maharashtra's new app can spot suspicious boats in seconds



fishing vessels and 4,000 passenger boats operating along Maharashtra's 877-km coastline, authorities have long faced challenges in distinguishing between Indian and potentially suspicious vessels.

Under the new system, mobile phones equipped with the MDA application will be distributed to fishermen and passenger boat operators for onboard use. During its pilot phase, the app was tested on 100 fishing boats over a month within Indian waters and was found to be highly effective in tracking movement patterns. Vessel activity will be monitored through a central control room at the Mahim Sagari Police Station, with additional control rooms planned across seven coastal districts to enable real-time monitoring and faster emergency response.

Inspector General of Police Rajiv Jain, heading Maharashtra's coastal security, said, "The system would significantly enhance surveillance and response capabilities". "The project has proven successful during trials, and work is underway to expand server capacity," Jain said, adding that discussions are ongoing with the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to strengthen connectivity between vessels and control rooms. More coastal towers are being installed to improve network coverage at sea. Once fully implemented, all registered Indian vessels will transmit identifiable "green" signals to control rooms, while any unidentified or suspicious vessel entering Indian waters will trigger a "red" alert for interception. Speed boats from the coastal police, Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy will be strategically deployed for patrol and rapid response.

Authorities say the MDA-Maharashtra app could become a model for coastal security nationwide. Maharashtra's coastline, stretching from Palghar to Sindhudurg, remains strategically significant, housing key maritime hubs such as Mumbai Port and Jawaharal Nehru Port Trust, along with several minor ports, offshore installations and petrochemical facilities. Coastal security has been a top priority since the 2008 Mumbai attacks, when terrorist Ajmal Kasab and his accomplices entered the city by sea using a small boat. Officials said, "The new system could play a crucial role in preventing similar threats in the future". The initiative also focuses on community participation, with fishermen being trained to identify suspicious activity and assist in safeguarding the coastline.

## Police, Navy and IIT Madras deploy Marine Domain Awareness system to track 32,000 vessels and plug surveillance gaps along the 877-km coastline

GNS News Agency, April 7

In a push to strengthen coastal security, the Maharashtra Police, in collaboration with the Indian Navy and the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, have rolled out a mobile application, Marine Domain Awareness (MDA) to track suspicious vessels along the state's coastline from Palghar to Sindhudurg.

The initiative aims to plug critical gaps in the existing surveillance system, which relies heavily on the Automatic Identification System (AIS). While AIS effectively tracks large commercial ships, it struggles to monitor smaller vessels such as fishing and passenger boats that often operate without identification systems. The MDA application, developed by a professor at IIT Madras, seeks to address this gap. With nearly 32,000 boats including around 28,000

# Donald Trump set to feature on gold coin to celebrate 250 years of U.S. Independence



GNS News Agency, April 7

we approach our 250th birthday, we are thrilled to prepare coins that represent the enduring spirit of our country and democracy, and there is no profile more emblematic for the front of such coins than that of our serving President, Donald J. Trump," U.S. Treasurer Brandon Beach said in a statement to FOX Business.U.S. Federal law states that no living president can appear on US currency.However, Mr. Beach said the proposed commemorative coin would be separate from circulating currency and the Treasury Secretary has sole discretion over the final design selection and authorizing its minting.Democrats have termed the Mr. Trump-themed gold coin embarrassing and against the nation's values."Monarchs and dictators put their faces on coins, not leaders of a democracy," Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon) was quoted by The Washington Post.The coin is expected to join a slate of special-edition currencies and medals the treasury is releasing to celebrate the 250th anniversary of U.S. Independence.Critics see the commemorative coin as the latest effort by Mr. Trump to leave his mark on the Washington landscape. Earlier, the Kennedy Centre was renamed as the Trump-Kennedy Centre for Performing Arts and the US Institute of Peace building had the name of the President added to it.Mr. Trump has also sought to remake White House grounds, proposing a visitor screening center and demolishing the White House's East Wing to build his long-desired ballroom.

U.S. President Donald Trump is all set to feature on a gold coin to commemorate the nation's 250th anniversary, amid questions over the legality of the move.The 24-karat gold coin, portraying Mr. Trump leaning on the Resolute desk with clenched fists, will be only the second time a living President has featured on a coin.Earlier, Calvin Coolidge, the 30th U.S. President had featured on a commemorative coin alongside George Washington that were minted in 1926 to celebrate 150 years of the U.S. Independence.The U.S. Commission on Fine Arts, at its meeting on March 19, approved the design of the commemorative gold coin, which will be minted once the final dimensions are decided."As

# ICE officers soon will help with airport security unless Democrats end shutdown, Trump says

GNS News Agency, April 7

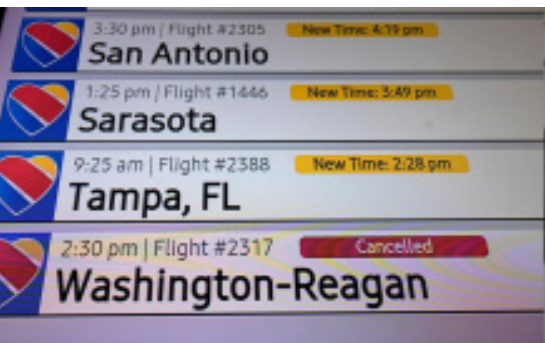


the Transportation Security Administration, which screens passengers and luggage for hazardous items.The vast majority of TSA employees are considered essential and continue to work during the funding lapse, but they are doing so without pay. Call-out rates have started to increase at some airports, and DHS said at least 376 have quit since the partial shutdown began Feb. 14.On Saturday, the Senate rejected a motion by Democrats to take up legislation to reopen TSA and pay workers who are now going without paychecks. Republicans argue that they need to fund all parts of the DHS, not just certain ones. A bill to fund the Cabinet department failed to advance in the Senate on Friday.There were signs of progress, though, with the re-starting in recent days of stalled talks between Democrats and the White House. On Saturday, Republican and Democratic senators were set to meet for a third consecutive day with White House officials behind closed doors as Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York spoke of "productive conversations."Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., urged the bipartisan group to act quickly. He has said repeatedly that Democrats and the White House need to find compromise as lines at airports have grown."If that group that's meeting can't come up with a solution really quickly, things are going to get worse and worse," Mr. Thune said Saturday.

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Saturday he will order federal immigration officers to take a role in airport security starting Monday unless Democrats agree on a bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security.In a series of social media posts, Mr. Trump said he was making plans to put officers from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in airports if the congressional standoff continues. After the Senate failed to find a resolution at a rare weekend session, Trump appeared resolute in his plan: "ICE is ready to go on Monday," he said.He announced a partial shutdown contributes to long lines to pass through screening at some of the nation's largest airports.The Republican president said ICE agents would bring the administration's immigration crackdown into the nation's airports, promising to arrest "all Illegal Immigrants." "I look forward to moving ICE in on Monday, and have already told them to, 'GET READY.' NO MORE WAITING, NO MORE GAMES!" Mr. Trump wrote while spending the weekend in Florida.

The move appears to be a pointed effort to expand the type of immigration enforcement that has become a sticking point in Congress. Democrats pledged to oppose funding for DHS unless changes were made in the wake of a crackdown in Minnesota that led to the fatal shootings of two protesters. Democrats are asking for better identification for federal law enforcement officers, a new code of conduct for those agencies and more use of judicial warrants, among other measures.The Minnesota operation was tied in part to allegations of fraud involving Somali residents. On Saturday (March 21, 2026), Trump said ICE officers sent to airports would focus on arresting immigrants from Somalia who are in the United States illegally. Repeating his criticism on Somalis, he said they "totally destroyed" Minnesota."If the Democrats do not allow for Just and Proper Security at our Airports, and elsewhere throughout our Country, ICE will do the job far better than ever done before," Trump said.Trump's posts did not offer detail on how ICE would take a role in airport security and what it meant for

# U.S. says airport delays will worsen as shutdown continues



GNS News Agency, April 7

if staffing issues worsened.The shutdown entered its 35th day on Friday and TSA officers are not getting paid. They are set to ?miss a second full paycheck ?on March 27, Duffy noted."This situation is placing increasing strain on the frontline workforce responsible for protecting millions of travellers," said the U.S. Travel Association, airlines, hotel chains and ?other companies in a joint letter.TSA absences fell ?slightly on Thursday to 9.8% nationwide from 10.2% Wednesday but were higher at some major airports, including ?29% at New York's JFK, 27% at New Orleans, 23% at Baltimore-Washington, 32% at Atlanta and over 30% at both Houston ?airports, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said he is ?worried disruptions at major airports will increase as a partial government ?shutdown continues with no end in sight.Airlines and travel groups fear absences among the 50,000 Transportation Security ?Administration airport security officers could increase again this weekend. Long lines were seen at major airports on Friday, including in Atlanta and Houston, ?with spring break travel in full swing."If a deal isn't cut, you're going to see what's ?happening today look like child's play," Mr. Duffy told CNN. ?He ?warned earlier this week that small airports could shut ?down soon

Last weekend, absences jumped to 10% after previously averaging around 6% during the shutdown, causing long lines at airports in Houston and New Orleans.Senators trying to reach a dealSenate Republicans and Democrats on Friday were in talks to try to reach a deal to fund the ?TSA, Senator Majority Leader John Thune said. DHS said 366 TSA officers have ?left their jobs during the shutdown. Last fall, a 43-day government shutdown led to widespread flight disruptions ?and the FAA ordered a 10% flight cut at major airports. Thistime, DHS funding lapsed on February 13 after Congress failed to reach a deal on immigration enforcement reforms demanded by Democrats.

# Britain sees no evidence that Iran is targeting Europe with missiles

GNS News Agency, April 7O (2026), the ?Israel Defence Forces posted on social media ?that Iran has missiles "that ?can reach London, Paris or Berlin". "There is no assessment to substantiate what's being said," British Housing ?Secretary Reed ?told the BBC. "I'm not aware of any assessment at all that they are even trying to target ?Europe, let alone that they ?could if they tried."In a separate interview with Sky News, ?Mr. Reed said that U.S. President Trump spoke for himself when he threatened ?to "obliterate" Iran's power plants if Tehran did not fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz within 48 hours.Asks to define Britain's position on Mr. Trump's deadline, Mr. Reed said: "The U.S. ?president is perfectly capable of speaking ?for himself and defending what it is that he's saying.""We're not ?going to be dragged into the ?war, but we will protect our own interests in the ?region. We will work with our allies to de-escalate the situation."Iran missiles targeting Diego Garcia base fell short, intercepted: ReedMr. Reed on Sunday (March 22, 2026) said one missile launched by Iran targeting a joint U.K.-U.S. military base in the Indian Ocean "fell short" while

another missile was "intercepted". "Our assessment is that the Iranians certainly targeted Diego Garcia," a military base some 4,000 km (2,500 miles) away from Iran, Mr. Reed told the BBC. "As we understand it, one missile fell short, failed, the other was intercepted and prevented," said the housing minister, who was representing the government on the Sunday morning shows."But I don't think it's a surprise this has happened, Iran has been recklessly firing missiles around the region," he added.Diego Garcia, part of the Chagos Islands archipelago, is one of two bases which the U.K. has allowed the United States to use for what the British government insists are "defensive operations" in its war against Iran.The Wall Street Journal first reported on Friday (March 20, 2026) that Iran had aimed two ballistic missiles at the base, which is a key hub for Washington's Asia operations, including the U.S. bombing campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq.While neither hit their target, the launch suggests that Tehran has missiles with longer ranges than previously thought.American forces have stationed bombers and other equipment at Diego Garcia.

# Safety of Indians living in UAE is a 'priority': Envoy



GNS News Agency, April 7

The UAE has assured India that the safety of Indians living in the Gulf country is its "priority", stressing that they are protected and treated like family, especially amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia which has seen the emirate facing attacks from Iran.UAE Ambassador to India Abdullnasser Alshaali also hailed India's move to co-sponsor a UN resolution that condemned Iran's attacks against Gulf countries, saying it was a statement of principle from a country that the UAE considers a strategic partner and friend, at a moment when it mattered most.

"The safety of Indian nationals in the UAE is a priority. They are protected and are treated as family, including the 200 nationalities living in the country in peace and harmony," Mr. Alshaali told PTI Videos.He said that UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited five injured civilians in the hospital: two Emiratis, one Indian, one Sudanese and one Iranian. He said: "They are all our responsibility.""Four million Indians live in the UAE; they are not a statistic. They are the son from Kerala sending money home each month so his mother can pay her medical bills, the engineer from Hyderabad building infrastructure that will stand for a century, the teacher from Tamil Nadu shaping the futures of Emirati children," he said.In 2024, the UAE was the second-largest source of remittances to India, totalling \$21.6 billion. "Those four million Indians represent families in every state of India whose livelihoods depend on a stable and secure UAE. Their safety is a personal responsibility that this country's leadership carries every day," he said. "What I would say to Indian families is this: the UAE's commitment to protecting the people who have built their lives here is absolute."On Iranian attacks, Mr. Alshaali said the UAE's integrated air defence systems have intercepted a vast majority of incoming threats and the country "remains safe, secure, and well-protected".

He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the UAE President before any resolution was drafted, before any multilateral statement and before any formal diplomatic process had begun."That call was received as an act of brotherhood. India then co-sponsored UN Security Council Resolution 2817 -- a statement of principle from a country

that the UAE considers a strategic partner and friend, at a moment it mattered most. The UAE will remember who stood with us first," he said.The UN Security Council Resolution 2817, co-sponsored by India, sent a "clear and unified message that the international community will not tolerate attacks on our sovereignty or the deliberate targeting of civilians and critical infrastructure", he said.When asked about the damage inflicted by Iran, Alshaali said Tehran launched a "sustained, unprovoked, and aggressive assault" against the Gulf countries."As of March 20, the UAE alone has faced 338 ballistic missiles, 15 cruise missiles, and more than 1,740 drones, more than all other targeted countries combined," he said, adding that Iranian munitions have struck residential neighbourhoods, commercial districts and civilian infrastructure.

Giving details of the casualties, he said six persons have been killed and 158 injured."These are not military casualties — these are civilians. The UAE condemns Iran's egregious aggression in the strongest possible terms," he said.Mr. Alshaali said the UAE has not stopped functioning for a single day. "Schools remain open, hospitals are operating, and supply chains are intact. More than 10 million citizens, residents, and visitors have continued their daily lives despite Iran's actions," he said.The Envoy said the UAE has absorbed more attacks than every other targeted country combined.He recalled that the GCC states gave Iran assurances that their bases and airspace would not be used to launch attacks against it."Those assurances were offered in good faith. They were not reciprocated. Iran's aggression has been directed not at the states that declared war on it, but at its neighbours — the very countries that worked hardest to prevent this escalation," he said.He categorically rejected any attempt to rationalise the attacks or provide an excuse for them. "An unprovoked attack on a neighbour that exhausted every diplomatic avenue to prevent escalation requires condemnation, not justification," he said.The diplomat said the UAE has responded with "strategic clarity and restraint", defending its territory with professionalism. However, the "restraint remains a choice", he added."The UAE retains its full and legitimate right under Article 51 of the UN Charter to deter aggression. We remain resilient in the face of any threat and are fully capable of safeguarding our sovereignty, stability, and security. Any aggression will not go unanswered, and the UAE stands fully prepared to address such threats," he asserted.When asked if there were any diplomatic solutions to the situation, he said that no one can responsibly put a date on when this will end."This war was avoidable. The UAE and GCC states engaged extensively, both publicly and privately, to prevent exactly this outcome. The UAE has consistently held that military solutions do not resolve the underlying issues in this region. The path forward requires an immediate and unconditional cessation of attacks," he added.

# Netanyahu visits site of Iranian missile attack, claims U.S.-Israel fighting for entire world

GNS News Agency, April 7

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the recent missile attacks on Diego Garcia shows that Iran has the capacity to reach deep into Europe and poses danger to the entire world.Mr. Netanyahu was visiting the southern Israeli city of Arad which faced Iranian missile strikes on Saturday (March 21, 2026) evening when he also said his country and the U.S. are fighting together on behalf of everyone.



"If you want proof that Iran endangers the entire world, the last 48 hours have given it. In the last 48 hours, Iran targeted a civilian area. They're using that as a mass murder weapon."Lucky, no one was killed, but that's due to luck, not their intention. Their intention is to murder civilians," Mr. Netanyahu said.Pointing out that Iran fired an intercontinental ballistic missile on Diego Garcia, Mr. Netanyahu said, "That's 4,000 kilometres. I've been warning all the time. They now have the capacity to reach deep into Europe. They already have fired on European countries -- Cyprus. They are putting everyone in their sights." For the past two decades, Israel has been referring to the Iranian ballistic missile programme, arguing that such weapons with nuclear capabilities would pose a grave threat not only to itself but also to Europe.

Iran fired missiles at the UK-U.S. air base on the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean on Saturday (March 21, 2026).The Israeli Prime Minister also drew attention to the Iran's attack on Jerusalem right next to the holy sites of the three monotheistic faiths, the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Al Aqsa Mosque and said, "By dint of a miracle, again, no one was hurt."The three sites were nevertheless the targets," he said.A fragment from a ballistic missile fired by Iran fell quite close to the Al Aqsa mosque and the Western Wall on Friday (March 20, 2026).It was a second such attack during the recent escalation when the old city of Jerusalem, home to the three holy sites of the three faiths, was impacted.

In an earlier attack, debris from the intercepted missile fell quite close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, leaving marks of destruction on some nearby buildings.Mr.

Netanyahu also said Iran is stopping the maritime international route, energy route and "trying to blackmail the entire world." "What more proof do you need that this regime that threatens the entire world has to be stopped? Israel and the United States are working together for the entire world," he claimed.Calling upon the international community to come together in the fight against Iran, the Israeli leader said he is happy to see some of them beginning to move in that direction, but claimed that more is needed."[U.S.] President Trump's call to have the international community confront this terrorist, fanatic regime of zealots, that is a call not only for the security of America and the security of Israel, it's for the security of the entire world. And it's time for them to act," he asserted.Responding to questions from reporters, Mr. Netanyahu said that Israel is responding to these attacks "with great force" but not targeting Iranian civilians."We've defined two clear goals. One is to completely break their nuclear programme, their missile programme and their capacity to produce the components for both of these programmes. We're well on our way in achieving it," the Israeli premier claimed."We've also set a goal of creating conditions for the Iranian people to overthrow this tyranny that has tormented them and made life miserable, and is making life miserable for the entire world. And I hope we achieve that too," he reiterated.The missile strike in Arad Saturday (March 21, 2026) evening left 115 people injured with nine of them in serious condition, rescue services said.

# Saudi Arabia reports three ballistic missiles targeted Riyadh area

GNS News Agency, April 7

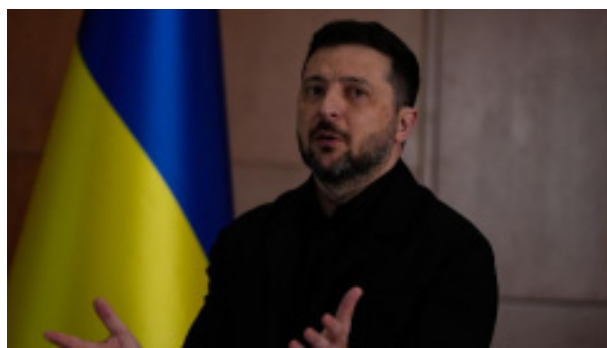
Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Defence said on Sunday (March 22, 2026) three ballistic missiles were detected around the capital, as the kingdom and its Gulf neighbours face Iranian strikes in retaliation for U.S.-Israeli attacks.

"One missile was intercepted, while the other two fell in an uninhabited area," a spokesperson for the Ministry posted on social media.Early Sunday (March 22, 2027) morning, the Saudi Civil Defence issued a warning, before cancelling it seven minutes later after determining the danger had passed.According to the Defence Ministry, five drones were also intercepted since midnight. Iran has kept up retaliatory attacks on Saudi Arabia and nearby nations in response to U.S.-Israeli strikes that sparked the regional war late last month.The attacks on the oil-rich nations, some of which have targeted energy facilities, have exacerbated concerns of a global energy supply shock.



"One missile was intercepted, while the other two fell in an uninhabited area," a spokesperson for the Ministry posted on social media

## A long war in West Asia could take away support from Ukraine, says Zelenskyy



GNS News Agency, April 7

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed concern that a prolonged U.S.-Israeli war on Iran could further erode America's support for Ukraine as Washington's global priorities shift and Kyiv braces for reduced deliveries of critically needed Patriot air defence missiles. Ukraine desperately needs more U.S.-made Patriot air defence systems to help it counter Russia's daily barrages, Mr. Zelenskyy said, speaking to The Associated Press in an exclusive interview on late Saturday (April 4, 2026) in Istanbul. Russia's relentless pounding of urban areas behind the front line following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than four years ago has killed thousands of civilians. It has also targeted Ukraine's energy supply to disrupt industrial production of Ukraine's newly developed drones and missiles, while also denying civilians heat and running water in winter.

"We have to recognize that we are not the priority for today," Mr. Zelenskyy said. "That's why I am afraid a long (Iran) war will give us less support." No sign of a breakthrough in Russia-Ukraine talks. The latest U.S.-brokered talks between envoys from Moscow and Kyiv ended in February with no sign of a breakthrough. Mr. Zelenskyy, who has accused Russia of "trying to drag out negotiations" while it presses on with its invasion, said Ukraine remains in contact with U.S. negotiators about a potential deal to end the war and has continued to press for stronger security guarantees. But, he said, even those discussions reflect a broader loss of focus from Ukraine. His most immediate concern, Mr. Zelenskyy said, are the Patriots — essential for intercepting Russian ballistic missiles — as Ukraine still lacks an effective alternative. These U.S. systems were never delivered in sufficient quantities to begin with, Mr. Zelenskyy said, and if the Iran war doesn't end soon, "the package — which is not very big for us — I think will be smaller and smaller day by day."

Mr. Zelenskyy had been counting on European partners to help make the Patriot purchases despite tight supply and limited U.S. production capacity. But the Iran war, now in its sixth week, has sent shock waves through the global economy and pulled in much of the wider West Asia region, further straining these already limited resources, diverting stockpiles and leaving Ukrainian cities more exposed to ballistic strikes. For Kyiv, a key objective is to

weaken Moscow's economy and make the war prohibitively costly. Surging oil prices driven by Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz are undermining that strategy by boosting the Kremlin's oil revenues and strengthening Moscow's capacity to sustain its war effort. Zelenskyy on war in West Asia. In his interview with the AP, Mr. Zelenskyy said Russia draws economic benefits from the war, citing the limited easing of American sanctions on Russian oil. "Russia gets additional money because of this, so yes, they have benefits," he said.

To keep Ukraine on the international agenda, Mr. Zelenskyy has offered to share Ukraine's hard-earned battlefield expertise with the United States and allies to develop effective countermeasures against Iranian attacks. Ukraine has met Russia's evolving use of Iranian-made Shahed drones with growing sophistication, technological ingenuity and low cost. Moscow significantly modified the original Shahed-136, rebranded as the Geran-2, enhancing its ability to evade air defenses and be mass produced. Ukraine responded with quick innovation of its own, including low-cost interceptor drones designed to track and destroy incoming drones. Mr. Zelenskyy said Ukraine is ready to share with Gulf Arab countries targeted by Iran its experience and technology, including interceptor drones and sea drones, which Ukraine produces — more than are used up — with funding from Americans and its European partners.

In return, these countries could help Ukraine "with anti-ballistic missiles," Mr. Zelenskyy said. In late March, as the Iran war escalated, Mr. Zelenskyy visited Gulf Arab states to promote Ukraine's singular experience in countering Iranian-made Shahed drones, leading to new defense cooperation agreements. Mr. Zelenskyy has also positioned Ukraine as a potential partner in safeguarding global trade routes, offering assistance in reopening the Strait of Hormuz by sharing Ukraine's experiences securing maritime corridors in the Black Sea. Mr. Zelenskyy was in Istanbul for talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a day after the Turkish leader spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Mr. Zelenskyy said they discussed peace talks and a possible meeting of leaders in Istanbul. He also said there could be new defense deals signed between the two countries soon. Each year as the weather improves, Russia moves its grinding war of attrition up a notch. However, it has been unable to capture Ukrainian cities and has made only incremental gains across rural areas. Russia occupies about 20% of Ukraine, including the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia seized in 2014.

On the roughly 1,250-kilometer (750-mile) front line stretching across eastern and southern parts of Ukraine, short-handed Ukrainian defenders are getting ready for a new offensive by Russia's larger army. The commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces, Gen. Oleksandr Syrskiy, said Russian troops have in recent days made simultaneous attempts to break through defense lines in several strategic areas. One thing Mr. Zelenskyy says he has insisted on and will continue to do so — a territorial compromise and giving up land will not be on Ukraine's agenda.

## How did the 'Amaravati Bill' come into place?



On April 2, Parliament passed the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, to recognise Amaravati as the sole and permanent capital of Andhra Pradesh. There was broad political consensus regarding the passing of the Bill, with even the principal Opposition party, the Congress, extending support to it. Only the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), which had earlier proposed a three-capital plan for the State, opposed it.

What is the background of this Bill?

The undivided State of Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated in 2014 with the passing of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014. This facilitated the creation of the State of Telangana and residual Andhra Pradesh. The Act specified that Hyderabad could be used as the capital by both the States for a period not exceeding 10 years, after which Andhra Pradesh had to establish its own capital. After the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) came to power in Andhra Pradesh in 2014, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu declared that Amaravati would be the new capital of the State and moved his administration out of Hyderabad. However, the project fell into a limbo after the YSRCP came to power in 2019 and proposed three capitals instead: Visakhapatnam as the executive capital, Amaravati as the legislative capital, and Kurnool as the judicial capital. In March 2022, a three-judge Bench of the Andhra Pradesh High Court ruled that the capital could not be shifted out of Amaravati, primarily on the ground that the State lacked the legislative competence required to reverse a policy decision taken in 2014-15. The YSRCP government challenged the High Court judgment in the Supreme Court by filing a Special Leave Petition (SLP). The SLP was pending when the NDA returned to power in the State. The Naidu government filed an affidavit in late 2024 in the apex court, affirming its commitment to develop Amaravati as the capi-

tal. The SLP, filed by the YSRCP government, is in the process of being withdrawn, in alignment with the present government's vision of building a greenfield capital.

What does the Bill say?

On March 28, 2026, the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly adopted a resolution requesting the Union government to grant statutory recognition to Amaravati as the State's sole capital. The resolution sought an amendment to Section 5 of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, to explicitly name Amaravati as the capital and end the ambiguity caused by previous three-capital proposals. Following the request, the Union government introduced the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026. As mandated by Section 5 of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, Hyderabad served as the joint capital for Telangana and Andhra Pradesh for a decade starting June 2, 2014. This arrangement concluded on June 2, 2024, after which Hyderabad became the exclusive capital of Telangana, leaving Andhra Pradesh to establish a new capital. The new Bill seeks to declare and notify Amaravati as the sole capital city of Andhra Pradesh with effect from June 2, 2024, by inserting the words "at Amaravati" to Section 5(2) of the 2014 Act and adding the phrase "and Amaravati includes the capital city areas notified under the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority Act, 2014" to the explanation to Section 5.

Why amend the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014?

Amending the Act is essential because the genesis of the capital of the successor State of Andhra Pradesh lies in this Central legislation. Amaravati needed to be explicitly recognised as the capital with statutory backing. The State government believed that the only way to prevent a future dispensation from shifting or splitting the capital was to amend the Act.

Why has the YSRCP opposed the Bill?

YSRCP MPs said they were not opposed to the Bill declaring Amaravati as the capital, but were unhappy with its "present form," as it allegedly ignores unfulfilled promises, especially with regard to the Land Pooling Scheme. This involves the voluntary contribution of land by farmers in exchange for smaller, developed, and high-value plots, making them partners in the development process. The YSRCP has argued that the interests of farmers who had parted with land for the capital project remain unaddressed. Party member P.V. Midhun Reddy said a clear timeline must be provided for compensating farmers and incorporated into the Bill.

## Why does Trump want to pull out of NATO?

Last week, in an interview to the British newspaper, U.S. President Donald Trump said withdrawing U.S. membership from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is now "beyond reconsideration". Through this, he indicated that one of America's oldest alliances since World War 2 could be on the brink of a break-up. The tough words, and the U.S. President's description of NATO as a "paper tiger", reflect an antagonism that goes back more than a decade that has been heightened during the ongoing war with Iran. Even so, the U.S. may not find it easy to exit the 32-nation, 76-year old alliance.

Why is Mr. Trump angry with NATO?

The immediate trigger for Mr. Trump's comments to The Telegraph was that most NATO allies refused U.S. requests for military and airspace support in connection with the war against Iran, where the U.S. has faced significant setbacks in recent weeks. While Spain and Italy have directly criticised the U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran, France has denied U.S. military jets overflight permission to fly to Israel. Even the U.S.'s closest allies — the U.K., Germany, and Canada — have refused to take part in operations. U.S. officials feel that this stand violates Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which states that "an armed attack against one NATO member shall be considered an attack against them all". Two days before Mr. Trump's interview appeared, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio had also told an American television channel that NATO's founding principles and membership would have to be "re-examined". "If NATO is just about us [the U.S.] defending Europe if they're attacked, but then denying us basing rights when we need them, then that's not a very good arrangement," Mr. Rubio said.

The seeds of U.S. discontent with NATO had been planted by Mr. Trump ever since his first term as President, when he announced that NATO was "obsolete". He criticised European allies for not pulling their weight in military expenditure while depending on the U.S. for their defence. In Mr. Trump's second term, the rift grew over his rough treatment of Ukraine. More recently, he was angered that NATO members criticised the U.S.'s regime change operations in Venezuela and that they fiercely opposed his plans to annex Greenland. With the U.S.-Israel war with Iran entering its sixth week, and no exit strategy in sight, European allies have become more determined in not joining the operations.

What is the purpose of NATO?

NATO (or OTAN, according to the French abbreviation) was formed in 1949, with the U.S., Canada and 10 West European countries which felt threatened by the Soviet Union, particularly after the installation of pro-Soviet Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and China. The North Atlantic Treaty, signed in Washington DC on April 4, 1949, created the inter-governmental military grouping mandated with "collective security". Over time, NATO gathered more members, including Greece and Turkey in the 1950s and Spain in 1982. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, more than a dozen East European countries joined, triggering a backlash from Russia. After Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, which was not a member, Finland and Sweden joined NATO, taking the total membership up to 32.

Ironically, although NATO was set up to counter the Soviet threat, NATO forces did not carry out a single military operation during the Cold War; it was only after conflicts in the Baltic states in the 1990s that NATO forces began joint operational missions, such as in Iraq (1990 and 2003), Bosnia (1992), Kosovo (1999), and Afghanistan (2001). NATO does not have a separate independent force, but when required, combines resources and personnel of the 32 members that operate under a unified command structure called the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), based in Belgium. It is led by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, a U.S. 4-star General or Admiral who heads the U.S. European Command. Although Ukraine has now backed away from plans to join NATO, Ukrainian forces have worked closely with NATO after Russia launched its 'Special Military Operations' in February 2022. They have received major aid packages, including a \$40 billion pledge at the NATO Summit in 2024, train-



The seeds of U.S. discontent with NATO had been planted by Mr. Trump ever since his first term as President, when he announced that NATO was "obsolete"

ing, and security assistance. As a result, Mr. Trump has complained that when it came to his demands that NATO members support U.S. operations in Iran, send their navies to help open up the Strait of Hormuz, or facilitate refuelling and overflight missions, their response should have been "automatic". "We've been there automatically, including Ukraine," he said. "Ukraine wasn't our problem. It was a test, and we were there for them, and we would always have been there for them. They weren't there for us," he told The Telegraph.

How much does the U.S. fund NATO operations?

Throughout all these operations, the U.S. has provided much of NATO's funding, including 62% of the defence spending and about 15% of the civil budget of the alliance. It also provides NATO countries with a "nuclear umbrella" and maintains U.S. military bases that enhance deterrence in the region. Under increasing security concerns and U.S. pressure, all NATO members agreed at the 2025 Hague Summit to raise defence spending to 5% of their GDP by 2035, but Mr. Trump has continued to chide allies to share more of the burden.

How hard would it be for the U.S. to pull out of NATO?

A U.S. exit from NATO or the Alliance Treaty seems unimaginable and is many times more difficult than its exit from more than 60 different multilateral organisations and treaties, including the World Health Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in January 2026, and much more legally complex than the U.K.'s exit from the European Union (Brexit) in January 2020. Article 13 of the North Atlantic Treaty provides for the withdrawal of any member, but says the member must submit a one-year "notice of denunciation... to the Government of the United States of America, which will inform the Governments of the other Parties." As the depository authority, the U.S. government would therefore have to hand itself the notice, and then inform other countries, which would make for an awkward process. In addition, and as a measure against Mr. Trump's own statements in his first tenure, the Biden administration pushed a law through the U.S. Congress in 2023 that prohibits the U.S. President from trying to "suspend, terminate, denounce, or withdraw the United States from the North Atlantic Treaty — without the advice and consent of the Senate or an act of Congress". Alternative paths could see the U.S. withdraw personnel from SHAPE or skip NATO meetings — in the manner India has withdrawn from attending SAARC summits — which would make the organisation virtually defunct.

In terms of its impact on the world order, especially in the midst of a war, the U.S.' withdrawal from NATO would lead to the remaking of all global security structures, severely weaken the hold of the Western coalition, and strengthen other global powers such as Russia and China. It is therefore more likely that both the U.S. and its NATO allies will work to avoid such a drastic step, beginning with the visit of NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte to Washington on April 8. As per the North Atlantic Treaty, the U.S. government would have to hand itself the exit notice, and then inform other countries, which would make for an awkward process.

## Ukraine says ten killed in 'massive' Russian missile and drone attacks

GNS News Agency, April 7

Russian strikes killed at least 10 people in Ukraine on Friday (April 3, 2026), officials said, as Moscow launched the latest in an increasing number of daytime barrages. Moscow has been firing aerial broadsides at Ukraine throughout its more than four-year invasion, mostly at night, but in recent weeks it has stepped up daytime attacks. The Russian military used more than 500 drones and dozens of missiles in its salvo on Friday, according to the Ukrainian air force.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy accused Russia of intensifying attacks ahead of Catholic Easter on Sunday, "turning what should have been silence in the skies into an Easter escalation". Images from Ukrainian emergency services showed damaged residential buildings, with a block of flats ripped open and rubble strewn on a street. The attack killed one person and left eight wounded in the capital region of Kyiv, said regional governor Mykola Kalashnyk.

"Unfortunately, animals were also affected by the attack — approximately 20 animals died due to damage to a veterinary clinic," Mr. Kalashnyk added. Some residents of the capital sheltered in the metro or in basements, AFP reporters saw, but many people sat in cafes unfazed by the attacks and despite blaring air raid sirens. In the Kyiv region, "a drone struck a residential building in Obukhiv, and another attack occurred between a kindergarten and a school in Vyshneve, damaging homes," said Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko.

Three people were killed in Ukraine's northern Stryk region, according to authorities. One person was killed in the northwestern Zhytomyr region, while attacks on the front-line Kharkiv, Donetsk and Kherson regions killed five others, local officials said. Easter truce? The barrage prompted emergency power outages in several regions, operator Ukrrenerg said. "This is how Moscow responds to Ukraine's Easter ceasefire proposals — with brutal attacks," said Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga. Mr. Zelenskyy said earlier this week he was ready for a truce over the Easter holidays, but the Kremlin said it had not received "clearly formulated" proposals. Ukraine has accused Russia of prolonging the war to capture more territory, and says



Moscow is not interested in peace. Russia denies targeting civilians. Talks between the two warring parties, mediated by the United States, have been stalled by the war in the Middle East.

In comments to reporters, including from AFP, published on Friday, Mr. Zelenskyy said he had invited an American delegation to Ukraine to relaunch negotiations with Moscow. "The delegation will do everything possible in the current conditions — during the war with Iran — to come to Kyiv," Mr. Zelenskyy said. "The American group can come to us and, after us, go to Moscow. If it does not work out with three parties, let's do it this way," he added. U.S. President Donald Trump's envoys have been engaged in three-way shuttle diplomacy with Ukrainian and Russian teams in a bid to end the war. But these have stalled as Washington has been occupied with the aerial campaign on Iran it launched in late February. Amid the West Asia war, Ukraine has sought to leverage its expertise in fighting off Russian drones similar to those Iran has been using in retaliatory attacks across Gulf nations.

Last week, Mr. Zelenskyy visited several countries and signed defence agreements with Qatar and Saudi Arabia. He also suggested Ukraine could help unblock the Strait of Hormuz, whose closure by Iran has rattled the global economy. He did not specify how Ukraine could contribute, but cited Kyiv's experience in restoring passage through the Black Sea, which Russia had blocked at the beginning of its invasion.

## Russia made nearly no territorial gains in Ukraine in March: Analysis

Russia's army recorded almost no territorial gains on the front line in Ukraine in March for the first time in two and a half years, AFP analysis of data from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) showed. The Russian army has been slowing in its advances since late 2025 — because of Kyiv's localised breakthroughs in the southeast of the country — and lost ground in February and March on the southern section of the front line between the Donetsk and Dnipropetrovsk regions. Across the entire front line, the Russian army seized only 23 sq. km in March, losing territory in some areas, according to the analysis.

This figure excludes infiltration operations conducted by Russian forces beyond the front line, as well as advances claimed by the Russian side but neither confirmed nor denied by the ISW. The ISW worked with the Critical Threats Project (part of the American Enterprise Institute, or AEI), another U.S. think tank specialising in conflict. The Russian

army made 319 square kilometres of gains in January and 123 sq. km in February, which was then the smallest advance since April 2024. Its advance in March was the smallest since September 2023.

The ISW attributed the slowdown to Ukrainian counter-offensives, but also to "Russia's ban on using Starlink terminals in Ukraine" and "the Kremlin's efforts to restrict access to Telegram". The messaging app, very popular among Russians, including those fighting on the front, has been barely usable in recent months due to blocks imposed by the authorities. As in February, Russia lost ground on the southern section of the front line, between the Donetsk and Dnipropetrovsk regions, where it occupied more than 400 sq. km at the end of January. This area shrank to 200 sq. km in February and to 144 sq. km in March. The situation was,

## Beyond solitary spotlight: How these 4 singers are shattering 'solo diva' myth in Indian music



GNS News Agency, April 7

For decades, the image of the female singer in the Indian music industry has often been solitary — a single voice at the microphone, fronting a performance largely shaped by others. The Womaniqz, however, offers a different picture. The nine-member band, that performed recently in Pune, places four women vocalists at the centre of the stage, creating music together rather than individually. The group's four lead singers — Deepti Rege, Tanishq Karnawat, Veda Nerurkar and Shreya Jain Khandelwal — come from different generations and musical backgrounds, yet share a common foundation in classical training and a strong commitment to live performance.

What makes the group unusual is not just its music, but its structure. Instead of competing for space, the four singers share it. "We were friends first," the group says. "We already knew and respected each other's music. Over time, the idea of creating something together just felt natural. Each of us brings something different to the table," says Deepti Rege, the band's co-founder and senior-most member. Their musical journeys, however, began long before the band itself — often in homes where music was nurtured by families who encouraged daughters to follow artistic ambitions. For Rege, music is almost hereditary. A Hindustani classical vocalist with over 25 years in the industry, she has contributed vocals to several Bollywood productions, including Gangubai Kathiawadi, Bajirao Mastani, Padmaavat and Super 30. Her connection to music stretches back generations. "My grandmother was a disciple of Hirabai Badodekar and also a Marathi poet. I grew up hearing my mother's riyaz at home. Today, fam-

ily support continues to play a crucial role in my career. My in-laws proudly talk about my work even more than I do," she says with a smile.

For Tanishq Karnawat, the path to music was shaped early by her parents' encouragement. She began learning to sing at the age of three and continues to train in Hindustani classical music. "My parents were the ones who first encouraged me," Karnawat says. "My mother used to perform at events and also taught music when she was younger, so music was always part of our home," she says. Growing up in that environment helped transform a childhood passion into a profession. Today, alongside performing with The Womaniqz, Karnawat also mentors young singers as a vocal instructor at the Kailash Kher Academy for Learning Art.

Singer Shreya Jain Khandelwal similarly grew up surrounded by art. Her grandmother had a deep love for Indian classical music and was trained in the sitar, while her mother carried that artistic tradition forward as a Bharatanatyam dancer. "My parents always gave me the freedom to pursue what I love. Because of that support, I could embrace music wholeheartedly," she says. Khandelwal, trained at the Shankar Mahadevan Academy and under Pt Muri Manohar Shukla, later performed at large-scale events such as the Ekam Satt Unity Concert at Jio Garden curated by Ameya Dabli, which featured composer A R Rahman. For Veda Nerurkar, the earliest musical lessons came directly from home. "My mother was my first guru. I grew up surrounded by music," she says. Nerurkar first came into the spotlight as a runner-up on Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Marathi Li'l Champs and later appeared on The Voice India Season 2. But behind those milestones was the steady support of her parents. "They travelled with me for competitions, auditions, and rehearsals. Their belief in me is the reason I could pursue music professionally," she says. While their journeys differ, the singers say those individual influences shape the sound of the band. Their performances often run for nearly two hours, weaving together melodies from different eras of Hindi cinema. A sold-out ticketed show at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre remains one of their most memorable milestones. Yet the singers say the most meaningful aspect of the project is the sense of solidarity it represents. "When women come together creatively, something powerful happens. On stage, we're not competing with each other — we're supporting each other," they say.

## Trump eases oil sanctions on Iran, says Hormuz should be guarded by other nations

GNS News Agency, April 7

United States President Donald Trump said that he is considering "winding down" the war on Iran, adding that securing the Strait of Hormuz — now under Iran's control — is the responsibility of other nations, even as Washington temporarily eased sanctions on Iranian oil shipments in a bid to ease the global supply crisis. "We are getting very close to meeting our objectives," Mr. Trump wrote in a social media post, adding that the U.S. has "degraded" Iran's missile capability, "destroyed" its defence industrial base, and "eliminated" its Navy and Air Force, including anti-aircraft weaponry. Adding that the U.S. had taken out Iran's nuclear capability, and would never allow Tehran to rebuild it, he vowed to protect America's allies in the region, "including Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, and others."

While Mr. Trump declared victory over Iran, the U.S. Treasury Department on Friday (March 20) said it was temporarily lifting sanctions on Iranian oil already loaded onto vessels, to tackle supply disruptions and rising prices. "By temporarily unlocking this existing supply for the world, the United States will quickly bring approximately 140 million barrels of oil to global markets, expanding the amount of worldwide energy and helping to relieve the temporary pressures on supply caused by Iran," Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a statement. "This temporary, short-term authorization is strictly limited to oil that is already in transit and does not allow new purchases or production." The U.S. and Israel have carried out thousands of air strikes in Iran since they started the war on February 28. At least 1,400 people have been killed, including Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and its Security Council Secretary Ali Larjani. Mr. Trump has repeatedly claimed that the U.S.-Israeli strikes have destroyed Iran's military capabilities.

Iran's continuing attacks Despite such claims, Iran has consistently carried out missile and drone attacks against Israel and America's Persian Gulf Arab allies, besides taking control of the Strait of Hormuz through which one-fifth of the world's traded oil passed before the war. On Saturday evening (March 21, 2026), Alireza Tangsiri, commander of



the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy, said the Guards had attacked two American bases in the Persian Gulf. "IRGC pounded the facilities of the two Al-Minhad [UAE] and Ali Al-Salem [Kuwait] air bases, the hangars, and the fuel depots of American-Zionist aircraft with a massive volume of ballistic missiles and suicide drones. These bases were the origin of the aggression against #IranianIslands," Mr. Tangsiri said in a post. The attacks on oil facilities in the Gulf and the closure of the Strait have driven up oil, gas, and fertilizer prices. Brent crude closed at \$106 a barrel on Friday (March 20), up from \$72 on February 28, the first day of the war. Changing stance on Hormuz "The Hormuz Strait will have to be guarded and policed, as necessary, by other Nations who use it — The United States does not! If asked, we will help these Countries in their Hormuz efforts, but it shouldn't be necessary once Iran's threat is eradicated. Importantly, it will be an easy Military Operation for them," Mr. Trump said, signalling that regional countries should lead any military operation to open the Strait. Mr. Trump had earlier sought help from America's NATO allies as well as China to open the Hormuz Strait. As most countries rejected his call, he said the U.S. did not want anybody's help. But again, on March 20, he called NATO partners "cowards" because they did not send any assistance. At the White House, Mr. Trump told reporters on Saturday (March 21) he was not looking for a ceasefire with Tehran. "I think we have won. I don't want to do a ceasefire. You know you don't do a ceasefire when you're literally obliterating the other side," he said.

## Global crisis deepens due to war; CPI slams Modi's silence



India, as a major democracy, should play a proactive role in promoting peace, says CPI leader K. Narayana

GNS News Agency, April 7

Communist Party of India (CPI) national leader K. Narayana has expressed concern that the ongoing war involving Iran is pushing the world into a severe crisis, primarily benefiting corporate interests. Addressing a press conference here on Sunday (March 22), Dr. Narayana alleged that the conflict driven by the United States and Israel is

aimed at controlling oil resources and boosting corporate profits. The war has resulted in large-scale loss of life and is contributing to a growing global economic crisis.

He criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for remaining silent and failing to exert pressure on U.S. President Donald Trump to halt the conflict. Dr. Narayana termed Modi's stance as "questionable," adding that India, as a major democracy, should play a proactive role in promoting peace. Highlighting the economic impact, he pointed out that rising petrol, diesel, and gas prices are affecting the transport sector and common people. Gas shortages, he said, have led to the closure of hotels and eateries in some areas, impacting workers and daily wage earners.

Dr. Narayana urged Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu to pressure the Centre to take a stand against the war. He said Mr. Naidu, given his political influence, should ensure that India does not support such conflicts. He also announced a "No War" protest would be held in Hyderabad on March 29, calling for participation from all political parties and the public. On State issues, Dr. Narayana questioned the continuation of individuals facing allegations in key positions related to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, stressing the need to protect the temple's sanctity. He welcomed the decision to install a statue of Potti Sriramulu in Amaravati but opposed involving corporate entities in the project. CPI leader Akkineni Vanaja demanded implementation of election promises, including housing for the poor, and called for large-scale participation in protests on March 24.

## Rethinking textbook development in India



Of late, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has been in the news for several controversies related to textbook content. The latest concerns its decision to remove a map from the Class 8 Social Science textbook that depicted Bikaner, Bundi, and Jaisalmer as part of the Maratha Empire after the royal family of Jaisalmer objected and claimed this was historical inaccuracy. Another instance was a two-page section in the Class 8 Social Science textbook discussing corruption at various levels of the judiciary, included in the chapter titled "The Role of the Judiciary in Our Society". This prompted a strong response leading the Supreme Court to take suo motu cognizance of the matter. NCERT not only withdrew the textbook but also issued an apology. But the controversy did not end. The Chief Justice of India ordered immediate seizure of all copies of the book, the initiation a probe to identify those responsible, and demanded accountability from NCERT.

Questions raised These controversies raise several important questions such as what content textbooks should contain, what ought to be taught, whether the Court's intervention is justified, and whether textbook writers and editors have violated established guidelines or, conversely, whether their academic freedom has been compromised.

While it is important to assess whether the Court's action is justified, it is even more crucial to examine why the NCERT has faced sustained criticism over the past decade. Much of this centres on its revision of school textbooks through the selective removal, reduction, or alteration of content in ways that appear to reflect a particular political ideology or an attempt to rewrite history. This, in turn, raises a deeper concern: does the institution's recent functioning demonstrate genuine autonomy or suggest that this so-called "autonomous body" has become vulnerable to the influence of those in power? We cannot say whether the NCERT has learned, or will learn, a lesson from the recent controversy. However, it offers a valuable lesson for those involved in materials preparation, textbook writing, and editing. In this context, it is necessary to consider what makes a good textbook for school students, the factors to be considered while writing one, and what should be avoided in

preparation. It is also essential to reflect on the key questions that school administrators and educators should ask when selecting textbooks for their schools and students. Requirements Considering the questions raised about NCERT textbooks, it is essential to provide professional development courses for all textbook writers and editors, and to develop new guidelines grounded in both universally accepted and contextually relevant principles.

In a multilingual, multi-religious, and multicultural country like India, textbook writers and editors are expected to not only possess expertise in their respective fields but also to value inclusiveness. They should be open-minded, principled, and committed to the cause of education. Additionally, they need to be trained to prepare instructional materials in a professional and pedagogically sound manner. The content should be appropriate for the target group; engaging, relevant, accurate, up-to-date, and inclusive. It must be free from religious, cultural, and gender bias, while remaining culturally and linguistically sensitive. Content, particularly in subjects such as history, should be presented objectively with accurate, reliable, and evidence-based information. Above all, it should align with the prescribed curriculum. Since the purpose of education is to inculcate values and promote logical reasoning and critical thinking, activities should be designed to foster empathy and encourage independent thinking. Freedom to choose

Schools should have the flexibility to select one that best suits their students from a range of textbooks by different publishers. This choice-based approach offers several clear advantages. Each author tends to emphasise different dimensions of a subject — such as historical context, social relevance, or technical detail — thereby giving students a broader and more balanced understanding rather than a single, limited viewpoint. Moreover, when a concept is not clearly explained or insufficiently illustrated in one textbook, another may present it in a simpler, more practical, or more relatable manner. Exposure to multiple explanations of the same topic helps reinforce learning and strengthens students' grasp of fundamental concepts. From an assessment perspective, choosing a book from a variety of textbooks also exposes students to diverse types of exercises. Some authors, particularly those specialising in competitive examinations, provide higher-order and application-based questions that go beyond standard curriculum materials, thereby better preparing students for advanced assessments. What matters most is academic freedom for textbook authors and editors who are committed to education, understand the importance of sound guidelines, act in students' best interests, and stand firm against pressure from powerful forces to compromise their work. After all, their unwavering intellectual commitment and courage should be reflected in their work, inspiring educators and learners. Those in power, including the judiciary, must respect academic freedom.

## A redoubt of cosmopolitanism

In an age when nationalism increasingly presents itself as grievance, and patriotism is confused with hostility towards difference, a question seeks attention. What kind of civilization is being invoked in the name of the nation? It is understandable that India must imagine its future with pride and not any rancour in its heart. But pride, if it is to transcend mere posturing, must be anchored in memories that unsettle the prevailing ethos of ethnic politics rather than pander to the self-flattering narratives of present day India. During my recent visit to Fatehpur Sikri, I felt this unsettling quality of the past's proximity, an inescapable sensation manifested palpably in a Proustian reverie of my childhood in the 1950s and 1960s. That was the halcyon era, seemingly untainted by the hardened fault lines of communal discord or the political grammars of difference that would later inscribe themselves upon our social fabric. In that early in-between space, childhood existed before the world began to demand an explanation of sectarian consciousness.

As Walter Benjamin might suggest, Fatehpur Sikri's ruins evoked for me a "Messianic cessation of happening", a jolt that arrests linear time, allowing fragments of the past to erupt into the present. My visit became an act of "brushing history against the grain," thereby interrupting the present narrative of division through childhood memories of times when communal harmony was not a utopian ideal but a given reality.

In an age when Europe was still inching toward what Francis Bacon would later call "the advancement of learning," Fatehpur Sikri had already become a living laboratory of intellectual cosmopolitanism. At the heart of Fatehpur Sikri stands the Ibadat Khana, the House of Worship. Standing there in the silence of a cold winter morning, I could visualize the Sunni and Shia theologians debating alongside Hindu pundits, Jain monks, Zoroastrians, and Jesuit priests, the encounters sustained in a form of brainstorming. Akbar was not seeking a final synthesis, nor endeavouring to declare authority as the final truth, but expose his rule itself to debate. Scholars, missionaries, theologians, Central Asian mystics, artists, architects and philosophers crossed linguistic and civilizational frontiers to gather at his court, an approach that we later see Rabindranath Tagore introducing in Shantiniketan.

The Ibadat Khana was not merely a hall of worship but a theatre of ideas, where translation, disputation, and philosophical encounter unfolded in real time. One is reminded of Bacon's utopian vision in New Atlantis, the ship that sails across oceans gathering knowledge from distant lands, or even of Napoleon's Egyptian expedition, when defeat at sea did not prevent him from carrying scientists, engineers, astronomers and archaeologists up the Nile, inadvertently laying the foundations of Egyptology. Fatehpur Sikri belongs to that larger genealogy of experimental cosmopolitan spaces, a court that imagined empire not simply as territorial dominion, but as the orchestration of knowledge, language and belief across borders. Commonly described as a "ghost city," abandoned for logistical reasons, it would be a mistake to consider Fatehpur Sikri as an architectural wonder of a past rather than of political thought. What was attempted here in the sixteenth century was not simply imperial administration, but a civilizational argument about power, belief, and difference. The city matters not because it failed, but because of what it dared to imagine and experiment.

From this practice emerged Sulh-i-Kul or "peace with all", not as a sentimental ethic, but as a principle of governance. It rejected the assumption, now taken almost for granted, that political stability requires cultural uniformity. In Akbar's imagination, power was strong enough to survive doubt which, to him, was not an administrative inconvenience but a condition of ethical rule. This confidence is pre-



## it will be a mistake to consider Fatehpur Sikri an architectural wonder of a past rather than of political thought

cisely what contemporary nationalism lacks. Across democracies today, the authoritarian turn is overtly proclaimed, but is imperceptibly allowed to proceed through the narrow narratives of ultra-nationalism and belonging. Race, religion, and culture are thereby mobilised as instruments of political consolidation. While dissent is made out to be disloyalty, the minorities are deemed to be demographic threats.

Standing in the midst of such a space, I could feel deep within me its philosophical essence resonate with other sub-continental traditions that resisted structures of centralized authority. Sikh thought, emerging soon after, made a decisive break by transferring sovereignty from rulers and lineages to the Word. With the declaration of the Guru Granth Sahib as the eternal Guru, authority was removed from charisma, bloodline, and coercion. Truth was placed beyond capture. The Bhakti movement similarly unsettled caste and religious hierarchies through devotion that refused social arrogance. Poets like Kabir dismantled Hindu-Muslim binaries with disarming clarity, insisting that spiritual truth dissolves identity pride. Sufi traditions, with their emphasis on humility and inward ethics, offered another sustained resistance to punitive religion. What unites these traditions is a refusal of the finality of interpretation, of dominance, of the claim that power alone can arbitrate truth. The tyranny of thought stood out rightly rejected.

Fatehpur Sikri therefore, represents power as a process of dialogue. The Diwan-i-Khas, with its central pillar and radiating paths, suggests that multiple perspectives can emerge from a shared space without needing uniformity. To remember Fatehpur Sikri today is for me a political act, challenging the claim that equality, pluralism, and human rights are embedded in our own civilizational experiments, articulated long before modern constitutionalism gave them legal form. The struggle for equality gains strength, not weakness, when anchored in such memory. My visit to Fatehpur Sikri underscored a crucial question: can a civilisation secure in its identity afford to engage in dialogue, debate, and evolution toward a more humane system? The answer will shape not only the future of pluralism but also the trajectory of democracy itself.

## 'Use and throw' is Hyderabad's attitude towards appliances, notes study



tors, washing machines, and air conditioners are rarely replaced due to their high cost. As income levels rise, replacement rates increase, with higher-income groups prioritising convenience and technological upgrades. For those earning above ₹20 lakh, replacement is dominant, with IT and Telecom equipment and large appliances showing replacement rates of 65%. Spare part availability is a major concern in getting the appliances repaired, and independent repair shops are often reliant on third party components, which are not trusted by consumers.

Hyderabad's repair facilities are partially equipped, with most repair shops relying on non-original spare parts due to the high cost and limited availability of genuine components. Technicians, who lack formal training, often salvage parts from non-functional devices or source them from local wholesalers and informal markets. Environmental sustainability is rarely a focus in training programs, contributing to unsustainable practices. Software locks and warranties discouraging third-party repairs are another reason, which increases e-waste in the environment. Recommendations for the city include affordable, genuine spare parts and elimination of restrictions on third party repairs, structured training programmes to equip the technicians with modern repair techniques, establishment of public-private repair hubs, cashback schemes or tax rebates for repairs, and imposition of green tax on premature replacements. India's e-waste generation is projected to rise from 34 billion kg in 2010 to 82 billion kg by 2030, the study noted, and flagged low recycling rates are poised to rise from eight billion kgs in 2010 to mere 13.6 billion kgs by 2030. Widening gap between e-waste generation and formal recycling rates highlights a major sustainability challenge. By choosing to repair rather than replace, the growing problem of e-waste can be mitigated while saving energy and raw materials used in manufacturing new products, the report said.

Hyderabad shares space with the national capital in accelerated consumerism as reflected in its residents' preference for purchase of new appliances rather than repair the faulty ones. A survey conducted by Toxics Link, an environmental research and advocacy organisation, revealed that repair culture is declining in Hyderabad across income groups. The study, titled 'Stitch in Time: Evaluating Consumer Behaviour & Electronics Repair Accessibility,' was conducted in five cities — Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Nagpur and Ranchi, to analyse consumer behaviour, repair practices and challenges faced by the repair industry. It concluded that Delhi and Hyderabad show a dominant 'replacement trend' that cuts across all economic groups, reflecting a fast-paced consumption pattern.

Significant replacement trends were found in Hyderabad, particularly for IT and Telecom equipment such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets. Lower-income groups (₹1-5 lakh) exhibited a high replacement rate (85.71%) for IT devices, driven by outdated technology and repair costs. Small appliances such as toasters, mixers, and hair straighteners are replaced 61.54% of the time, while large electrical and electronic appliances such as refrigera-

## Telangana Govt raises TDR use, allows more floors and setback relaxations in new building rules



vided mandatory parking and other rules are met. The government has allowed the use of TDR for setback relaxations in different categories. Non-high-rise buildings may now obtain setback relaxations via TDR while still adhering to the minimum norms applicable for road-widening situations. High-rises may avail up to 10% relaxation in setbacks through TDR, with a mandatory minimum 7-metre all-round setback.

In instances where Master Plan roads are reduced or modified, applicants are now given a choice to either pay applicable development/conversion charges or furnish equivalent TDR in lieu of payment, offering builders a financially flexible alternative. To facilitate vertical development, the government has revised the norms for additional floors using TDR in large plots (over 2000 sq.m). This is 3 additional floors on 40-ft roads, up to 4 additional floors on 60-ft roads and up to 5 additional floors on 80-ft roads. All such permissions, however, are subject to fire safety, airport clearances and other regulatory checks. In a significant tweak to earlier provisions, the government also revised TDR loading requirements for high-rises. Buildings above 10 floors and up to 20 floors must load 3% of the built-up area above the 10th floor with TDR. For structures above 20 floors, 5% of the built-up area beyond the 20th floor must be supported by TDR. To streamline approvals, developers must submit 50% of the required TDR at the building permission stage, and the remaining before issuance of the Occupancy Certificate. The order follows multiple stakeholder representations seeking rationalisation of TDR usage and more adaptable construction parameters. The new rules are expected to accelerate real estate activity in Hyderabad and other urban regions while providing builders with greater flexibility in project design.

The government has announced amendments to the Telangana Building Rules 2012 aimed at expanding the scope of Transferable Development Rights (TDR), easing height restrictions and offering greater flexibility to developers in both high-rise and non-high-rise buildings. Image used for representation purpose only. The government has announced amendments to the Telangana Building Rules, 2012, aimed at expanding the scope of Transferable Development Rights (TDR), easing height restrictions, and offering greater flexibility to developers in both high-rise and non-high-rise buildings.

The new norms were issued on Sunday (March 22, 2026) by the Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) Department. One of the most significant changes is the redefinition of a high-rise building as any structure measuring 21 metres or above, excluding non-working components such as chimneys, cooling towers, lift machine rooms and water tanks. Further, buildings rising between 18m and 21m on plots ranging from 750 sq.m to 2000 sq.m will now be permitted only through TDR, pro-

## Japan could consider Hormuz minesweeping if ceasefire reached, says Foreign Minister Motegi



pacifist constitution, but 2015 security legislation allows Japan to use its Self-Defense Forces overseas if an attack, including on a close security partner, threatens Japan's survival and no other means are available to address it. Tokyo has no immediate plans to seek arrangements to allow passage through the Strait of Hormuz for stranded Japanese vessels, Mr. Motegi said, adding "it was extremely important" to create conditions that allow all ships to navigate through the narrow waterway, the conduit for a fifth of the world's oil shipments.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Japan's Kyodo news agency on Friday (March 20) that he had spoken to Mr. Motegi about potentially letting Japanese-registered vessels pass through the strait. Japan gets around 90% of its oil shipments via the strait, which Tehran has largely closed during the war, now in its fourth week. A spike in global oil prices has prompted Japan and other countries to release oil from their reserves. U.S. President Donald Trump met Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on Thursday (March 19), urging her to "step up" as he presses allies — so far unsuccessfully — to send warships to help open the strait. Ms. Takaichi told reporters after the Washington summit that she had briefed Mr. Trump on what support Japan could and could not provide in the strait under its laws.

Japan could consider deploying its military for minesweeping in the Strait of Hormuz, a vital artery for global oil supplies, if a ceasefire is reached in the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran, Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said on Sunday (March 22, 2026). "If there were to be a complete ceasefire, hypothetically speaking, then things like minesweeping could come up," Mr. Motegi said during a Fuji TV programme. "This is purely hypothetical, but if a ceasefire were established and naval mines were creating an obstacle, then I think that would be something to consider."

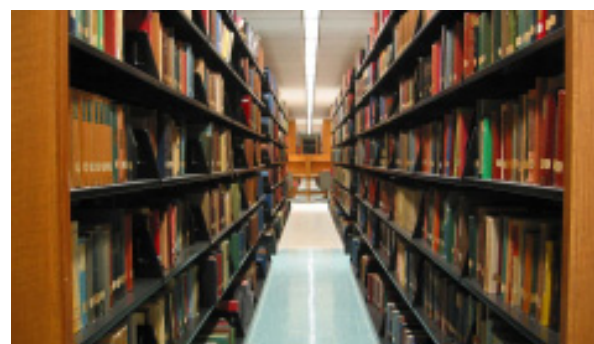
Japan's military actions are limited under its postwar

## Career in Social Work

In an age marked by rapid economic growth, widening inequalities and quiet crises in mental health, livelihoods and communities, the question many youngsters now ask is not just "What will I earn?" but also "Will I enjoy it?" Social work is often mistaken for charity or voluntary service. In fact, it is rigorous professional career option that responds directly to the social realities of our times and has not yet been touched by AI. Grounded in theory, ethics, research, and structured field practice, it prepares students to work across hospitals, industries, communities, development organisations, research institutions, and policy spaces. In India, PG programmes offer both generic training and specialised pathways, enabling students to shape careers aligned with their interests and strengths. Important specialisations include Medical and Psychiatric Social Work. Students are trained to work in hospitals, psychiatric settings, palliative care cen-

tres, and counselling services. Their role lies at the intersection of health systems and human experience, supporting patients and families as they navigate illness, disability, trauma and end-of-life care. With increasing attention to mental health and holistic healthcare, the relevance of professionally trained social workers in medical settings has never been greater. Another important specialisation is Human Resource Management (HRM), rooted in the core social work principle of focusing on the person within a system. It goes far beyond conventional corporate training. Students study HRM and development, labour laws, industrial relations, workplace wellness, organisational behaviour, and HR analytics, alongside core social work methods. This equips graduates to work in industries and organisations where employee well-being and inclusive workplaces are now seen as strategic imperatives rather than optional ideals.

## Why Indian professors are trading creativity for citations



GNS News Agency, April 7

Imagine a Sahitya Akademi winner being told that his/her life's work is worth "zero" because it isn't in a Scopus database. In the high-stakes world of Indian higher education, a structural paradox is stifling the Humanities. As institutions chase global rankings, scholarly value is increasingly defined not by what is read or taught but by what can be indexed. Under the current rules of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), a prize-winning novel or a landmark poetry collection often carries less institutional weight than a poorly written but Scopus-indexed article. We are currently measuring the weight of a soul using a scale designed for coal. The problem lies in the Scopus: Web of Science Trap. Global ranking systems rely heavily on databases that privilege standardised scientific formats. Poetry and creative fiction, published in literary magazines or small presses, remain invisible to these indexing systems. In the cold logic of ranking metrics, if a work is not indexed, it does not exist. This has birthed a "Humanities Gap". While Science and Engineering align seamlessly with citation metrics, creative and practice-based research in the Arts is systematically disadvantaged. We are currently measuring knowledge produced in the library using tools designed for the laboratory.

Standardised research is often a "report" on what already exists. Creative writing is the act of bringing something new into existence. A research article on "Social Isolation in Urban India" provides data, percentages, and trends. However, a play about a lonely elderly man in a high-rise apartment makes the audience feel that isolation. Creative writing preserves the "soul" of a culture — its nuances, slang, and emotional landscape — which data points simply cannot capture. Most research articles are locked behind paywalls and written in jargon that only experts un-

derstand. A poem or a play is democratic; it can be read by anyone. It travels further and stays in the memory longer than a table of citations.

Internationally, the tide is turning. Forward-thinking frameworks now recognise Non-Traditional Research Outputs (NTRs) to avoid the false equivalence that treats all knowledge as a journal article. The U.K.'s REF 2029 evaluates poems as "outputs", even allowing major collections to be "double-weighted" to reflect significant intellectual labour. In Australia, the ERA system tracks poetry under "Code J3", requiring a "Research Statement" to justify its scholarly contribution. In European countries, creative work is treated as a "research artefact", where the work itself is the primary site of knowledge. In the U.S., tenure committees routinely count poems as primary outputs based on publisher reputation and critical reception. All this proves that recognising art doesn't mean lowering the bar; it means redefining rigour for different disciplines. India doesn't need to clone the U.K.'s REF or Australia's ERA. It needs to borrow their conceptual clarity. A poem or a translation is not a substitute for research; it is research, conducted through a specific mode of inquiry. By adopting a lean NTR framework, bodies like NAAC and NBA can bridge the gap between creative output and research evaluation without a structural overhaul.

A first step is to formalise creative categories and explicitly recognise poetry, translation, and performance as valid research and not dismiss as "extracurricular". Next comes the Research Context Note. Instead of a technical paper, allow a two-page brief detailing the work's intellectual background, originality, and critical acclaim received. Third, existing criteria needs to be mapped and creative works can be interpreted under current parameters like Criterion 5 (Faculty Contribution) or Program Outcomes regarding societal relevance. Fourth is to apply weighted recognition and acknowledge that a book-length project involves more labour than a short-form article and grant it higher qualitative weight. Finally, mandate that institutional repositories archive creative works digitally alongside their research notes for transparent audit verification. The goal is simple: start measuring knowledge in all its forms, rather than just its most "index-friendly" expressions. It is time for Indian accreditation to value the meaning behind the metrics. If the professors aren't rewarded for being creative, they won't teach students to be creative. That's the real loss for India's workforce. The writer is an Assistant Professor of English, specialising in Communication and Language Studies, at Velammal Engineering College, Chennai.

## Are we in a paradigm shift in our TB response?



"I cannot go for sputum testing to the centre; it would mean losing a day's work. Who will feed us?" asks 52-year-old Ganga, who works as a garbage collector, standing in front of her 50-sq. ft. home in a crowded slum in urban Pune. Ganga has been suffering from a cough and has experienced significant weight loss over the past two months, but has had to continue work, regardless. Subsequently, she was diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) of the lungs (pulmonary TB), which is contagious. Ganga's is the dilemma of thousands of Indians who experience symptoms suggestive of TB. As per latest data from the World Health Organization's Global Tuberculosis Report, yet again, India has topped the global burden of TB with about 25% of the estimated incident cases, despite 2025 touted to be the year the country aimed to attain the 2030 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) pertaining to TB.

Additionally, the global health scenario has been facing catastrophes in recent times, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and the human-made disaster of massive fund cuts for health and development initiatives. Ongoing wars and cross-border tensions between nations have made millions homeless and left them struggling for basic amenities. These events have substantially impacted TB care activities across the globe to varying degrees.

TB is a disease that reflects the inequities in a society, its poverty and the everyday distress of people at the margins. These facets make it a truly political disease and the highest level of commitment from systems is required for it to cease to be a public health threat — especially towards highly vulnerable populations. One of those vulnerable populations are migrant labourers from States such as Bihar and Jharkhand who work elsewhere in the country. "There is often a misconception that the best thing for migrant workers in the city who fall ill, is to go back to their home states as they will get family and government support once they are in villages. But in many cases, they do not know how to proceed, with their livelihoods being lost and the rampant stigma towards TB", explains Vedit Panchal, a community health physician who works amongst marginalised populations in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. Stone crushing and iron ore mining are important occupations in the areas where Dr. Vedit works. These jobs lead to substantial lung damage among workers, through the inhalation of fine dust particles. Such unsafe, unchecked work environments with minimal accountability from employers, alongside poor housing and food scarcity contribute to these individuals becoming very high risk of contracting TB and having adverse outcomes, including death. Homelessness is yet another factor that rarely features in our mainstream public health narrative. Most homeless individuals do not have a valid Aadhaar card or mobile number, so many government centres do not even register them as patients", says Dr. Vedit. This is a painful example of how people who require care the most, are denied it. Gender is also a factor that compromises TB care. Women tend to delay seeking care owing to their domestic responsibilities, prioritisation of family needs over themselves and fear of stigma. Marginalised groups including the LGBTQ population also carry a high burden of TB, many times much higher than the national average. "It's 2026, and we are still struggling with delayed diagnosis. Despite having advanced molecular diagnostic technologies, we battle with a shortage of CBNAAT cartridges/Truenat chips, especially in rural and semi-urban

settings," says Meera Yadav, patient rights activist and XDR-TB survivor. According to her, the diagnosis of extrapulmonary TB, which affects organs apart from the lungs, is the most difficult. While the sample needed for diagnosing pulmonary TB is the sputum, which is fairly easily obtained from the patient when they cough, the samples needed to diagnose TB of other organs may require advanced tests such as tissue biopsies and CT scans. These are generally expensive and not available in all settings, and this results in huge out-of-pocket expenditure, she says. She also raises concerns about the frequent drug stock outs that happened within the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP), which provides free treatment to persons with TB (PwTB), leading to long gaps in treatment. NTEP also provides a direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme, Ni-Kshay Poshan Yojana, for nutritional support, wherein ₹1000 is transferred per month to the beneficiary bank account, and Ni-Kshay Mitra where donors provide food baskets to PwTB. However, the timelines of these payments have been very erratic owing to various technical reasons, with some PwTB receiving the benefit after completion of treatment only. "We are missing the window of opportunity, critical to prevent complications and deaths among PwTB by delaying these payments", says community health professor Madhavi Bhargava. The need to invest in strengthening diagnostic infrastructure for both pulmonary and extra pulmonary TB and to streamline both benefits and drug stocking is crucial at this stage. "Another big gap in the programme is the lack of psychosocial support. PwTB face huge stigma from society and it can affect outcomes," says Meera. TB survivors with lived experience can help PwTB navigate these difficult times, she adds, strongly emphasising formal engagement of people who have survived TB in the past to offer peer support. However, since the abrupt shutdown of USAID in 2025, which actively engaged TB survivors for peer support, several community support initiatives have closed down or are at the verge of closure. There is a need for the government to look into these initiatives and keep them going.

Steps in the right direction Undernutrition still continues to be the most important factor leading to the risk of contracting TB and adverse outcomes in PwTB. Almost 7 to 8 lakh cases of TB in India are attributable to undernutrition. The ICMR-funded RATIONS trial in Jharkhand showed that incidence of TB among household contacts is lowered by almost 48%, by nutritional supplementation, and mortality among PwTB is lowered by almost 60%. It generated the much-needed evidence required for policy change regarding nutritional support in TB care. The latest guidelines from WHO on TB and undernutrition now emphasise nutritional support for TB prevention and the trial results have shaped these recommendations. "The new WHO guidelines recommend that PwTB with even mild or moderate under-nourishment as well as the household contacts of PwTB, should receive assessment, counselling and nutritional support as part of TB care. This ensures that adverse outcomes are prevented/minimised in undernourished PwTB and that household contacts get food as a preventive modality", says Dr. Madhavi, who is also the co-lead of the RATIONS trial. The government planning to introduce ready-to-use energy dense nutritional supplements (EDNS) for undernourished PwTB. But Dr. Madhavi expresses her concern over the EDNS plan, stating that they may mystify nutrition for users and may provide a window for industries to take over this space. Another important introduction in NTEP last year was the differentiated TB care guidelines, which mandate the triaging of individuals at the time of TB diagnosis, to provide customised care in terms of hospitalization or home-based care, and thereby reduce mortality and morbidity. Findings from the Tamil Nadu Kasanoi Erappilla Thittam (TN-KET), a State-wide and State-specific differentiated TB care initiative implemented by T.N.'s NTEP and the ICMR National Institute of Epidemiology from 2022 to 2025, suggest that TB deaths can be reduced by 20-40% by implementing a simple triage-based severity assessment at TB diagnosis.

## Air India forms panel to find CEO Wilson's successor



June this year. Meanwhile, Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran appreciated the contribution of Wilson and said under his leadership Air India made progress on several fronts. "Campbell and his team have demonstrated tenacity and resolve and have aligned an organization drawn from many backgrounds behind the shared goal of building the new Air India that is now emerging," he said. A former Singapore Airlines' veteran, Wilson took the reins of the airline in September 2022 following the privatisation of the then government-owned carrier in January that year. Within days of him taking over the charge, Air India announced a five-year comprehensive transformation plan, Vihana. AI, focusing on five key pillars — exceptional customer experience, robust operations, industry-best talent, industry leadership, and commercial efficiency and profitability. As part of this plan, the airline put in place a detailed roadmap with clear milestones focusing on dramatically growing both its network and fleet, taking a leadership position in technology, sustainability, and innovation, while aggressively investing behind the best industry talent. "With these foundational blocks now settling and a brief window until deliveries from the nearly 600-strong aircraft orderbook commence in earnest from 2027, the time is right for me to hand over the reins for the next phase of Air India's rise," Wilson said in the statement. At a conference in the national capital last year, Wilson mentioned that the airline was facing a loss of over Rs 4,000 crore due to the Pakistan airspace closure. Air India's low-cost subsidiary, Air India Express also does not have a head since March 19 this year following the exit of Managing Director Aloke Singh after he completed his 5-year tenure. Air India Express is yet to announce Singh's replacement.

Mumbai: Air India CEO & MD Campbell Wilson has resigned after helming the Tata Group-owned airline for four years that have been punctuated by multiple headwinds, including the fatal AI171 crash in June last year. The Air India board has constituted a committee that will find the successor in the coming months, a statement from the airline said on Tuesday. "Wilson had conveyed his intention to step down in 2026 to Air India Chairman N Chandrasekaran in 2024 and, since then, has been working to ensure the organisation and leadership team is on a stable footing for the transition," it said. Wilson had been under fire since June 12 last year following the crash of the airline's London-bound flight soon after takeoff from Ahmedabad airport, killing 241 of the 242 persons on board. He also came under attack for various regulatory lapses.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), which is probing the crash, has already filed its preliminary report while the final report is expected to be submitted in

## Government may seek revised bids for IDBI Bank strategic sale



New Delhi: The government may ask for revised financial bids from two potential buyers of IDBI Bank as their original bid amounts were lower than the reserve price fixed for the strategic sale of the lender, sources said. "The IDBI Bank strategic sale is in the technical evaluation stage," a senior official said. Amidst the West Asia crisis, the government is banking on disinvestment and asset monetisation to garner resources and create fiscal space for measures to shield the economy from the global uncertainty, officials said.

After over three years of pursuance, the strategic sale of IDBI Bank had reached the final stage of financial bid, and the government does not want to restart the process again to avoid further delay. The government and LIC were together looking to sell 60.72 per cent in IDBI Bank and had floated an Expression of Interest (EOI) in October 2022. Financial bids came on February 6. After that, the government set the reserve price for the strategic sale. The financial

bids for the IDBI Bank strategic sale, however, came in lower than the reserve price set by the inter-ministerial group on disinvestment headed by secretaries in the finance ministry.

Following that, the strategic sale of IDBI Bank hit a roadblock. Sources said that the government has now restarted work to take forward the IDBI Bank strategic sale to a logical conclusion. Prem Watsa-led Fairfax and Emirates NBD are reported to have put in bids for the strategic sale of IDBI Bank. Currently, the government and state-owned LIC together hold a 94.71 per cent stake in IDBI Bank. The government owns 45.48 per cent, and LIC holds 49.24 per cent in the lender. Of this, the government and LIC are looking to sell 60.72 per cent in IDBI Bank.

In October 2022, the government and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) had invited Expression of Interest (EOI) for selling 60.72 per cent stake in IDBI Bank. The Centre and LIC look to pare 30.48 and 30.24 per cent stake, respectively. In January 2023, the government said it received multiple preliminary bids. Following that, the bids were sent for security clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and for the 'Fit and Proper' assessment from the RBI. The shortlisted bidders who received both the clearances later on undertook due diligence of the bank, and the government, in January, invited financial bids. In February, the government announced that it received financial bids for IDBI Bank.

## Global oil shock: Air India hikes fuel surcharge on domestic, international routes

New Delhi: Air India on Tuesday announced a revision in fuel surcharge across domestic and international routes amid a rise in global jet fuel prices. For domestic routes, the airline said it will shift from a flat surcharge to a distance-based structure, effective from Wednesday. The revised surcharge will range from Rs 299 for flights up to 500 kms to Rs 899 for sectors above 2,000 kms. The move follows the government's decision to cap the increase in domestic Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices at 25 per cent, which allows airlines to adopt a calibrated approach in passing on costs to passengers. However, the airline will implement steeper revisions due to the absence of similar price controls on ATF for international routes.

Citing data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Air India said global jet fuel prices surged to \$195.19 per barrel for the week ending March 27, nearly doubling from \$99.40 at the end of February. The airline said the sharp rise was driven by increases in both crude oil prices and refining margins, with the 'crack spread' jumping significantly in recent weeks, leading to one of the most challenging fuel cost environments for airlines in recent years.

After the revised structure, fuel surcharge on international routes will vary by region, starting from \$24 for SAARC



destinations (excluding Bangladesh) and going up to \$280 for North America and Australia. Europe-bound flights will attract a surcharge of \$205. The airline said that even after the revision, surcharges do not fully compensate for the steep rise in fuel costs, and it continues to absorb a significant portion of the increase. Tickets issued before the revised timings will not attract the new surcharge unless passengers make changes to their travel plans requiring fare recalculation. Earlier, IndiGo increased fuel charges on flight operations due to the surge in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices.

## Downside risk limited, 3-year return can be 50%: Prashant Jain of 3P

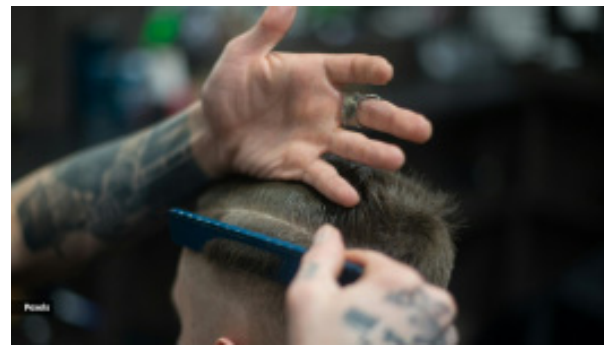
As the West Asia war continues to rattle equity markets and sectors across the economy, Prashant Jain, Founder and CIO, 3P Investment Managers, said India's vulnerability to oil has moderated and hence the impact of US/Israel-Iran conflict would be marginal and transient for India. While sectors such as autos, airlines, real estate, and cement would be among the most directly affected, the sharp decline in the Nifty in March, combined with an 18-month time correction, has led to a meaningful moderation in valuations. There is clear value in the market for long-term investors. Even in a challenging environment, he said, the downside risk is limited. Edited Excerpts:

How do you see the war and its impact on the markets? The first three months of 2026 have arguably been more eventful than the preceding three years. We started the year worrying about trade disputes and the US tariffs, the narrative shifted to the disruptive impact of AI and is now overtaken by geopolitical risks around Hormuz. The asset prices seem to be rattled by this rapid turn of events with USD prices of gold, silver and bitcoin down 16%, 38% and 46% respectively from their recent peaks. Stock markets that are expected to be more volatile have surprisingly held up reasonably well with Dow down 8% and Nifty down 14% from their recent peaks. How vulnerable is India to ris-

ing oil prices?

The only meaningful impact is because of higher prices of crude oil & gas and a disruption in availability. It is worth noting that India's vulnerability to oil has considerably moderated over time. Oil imports as a share of GDP have declined from over 5% in FY2013 to 3% currently. This along with rising services exports have played a key role in moderating India's current account deficit (CAD) to nearly 1% compared to 2-3% in the past. Back in 2000-08, Indian economy displayed remarkable resilience with real economic growth at approximately 7% a year even when oil prices rose from USD 25/bbl in 2000 to USD 140/bbl in 2008. From India's perspective, if Hormuz does not open for an extended period, it will lead to sustained and maybe even higher oil prices adversely impacting CAD and consequently, the INR. This worries FIIs and they continue to sell putting pressure on balance of payments (BOP) and the INR. Higher energy prices and weak INR lead to inflation which together with potentially adverse impact of AI on jobs could lead to a consumer slowdown resulting in lower capex and corporate earnings. However, the above mentioned reasoning overlooks the reduced vulnerability of India to higher oil prices, the resilience of the Indian economy, and the fact that FIIs have already sold \$12.7 billion worth of stocks in March, the highest ever in a single month. I

## 'Why do I have a receding hairline if I'm only 16 years old?'



In our teenage years, our bodies undergo multiple changes, new emotions sprout, and for many, our appearance suddenly becomes a subject of attention. From experimenting with hairstyles and wardrobes to feeling the songs a little too intensely, a new chapter begins. Now, imagine in such a rush of emotions, you notice a receding hairline. Sounds like the end of the world, right? Well, it doesn't have to be. When we spotted a similarly distressed teen enquiring on online forum Quora, "Why do I have a receding hairline if I'm only 16?", we decided to seek expert advice. A slight change in the hairline can be normal during teenage years as the face matures, especially in boys (Image: Pexels)

As Dr Shareefa Chause, Dermatologist at Dr Shareefa Skin Care Clinic, Mumbai, tells us, not every change in your hairline at this age is cause for panic. She explains that "a

slight change in the hairline can be normal during teenage years as the face matures, especially in boys." This natural shift is often referred to as a maturing hairline and can happen gradually as facial structure evolves. However, there's a difference between subtle changes and more noticeable ones. "A clearly receding hairline or excessive hair fall may indicate early hair loss and should be checked by a doctor," she clarifies.

When is it something more than just a 'maturing hairline'?

When it comes to causes, genetics often plays the biggest role. Early-onset male pattern hair loss can begin sooner than expected, with hair follicles gradually "shrinking" over time. But it's rarely the only factor at play. Hormonal fluctuations during puberty, ongoing stress, poor nutrition, or even underlying scalp conditions can all contribute to changes in the hairline. This is why recognising patterns becomes important. A maturing hairline tends to move back slightly in a uniform way and then stabilise, without dramatic thinning. In contrast, early hair loss may feel more sudden, appear uneven—especially around the temples or crown—and be accompanied by increased hair fall. For teenagers who notice these signs, the dermatologist strongly advises against quick fixes. As Dr Chause puts it, "they should avoid self-medication and consult a dermatologist for proper evaluation." Alongside medical guidance, she also highlights the importance of maintaining a balanced diet, managing stress, and following gentle hair care practices to support overall hair health.

## Gastrointestinal surgeon warns against taking stomach discomfort lightly, shares case of 46-year-old diagnosed with cancer: 'Time nahi milta doctor'



Gastrointestinal surgeon Dr Kartik Sahni cautioned against taking "stomach discomfort" lightly, as he shared the case of a 46-year-old "busy" computer engineer who ended up ignoring such "stomach upset" for six months and was eventually diagnosed with sigmoid colon cancer with liver metastasis (a serious type of cancer which spreads from the sigmoid colon to the liver). "I saw a case today that left me shocked. A 46-year-old male, a computer engineer by profession, had 'stomach upset' for the past six months. Only discomfort, no bleeding, no bowel change. Nothing. No pain. Which is why he started ignoring. Antacids, over-the-counter drugs, home remedies. Busy life. Time nahi milta doctor (I don't get time). Ultrasound happened. Multiple liver PETs. Sigmoid colon cancer with liver metastasis. No pain. Cancer apna kaam silently karta raha," Dr Sahni said in a post on Instagram. Appealing to people not to ignore symptoms, or even minor discomfort that has persisted for a while, Dr Sahni said, "Please stomach issues ko normal mat samjho (don't consider stomach issues as normal). Ignoring for six months, which could have been diagnosed in six days, is the ultimate difference between life and death."

Dr Anil Heroor, director of oncological sciences at KIMS Hospitals, Thane, reiterated that "unfortunately, it is more common than people realise". "Cancers of the colon, especially on the left side like the sigmoid colon, can grow quietly for months or even years. Early symptoms are often vague: mild bloating, discomfort, acidity, or a feeling that

digestion isn't quite right. Since there is no dramatic pain or bleeding at first, people tend to ignore these signs," said Dr Heroor. According to Dr Heroor, colon cancer is increasingly being diagnosed in people in their 40s and even 30s. "Sedentary lifestyles, poor dietary habits, obesity, smoking, and chronic stress are contributing factors. Age should never be a reason to dismiss symptoms," asserted Dr Heroor. Cancer does not announce itself loudly in the early stages, Dr Heroor noted. "It often whispers. By the time strong symptoms appear, the disease may already be advanced. In this case, the lack of red flags like bleeding or weight loss gave a false sense of reassurance while the cancer continued to progress silently." According to Dr Heroor, over-the-counter medications can temporarily ease symptoms, which delays medical evaluation. "If digestive complaints last more than a few weeks despite treatment, they should not be overlooked. Symptom relief does not always mean the underlying problem has been resolved."

At what point should someone seek medical attention for stomach-related issues?

Dr Heroor emphasised that any digestive symptom that lasts more than three to four weeks deserves evaluation, especially in adults over 40. "Persistent discomfort, changes in bowel habits, unexplained fatigue, anaemia, or a feeling that something is 'not normal' should lead to further testing. Early consultation can make a life-saving difference." From a diagnostic standpoint, early endoscopic evaluation plays a critical role. "Upper gastrointestinal endoscopy should be considered when symptoms persist beyond 4-6 weeks despite treatment, particularly when risk factors or alarm features are present. Endoscopy allows direct visualisation of the lining of the stomach and oesophagus, targeted biopsies, and early detection of malignant or premalignant changes that may not be evident on imaging alone," said Dr Vikas Jindal, consultant, Dept of Gastroenterology at the CK Birla Hospital, Delhi. What to note? The key message is that persistent, unexplained gastrointestinal symptoms warrant timely and thorough evaluation. "Early differentiation between benign functional disorders and serious malignancy can significantly improve outcomes, as delays often result in diagnosis at advanced, less treatable stages," said Dr Jindal.

## Iran FM Araghchi warns of contamination risk after U.S.-Israeli strikes on Bushehr nuclear power plant



make ends meet. The strikes came as the search continued for a missing U.S. airman whose fighter jet went down over Iran, and as Tehran announced fresh attacks in the region, with the Revolutionary Guards saying they carried out a drone strike on a commercial ship in Bahrain allegedly linked to Israel. The war erupted more than a month ago with U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran that killed supreme leader Ali Khamenei, triggering a retaliation that has spread the conflict throughout the West Asia and convulsed the global economy.

## Back to the moon and beyond

Amid the turbulent geopolitics, marked by wars and nagging trade tensions, an ambitious space mission has brought a sense of collective purpose to a divided world and rekindled scientific curiosity to expand the horizons of knowledge. The successful launch and the progress of NASA's Artemis-II, a flyby mission to the moon, came as a whiff of fresh air in the midst of disturbing reports of military conflicts around the world. Artemis-II, carrying four astronauts of diverse ethnic backgrounds, is more than just a trip around the moon. It is part of a larger plan to return humans to the lunar surface, establish a permanent base, and eventually prepare for missions to Mars. It envisages using the moon as both a laboratory and a launchpad for future expeditions deep into space. Coming nearly 54 years since the last manned mission left the lunar surface in December 1972, Artemis-II has several firsts to its credit. While moving around the moon, the Orion spacecraft will travel to a distance of about 6,500 km from the far side of the moon. This will be the farthest that humans have ever ventured into space. The SLS (Space Launch System) rockets being used for the Artemis missions are the most powerful launch vehicles available to NASA right now. This is the first time that the SLS rocket and Orion spacecraft are being used to carry astronauts. The long-dormant dream of establishing a permanent lunar base draws one step closer, with the launch of Artemis-II. It will not land on the moon but circle it and return to Earth after a 10-day journey.

# Why Uzbeki Javokhir Sindarov is Time Master Javo



GNS News Agency, April 7

One thing Javokhir Sindarov has done to rattle older opponents is put them under intense time pressure at the Candidates, but not without losing his solid play. "It's always like you are playing with good comfort. Main thing is if you have time you always try to be confident because if you miss small tactics everything can change very fast," he explained to FIDE after defeating Wei Yi and going 5.5/6 at Cyprus.

Sindarov chooses moves to spend time on, and blitzes through others. "When I have time advantage I try to play a little faster but only after checking everything. I'm not trying to find best moves, but if I feel like here if I have some win-

ning moves then I take my time and think a lot. But otherwise I try to play faster and press his time like in usually every game," he explained. "I played a lot like this Vienna hybrid in eSports and yeah, we played a lot of these games. I expected it but I didn't prepare for this line. So it was a surprise. But it looks like some Italian position for black. And white had just one temp on a3. I like my position but I don't need to give him this stuff with bishop g5," he said.

So, how do his team function?

"My team just found this interesting idea, and I liked it. It's an interesting imbalance. From Italian I played a lot knight f3 knight c3 and if they play d6 I was always playing knight A4. Queen d3 is a novelty in my database. I only have one game that's queen e2," he revealed, possible thing for Gukesh to keep an eye on, should the Uzbek line up for World's as seems likely. "A3 surprised me. I understand he chose this opening because he needs to play something without (out of) my preparation. And I like his idea. He needed to play faster, maybe at some point he missed something," he said. Sindarov also revealed he believes in guerrilla moves at constant clip. "If he don't push I will just try to attack some small attacks from this side." Wei Yi said, "after queen d3 I was still in the book. But the position was not easy to play for both. Sindarov played some strong moves. After b4 I missed the idea played by Sindarov. Bishop g4 was a very strong idea. Sacrifice the f6 pawn but play for activity of pieces."

# 'Pahunchna easy hai': How Ravi Bishnoi went from the tapri outside SMS Stadium to four wickets at Ahmedabad

GNS News Agency, April 7

Strip away the deceptions Ravi Bishnoi layers around his bowling and the deliveries themselves are fairly simple — they usually slide in skidding, or break in with bounce. But he applies the twist all around them. First in the way he approaches the crease. He breaks to his left, then zig-zags back to his right, then hustles through briskly. Like a young boy running in angles to evade adults trying to hold him — to take back the mango he has stolen from the tree. And then the batsman has to take stock of the pace and the bounce. It was the eleventh over of the chase for Gujarat Titans when Bishnoi came on. Sai Sudharsan went immediately — went for the pull, but the line was away from him. He ended up dragging and miscuing it.

In his next over, two more. Glenn Phillips fell off the first ball of the thirteenth, pulling to long-on — the ball rushed on quicker than he anticipated and he was forced to hit it straighter than he wanted. Two balls later, Washington Sundar was done in by the line. He hadn't misread the googly nor its length — it was full, ideal for the slog sweep — but it broke more than he thought from the leg-stump line. Another top-edge. Cooked. Washington Sundar hadn't misread the googly nor its length — it was full, ideal for the slog sweep — but it broke more than he thought from the leg-stump line. (BCCI/Creimas Photo) Washington Sundar hadn't misread the googly nor its length — it was full, ideal for the slog sweep — but it broke more than he thought from the leg-stump line. In the fifteenth, the left-handed Rahul Tewatia reverse-bashed him for a six. Next ball — a slider skidding off the turf — Tewatia went for the cut. The pacy skid meant he edged it to the keeper. There is a chai ki tapri beside the Arjun statue outside the SMS Stadium in Jaipur. Ravi Bishnoi knows it well. He sat there once, outside the gates, and wept. He had taken five wickets and scored a hundred in the district tournament. His name was not on the list of a hundred and fifty boys called for the Rajasthan Under-19 trials. His brother told him to go anyway. "Main baat karta hoon peechhe." He would try speaking to officials. They didn't let him in. So he sat beside the statue and cried until someone inside made a phone call, and the gates opened.

Jodhpur is not a city that has produced India cricketers. When Bishnoi was growing up, nobody had. The academy where he trained — Spartans Cricket Academy — was built on a 100 by 100 plot. The coaches and the boys built the pitch themselves, in the Rajasthan summer. "Duniya kehni thi yaar ye ladke paagal ho gaye hain," Bishnoi tells Sports Yaari. "Itni garmi mein pata nahi kya kar rahe hain." The boys were not crazy. They were from Jodhpur, where the margin for error is smaller, where nobody will come to find you. "Peechhe dekhte ho to bahut accha lagta



hai," he tells Sports Yaari. "Ke wahan se leke yahan tak ki journey." And then, the line that matters: "Naa hi sirf main — poori academy grow ho rahi hai." Dhruv Jurel came and trained here. Others followed. A place the world once called mad has become, quietly, a pipeline. The Under-19 World Cup came and Bishnoi was its leading wicket-taker. The IPL came. Lucknow Super Giants drafted him without auction — alongside KL Rahul and Marcus Stoinis — before the bidding began. From the tapri outside SMS Stadium to a franchise's first signing.

But arrival is only the first question. The second — the harder one — is how you stay. "Pahunchna easy hai," Bishnoi tells Gamechangers. "But wahan rukna mushkil hai. It is the toughest job I think." He is specific: "Skill mein aap jab wahan pahunchte ho to sab ek saath hi hote hain. But jo mentally zyada strong hai, wahi wahan pe survive karta hai." A few years ago, Anil Kumble told Bishnoi not to worry about perceptions of his bowling — that he doesn't turn his leg break enough, or flight it more conventionally. "Just back your strengths and carry on." The advice has not been abandoned. It has been extended. Because the batsmen have extended their preparation. What he is adding now is the leg break. The stock ball most leg spinners lead with, the one he has until recently used sparingly. "Ab it's time to bring leg spin aur us pe mujhe aur kaam karna padega," he tells Gamechangers. And then, with the candour of someone who has actually tried: "Legspin bahut time lagta hai yaar usmein. Aur aapko bahut mehnat karni padegi." The Spartans academy in Jodhpur has a second ground now. The boys who built the first pitch in the summer heat are scattered across IPL franchises. The world that once called them mad has gone quiet. Ravi Bishnoi is still adding the leg break. Last night he took four wickets — with the angles, the blur, the pace that rushes on quicker than anticipated. The mango still in his pocket.

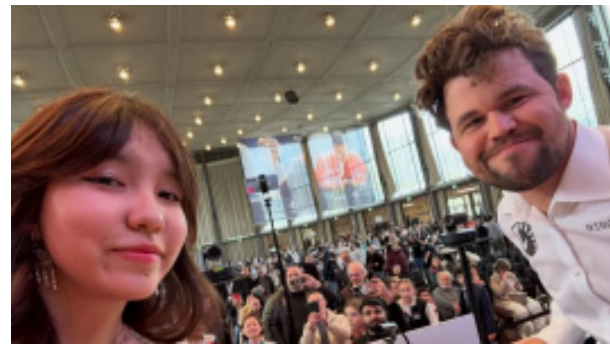
# Why Magnus Carlsen agreed to a selfie with opponent, then immediately got arbiter to take away her phone

GNS News Agency, April 7

Nurman, second only behind Bibisara Assaubayeva in Kazakhstan, was already seated when Carlsen turned up to play against her and the duo shook hands. Nurman then asked for a selfie. (Credit: Alua Nurman Instagram) Nurman, second only behind Bibisara Assaubayeva in Kazakhstan, was already seated when Carlsen turned up to play against her and the duo shook hands. Nurman then asked for a selfie. (Credit: Alua Nurman Instagram) Kazakh women's No 2 Alua Nurman was up against Magnus Carlsen at the Grenke Chess Festival, a FIDE event at Karlsruhe, where the likes of Ian Nepomniachtchi, Levon Aronian, Vincent Keymer, Artur Yusupov, and Hans Niemann also participated. It was a Swiss format with freestyle time control.

The chess festival sees more than 3,500 participants across all sections, and is the largest chess tournament in the world. In the Freestyle Open A, a prize fund of €205,250 is at stake, including €60,000 for first place. Nurman, second only behind Bibisara Assaubayeva in Kazakhstan, was already seated when Carlsen turned up to play against her and the duo shook hands. Nurman then asked for a selfie. According to a video posted by ChessBase's Abhodaya Ram, Nurman then proceeds to request for a selfie, which Carlsen obliges with a big broad smile. He returns the phone which Nurman returns to her handbag.

Carlsen, who has had massive issues with opponents over cheating in chess, which has led to stringent measures being adopted, followed the correct protocol, by getting the arbiter to take away the phone. As per FIDE rules, had Nurman won the match, and been found with a phone on her person, she could've been expelled from the event



even. A controversy was averted, though Carlsen copped social media criticism for 'snitching' and 'beta' behaviour. Nurman, who might only have been a fan of the legend, looking for a selfie, however was required to not keep her phone while playing, unless the arbiter permitted. In this case, he didn't. At the event from April 2-6, Germany's number one chess player Vincent Keymer and Hans Niemann (USA) led the Freestyle Chess Open A with a perfect score of 5/5 after five rounds. They were due to face each other in Round 6 in a direct clash for the sole lead. The internet was filled with videos showing Niemann and Carlsen crossing each other when pacing the floor. In the competition, a group of six players followed on 4.5/5, including world number one Magnus Carlsen with only one player, German grandmaster Daniel Hausrath, currently ranked outside the world's top 1000, among the elite. Sunday's round 6 and 7 will decide the structure at the top, with the leaders meeting and the chasing group paired against each other. The winner of the Freestyle Open A qualifies for the FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship 2027.

# Dewald Brevis likely to return for Chennai Super Kings against Royal Challengers Bengaluru



GNS News Agency, April 7

IPL 2026, Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) vs Chennai Super Kings (CSK) Playing 11 Today Match, Full Squad: After a gap of over a week, defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru take the field against a down on their luck Chennai Super Kings as the two star-studded lineups face off at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

While RCB are coming off a win vs the Sunrisers Hyderabad in the opening match, CSK are already in a fix after losing back to back matches to Rajasthan Royals and Punjab Kings. Chennai are already without their talisman MS Dhoni but there's some good news at last on the other batting front with South African big hitter Dewald Brevis likely to return to the lineup in this match. They might also opt to use Akeal Hosen as another spin option in place of Prashant

Veer. Bengaluru, meanwhile, are unlikely to tinker with a winning combination.

RCB vs CSK Predicted XI's Chennai Super Kings: Ruturaj Gaikwad (c), Sanju Samson (wk), Ayush Mhatre, Kartik Sharma, Dewald Brevis, Shivam Dube, Sarfaraz Khan, Akeal Hosen, Noor Ahmad, Khaleel Ahmed, Anshul Kamboj, Matt Henry/Jamie Overton

Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Phil Salt, Virat Kohli, Devdutt Padikkal, Rajat Patidar (c), Romario Shepherd, Tim David, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Krunal Pandya, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jacob Duffy, Abhinandan Singh, Suyash Sharma

RCB vs CSK Squads Chennai Super Kings: Sanju Samson(w), Ruturaj Gaikwad(c), Ayush Mhatre, Sarfaraz Khan, Shivam Dube, Kartik Sharma, Prashant Veer, Noor Ahmad, Anshul Kamboj, Matt Henry, Khaleel Ahmed, Jamie Overton, Rahul Chahar, Matthew Short, Ramakrishna Ghosh, Gurjapneet Singh, Akeal Hosen, MS Dhoni, Shreyas Gopal, Spencer Johnson, Mukesh Choudhary, Urvil Patel, Aman Khan, Dewald Brevis, Zakary Foulkes Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Philip Salt, Virat Kohli, Devdutt Padikkal, Rajat Patidar(c), Jitesh Sharma(w), Tim David, Romario Shepherd, Krunal Pandya, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Abhinandan Singh, Jacob Duffy, Suyash Sharma, Jacob Bethell, Rasikh Salam Dar, Kanishk Chouhan, Venkatesh Iyer, Josh Hazlewood, Mangesh Yadav, Vihaan Malhotra, Vicky Ostwal, Jordan Cox, Swapnil Singh, Satvik Deswal

# Ravi Bishnoi explains where Rajasthan Royals won their IPL 2026 thriller against Gujarat Titans: 'That made the difference between the two sides'

GNS News Agency, April 7

Bishnoi, who removed the well-set Sai Sudharsan for 73 and later also dismissed Washington Sundar for four runs, said that he was looking to make full use of the longer boundaries against both southpaws, and the plan worked on Saturday. (BCCI/CREIMAS Photo) Bishnoi, who removed the well-set Sai Sudharsan for 73 and later also dismissed Washington Sundar for four runs, said that he was looking to make full use of the longer boundaries against both southpaws, and the plan worked on Saturday. (BCCI/CREIMAS Photo)

The Gujarat Titans batting unit comprises of more than one left-hander, and under such circumstances, it can become challenging for a leg-spinner to not just get wickets, but also control the flow of boundaries. Yet, Rajasthan Royals leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi, through a combination of skill and guile, managed to deliver one of the best spells of his IPL career, taking 4/41 in his four overs to help the visitors win by six runs.

Despite his Player of the Match exploits, however, Bishnoi praised the pace trio of Sandeep Sharma, Jofra Archer and Tushar Deshpande for the way they executed with the ball in the death overs, admitting that, along with his performance, that proved to be the difference between victory and defeat in the end. "Sandy bhai (Sandeep Sharma) is a fabulous bowler, as we all know. But the way Jofra Archer and Tushar Deshpande executed their plans, I felt their execution was better in the last two overs. That made the difference between the two sides, the execution was the difference," Bishnoi said at the post-match press conference.

The 25-year-old, who removed the well-set Sai Sudharsan for 73 and later also dismissed Washington



Sundar for four runs, said that he was looking to make full use of the longer boundaries against both southpaws, and the plan worked on Saturday. "There was a big boundary on one side, and more left-hand batsmen in that team. I was trying to bowl the googly, so I was trying to hit them with the middle leg so that it would be difficult to hit on that side. In that plan, 2-3 batsmen were trapped. I tried to hit on the long end with the ball that came out for the lefty. In that, Sai and Washi were out. I discussed that tactic with my captain, and he worked with Dhruv," Bishnoi said. The IPL has seen several batter-friendly wickets so far this season, making it harder for bowlers to have a say in the game. Bishnoi felt that bowlers needed to focus on bowling a consistent line and length on surfaces to succeed. "I was focusing on my line and length. When I missed them, I got hit for fours and sixes. If I tried to hit the right lines and lengths, then batters would automatically look to go after you and get out." "The tracks are so flat that you can't miss them. The margin of error (is small). The execution matters from the first over to the last over. The more you execute well, the results will fall in your favour," the leg-spinner said.

# Badminton Asia Championships: Why Dinesh Khanna, India's only singles champion, didn't know what to do with the tea set he was presented with at Lucknow in 1965

GNS News Agency, April 7

Many years after Dinesh Khanna won India's first and only singles title at the Badminton Asia Championships, the Amritsar ace faced a 'storm in a teacup'. His wife was glaring at the white metal tea set Khanna was given after winning the Asian title, in which she could never actually serve tea. The rolling trophy that Khanna had won at Lucknow in 1965 ended up as a keepsake for the next Asian champion from Indonesia. The military junta commander from the next edition in Manila in 1969 had proposed that they would carve out a brand-new Asian rolling trophy. So, Khanna, who had won as an unseeded player, defeating Thai Sangob Rattanusorn 15-3, 15-11, was left with no trophy to flaunt on the shelves and a nonexistent gold medal, which is only mentioned on the Wikipedia page. "After some years, my wife said, 'What are we to do with the tea set? We couldn't use it to drink tea. I couldn't display a tea set in cabinets like a trophy. We got rid of it naturally!'" Khanna, now 83, laughs uproariously at the memory.

The rolling trophy that Khanna had won at Lucknow in 1965 ended up as a keepsake for the next Asian champion from Indonesia. The rolling trophy that Khanna had won at Lucknow in 1965 ended up as a keepsake for the next Asian champion from Indonesia. (Right) Khanna receiving the trophy from David Bloomer, president IBF, now named BWF (Images via special arrangement)

No Indian singles shuttler has won the Asian Championships since. Satwik-Chirag engraved their names in doubles in 2023. But from the outset, the Badminton Asia Championships, which start this Tuesday, and are high on Lakshya Sen's priority list this season, have seemed a tough title to nail. A fresh civil engineering graduate from Chandigarh's Punjab University, Khanna — firmly in the shadow of Nandu Natekar and Suresh Goel — had given himself a year to devote to badminton. In 1963, playing the inter-state, he twisted his knee. An open-knee surgery followed, but on his comeback, he got a good six months of training with the big Indian names, and ended up at the three-week camp at Lucknow as India's fourth-best singles player. "The plan was to win a couple of rounds, then sit and watch the top badminton players of the world in action from the stands, because in Amritsar you hardly got to watch great badminton," Khanna recalls. So he wound up in the quarters against Yoshinori Itagaki, a barely 5-foot Japanese, nicknamed 'Bouncing Ball' because of his relentless

retrieving. Khanna, an unapologetic and diligent defensive player himself with no pretension to pretty strokeplay, liked his afternoon naps for recovery and didn't train much physically outside the court. "My teammates came to me before the quarters and said, 'Woh toh ek ghante se skipping kar raha hai.' (Itagaki was skipping for an hour). I said, 'Main toh rest kar raha hoon. Theek hai, usko skipping karne do,' ('I will rest. It's okay, let him skip,' he recalls. Indian Express coverage of the 1965 title by renowned Ron Hendricks. The press gallery was just behind the base line where Khanna was testing shuttles. Indian Express coverage of the 1965 title by renowned Ron Hendricks. The press gallery was just behind the base line where Khanna was testing shuttles. It wasn't self-confidence or anything. "At engineering college, somebody advised me to skip to improve speed. I must have tried on a hard surface. I couldn't walk for the next 3 days, so I never skipped after that day," he says. Itagaki lay in wait. Khanna took the first set 15-1, because the Indian's impassive defence rattled the Japanese. In the second, however, the rallies started. "A Hong Kong player with a fetish for stats later told me, the longest rally went to 50 strokes, and there were many of 40, too," Khanna recalls. At 7-7, his feet had started shaking from exhaustion, but the thought of a third set with Itagaki jolted him at 12-12 to use his backhand to make the similarly tiring Japanese go for overheads, running even more. The chair umpire would take a small timeout to inform organisers to keep two stretchers ready beside the court. Not only would Khanna prevail, but he also defeated India's best strokemaker, Suresh Goel, in the semis. Goel had evicted top seed Yew Cheng Hoe in the quarters. But finding himself in the finals was surreal for Khanna. "I had no tension. Just surprised that I was initially watching from the stands as a fan, but ended up playing the final myself," he says. The Nehru Memorial in Delhi that followed the Asian Championships in Lucknow, was virtually another top Asian meet. Khanna faced Yew Cheng Hoe who was the top seed in Asians and Nehru both, and defeated him in the finals of Nehru Memorial. The Nehru Memorial in Delhi that followed the Asian Championships in Lucknow, was virtually another top Asian meet. Khanna faced Yew Cheng Hoe who was the top seed in Asians and Nehru both, and defeated him in the finals of Nehru Memorial. Inspiration came from a Lucknow legend. "India wasn't great at sport then. But before the final, KD Singh Babu, who had won Olympic golds with Dhyanchand, shook hands with me and wished me luck. I

## 2,500 movies in 62 years: Even if we start watching Sukumari's films at a rate of one per day, we would finish only by 2033



advance Born on October 6, 1940, Sukumari made her silver screen debut at the tender age of 10 in the Tamil film *Or Iravu* (1951). Director P Neelakantan offered her a role in the movie after chancing upon her while she was coincidentally on a film set with her relative, veteran actor Padmini (one among the 'Travancore Sisters' trio). Her passion for dance and her natural acting style quickly made her a prominent figure in the industry.

Even her entry into Malayalam cinema was entirely coincidental. In director SM Sriramulu Naidu's *Thaskaraveeran* (1957), when the actor who was supposed to play Kottarakkara Sreedharan Nair's wife failed to show up, the role was given to Sukumari, who was then a member of the movie's dance troupe.

Sukumari born on October 6, 1940. Sukumari had the unique fortune of playing both the heroine and the mother to several legendary heroes. (Credit: AMMA) Right from the onset of her career, despite it being an era dominated by leading ladies like Sarada, Sheela, and Jayabharathi, Sukumari managed to handle serious mother roles and comedic ones with equal ease, regardless of her actual age. Her on-screen pairing with Adoor Bhasi in comedy sequences became iconic, and the two appeared together in over 30 films. Interestingly, she had the unique fortune of playing both the heroine and the mother to almost all legendary heroes in Malayalam cinema of that era, including Sathyan, Prem Nazir, and Madhu. She also shared the screen with veterans like SP Pillai, Bahadoor, Sankaradi, Thikkurissy Sukumaran Nair, Nedumudi Venu, Bharat Gopy, and Thilakan, and even stole the spotlight from them often. Later, she also became an on-screen mother, sister, and friend to the next generation of actors like Mohanlal and Mammooty, among others. In an illustrious career spanning 62 years, Sukumari appeared in over 2,500 films. Sukumari won the National Film Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role for her performance in *Namma Gramam*. (Credit: AMMA)

In an illustrious career spanning 62 years, she appeared in over 2,500 films across Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Sinhala, French, Italian, Bengali, Tulu, English, and Kannada languages. In 2003, she was honoured with the Padma Shri. Aside from a National Film Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role for her performance in *Namma Gramam*, she also won several Kerala State Film Awards for Second Best Actress. Beyond cinema, she was a vibrant presence in dance, theatre, and stage shows as well. She is widely known among her colleagues and Malayalam movie audiences as Sukumari "Ammma." According to Rediff, she married veteran filmmaker A Bhimsingh in 1959 at the age of 19 but became a widow by 30. She shared a son named Suresh Bhimsingh, with him. Sukumari passed away at a private hospital in Chennai on March 26, 2013, after battling burns suffered following an accident at her residence. Yet, thanks to the hundreds of characters she immortalised, Sukumari continues to live on in the hearts of film lovers.

Versatility is not something all actors possess. In fact, it's often far more difficult to be versatile than to be prolific, which is why not many attempt it. As tedious as the task already is, the industry's penchant for stereotyping artistes adds to the woes of those trying to expand their horizons. As a result, many end up playing characters that seem cut from the same cloth over and over again. Even the Malayalam film industry, renowned for its experimentation and revered for its artistes' willingness not to be weighed down by their image, has at times chained actors to certain roles, thus denying them the opportunity to experiment.

However, a few have stormed ahead, breaking down such barriers and not allowing anyone to reduce their artistic identity to a few archetypes. Sukumari was not just one of them, but arguably the queen among them. She could switch from Dick Ammayi (Boeing Boeing) to Devaki (Arappatta Kettiya Gramathil) at whim. For her, the journey from Revathi (Poochakkoru Mookkuthi) to Sulochana Thankappan (Thalayamamthram) was as effortless as moving from Maggie Aunty (Vandanam) to Kannappa Chekavar's wife (Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha), Subhadra Kunjamma (Chakkikotha Chankaran), and Nabisa (Mizhikal Sakshi). She could be the funny one, the arrogant one, the devious one, the troubled one, the aching one, the scarred one, the envious one, and the liberated one — back-to-back or even simultaneously. Must Read | Mammooty considered becoming a film director as he feared being phased out of acting after consecutive flops: 'He even accepted an

## Pawan Kalyan's Jalsa had a video game before anyone else — and that's not even its biggest achievement

There are films that do well at the box office, and then there are films that turn into something else entirely. *Jalsa* belongs to the second category. It arrived at exactly the right moment in Pawan Kalyan's career, did things no Telugu film had done before in terms of marketing and music, carried ideas that stayed in the audience's mind long after the credits rolled, and somehow only grew in stature after the cameras stopped. Before *Jalsa*, Pawan Kalyan had delivered five consecutive underperforming films. The industry had started to question whether the box office pull he had built through hits like *Thammudu*, *Badri*, and *Kushi* still held.

Written and directed by Trivikram Srinivas and produced by Allu Aravind under the Geetha Arts banner, *Jalsa* released on April 2, 2008, and on its opening day set the highest first-day collection in Telugu cinema history at the time, as well as the highest for any South Indian film in a single state. It ended the year as the highest-grossing Telugu film of 2008. It was also the first film in Pawan Kalyan's career to cross the Rs 25 crore share mark. The story and what made it work Pawan Kalyan plays Sanjay Sahu, a post-graduate from Osmania University working as a gym instructor. He is in love with Indu (Kamalinee Mukherjee), but her father, a police officer played by Prakash Raj, disapproves. Later, Bhagyamathi (Ileana D'Cruz), Indu's sister, falls for Sanjay, and her father too rejects the match after revealing Sanjay's Naxalite past. The story builds toward a confrontation with the central antagonist, Damodar Reddy (Mukesh Rishi), a politically powerful factionist. One detail that still catches new viewers off guard is how the film opens. Mahesh Babu provided the voiceover introduction for Pawan Kalyan's character. At the time, the two were the dominant names in Telugu cinema, and having one introduce the other was a gesture that generated enormous goodwill before audiences had seen a single scene.

Aditya Music acquired the audio rights for Rs 90 lakh, the highest price paid for a Telugu film soundtrack at that time. The music release function was broadcast by four Telugu television channels and registered a TRP rating of 27.95, a record for a film event at the time. In its first week, 35 lakh units of audio cassettes were sold, and *Jalsa* songs were being broadcast 64 times every day on FM radio, surpassing the previous record of 34. The music's commercial reach did not stop there. Ringtone downloads from the *Jalsa* soundtrack alone generated approximately Rs 1.45 crore, a figure that marked a genuine shift in how the Telugu music market was being monetised. In 2008, that was a number the industry had not seen from a film's music in quite this way. The first movie-based video game in South Indian cinema

This is one of those *Jalsa* facts that tends to surprise people, even longtime fans of the film. As part of a wider marketing push, the team behind *Jalsa* went further than any South Indian film had gone before. *Jalsa* became the first Telugu and South Indian film to have an official video game. The game was launched at a function at Hotel Novotel in Hyderabad on March 22, 2008. The online version was developed by R22 Games, while the mobile version was developed by FX Labs. The online game was available for



free, while the mobile game was priced at Rs 50 per download and made available across 42 Big C outlets in Andhra Pradesh. The developer of the online version, Chris Whaley, said at the launch that *Jalsa* was the best action game he had developed up to that point.

The themes and philosophy inside a commercial entertainer The central theme of *Jalsa* is fear, specifically who uses it, who is controlled by it, and what it costs. Sanjay Sahu begins the film having already passed through one kind of fear. His Naxalite past, drawn out through a second-half flashback, shows a young man radicalised by the experience of poverty and inequality, who then came to question whether violence in the name of justice was solving anything at all. One of the film's most quoted lines comes directly from this period of Sanjay's life: the idea that when innocent people are dying in a war supposedly waged for innocents, the meaning of the war itself must be questioned. Trivikram was not endorsing Naxalism or condemning it. He was asking the audience to sit with a harder question: what does a person do when the system that failed them is the same system they are told to work within? The antagonist, Damodar Reddy, operates entirely through fear. He is presented as a man whose power rests not on strength but on the belief others hold in that strength. The climax, which some critics felt arrived too quickly, revolves around this idea. Sanjay's method of defeating Damodar Reddy is not through greater force but by dismantling the structure of fear around him, making his power visible as performance rather than substance. The interval monologue, which remains the most-discussed scene in the film, cuts through the comedy that surrounds it with deliberate force. Trivikram uses it to address the audience directly through Sanjay, questioning who actually has the right to speak about hardship, and forcing a distinction between inconvenience and genuine suffering. The scene has been reposted, quoted in political speeches, and played at fan events for eighteen years because it does something the rest of the film does not try to do. It steps outside the entertainment and makes a direct argument. Pawan Kalyan himself has spoken about the weight behind those lines. He said that Trivikram wrote the interval dialogue with the explicit intention of steering him toward cinema and away from politics. Pawan entered politics anyway.

## 'I shot this with Ranbir Kapoor': Turban-clad actor clears the air on AI claims over Ramayana teaser 'colour-changing' glitch



Ranbir Kapoor's *Ramayana* teaser finally released on Thursday, and has been the talk of the town since then. While the actor's look as Rama is earning praise worldwide, the teaser has also faced criticism online over its VFX. "More over, a particular sequence in which the turban of a supporting actor appeared to change colour mid-scene, sparked speculation about the use of AI. However, the actor seen in that scene has now set the record straight on social media.

In the teaser, a frame shows Ranbir Kapoor's Lord Rama walking through Ayodhya as people shower flower petals on him. As the shot shifts to an over-the-shoulder angle, a person on the left appears to have a turban that changes from blue to purple. The clip has been going viral on social media, with netizens citing it as possible proof of generative AI in the teaser. However, actor Saket Patel, who starred in the scene, took to his Instagram handle and cleared the air. He clarified that he is the citizen seen wearing the turban in the shot. He also revealed that the sequence was shot on location, and has not been generated by AI. In a video message, Saket said, "I'm Saket Patel. I

am an actor, and believe me, I'm not AI." Talking about the posts calling the scene fake, he added, "Somehow people are fully convinced that I don't exist. I shot for this almost two years ago with real crowds on real sets, real me, and real Ranbir Kapoor in front of me. The funny thing is that in 2026, if something looks too nice, people call it fake."

Prithik Roshan defends *Ramayana*

Amid ongoing criticism of the teaser's VFX, Prithik Roshan shared a note explaining different visual styles and audience expectations, while also defending *Ramayana*. He praised filmmakers pushing boundaries, writing, "Today some special humans among us, like the makers of films like *Kalki*, *Bahubali*, *Ramayana* (also my dad for *koi mil gaya n krish ofcourse*) are my heroes, they have the guts and vision to do what's never been done all for the love of cinema so that we the audience get to experience something never watched before. From my point of view they risked all that money, and years and years of effort just so another 11yr old kid could feel what I felt." Urging viewers to be more open-minded, he added, "AND you can't criticize the maker just cause he has chosen one style while you prefer another style. That's not fair. So sometimes when you say 'bad VFX.' Maybe it's just a style you didn't expect? So next time don't just ask, 'Is it real?' First ask, 'Is it right for the story?' 'Is it making me feel what the maker intended?' Debate it. But debate it with awareness." Produced by Namit Malhotra, *Ramayana* is mounted on a massive Rs 4,000 crore budget, making it the most expensive Indian film. Besides Ranbir Kapoor, the movie also features Yash as Ravana, Sai Pallavi as Sita, Sunny Deol as Lord Hanuman, and Ravie Dubey as Lakshman. Helmed by Nitesh Tiwari, *Ramayana Part One* is set to hit the theatres in October 2026, while part two will release on Diwali, next year.

## Ranbir Kapoor shares daughter Raha's adorable reaction to Ramayana: 'Did you shoot with Hanuman today?'

Since the teaser release of Nitesh Tiwari's *Ramayana*, fans have been widely praising Ranbir Kapoor's look as Lord Rama. The makers also hosted a grand teaser screening in Los Angeles for a select audience, followed by an interaction with fans and the media. During the event, Ranbir shared a sweet anecdote about his daughter Raha Kapoor, revealing that she would often ask him about shooting with Hanuman while he was working on the film. During a chat with AP, Ranbir said, "I was extremely blessed to have this opportunity that coincided with me becoming a father. On one side, I am going to work and play Lord Rama, but I am also going home and telling my daughter, Raha, stories about *Ramayana*. Just to see a 3-year-old so engaged and asking me, 'Did you shoot with Lord Hanuman today? Or Sita today? What did you do today?'"

He further added, "She has so much interest in this story, which tells that this is in our DNA. The culture is so seeped into our subconscious that it comes very naturally — the love and interest come very naturally to us. We really want that to appeal to a larger audience and a global audience, and really share something that we have believed in for centuries and will continue to believe in for centuries." In another event, Ranbir had revealed that he initially rejected *Ramayana*, because he felt that he was not ready to play the role of Lord Rama. But, the birth of his daughter Raha changed everything for him. "I remember when Namit offered me this part around 4 years ago, my instant reaction was 'No', I'm not fit enough, not good enough, and I won't be able to do full justice," he shared. The actor continued, "That fear very quickly turned into gratitude because opportunities like this were needed very much in my life. I was in a period in my life where I needed to change my life and lifestyle. I became a father for the first time. I think the



sweet coincidence of playing Lord Rama and becoming a father was needed for a turning point in my life." About *Ramayana* Backed by producer Namit Malhotra, *Ramayana* is being mounted on a staggering Rs 4,000 crore budget, making it the most expensive Indian film ever and one of the costliest productions globally. The film also features Yash as Ravana, Sai Pallavi as Sita, Sunny Deol as Hanuman, and Ravie Dubey as Lakshman. The ensemble also includes Kajal Aggarwal, Rakul Preet Singh, Arun Govil, Kunal Kapoor, Adinath Kothare, Sheeba Chaddha, and Indira Krishnan. The film is planned as a two-part saga. While the first part is slated for a theatrical release in October 2026, the second chapter is expected to arrive in 2027.

## 'I was 15 and in IT class': Janhvi Kapoor recalls the horror of finding her morphed images online

Janhvi Kapoor recently spoke about the darker realities of growing up in the spotlight, recalling a traumatic experience from her teenage years. In a recent conversation, she shared how she first came across a morphed, sexually explicit image of herself while still in school.

On Raj Shamani's podcast, Janhvi recalled being just 15 years old when the incident occurred. While attending an IT class at school, she realised that male classmates were looking at a pornographic website. To her horror, the site featured a deepfake-style image of her face morphed onto someone else's body. "I remember I was in my IT class and I saw boys in my class looking at this site and there was a photo of me on it," she shared. Janhvi described the experience as isolating, noting that at such a young age, she felt she had to "rationalise" the lack of morality on social media because of her family's fame. The evolution of digital harassment

While the initial incident happened years ago, Janhvi emphasised that the problem has only evolved with the rise of Artificial Intelligence. She expressed deep concern over how AI-generated visuals are now used to create false narratives. She added, "I am not at peace with it. There are visuals of me out there, even shared by official news pages, which are completely AI. I have never worn those clothes or been photographed like that." The actor noted that even reputable news pages occasionally share AI visuals of her in outfits she has never worn. This, she argues, poses a professional threat and said, "It gets circulated as if it's something I've put out. That creates a certain kind of impression. Suppose tomorrow I go to a director and I say, 'Listen, I am not comfortable wearing this,' they can point to a morphed image and say, 'But you've done it before.'" The "price of privilege" Janhvi Kapoor added that while it affects her deeply, she often feels hesitant to complain about such things. "It upsets me, of course. But I feel like I don't have that much of a voice to complain," she said, adding that perceptions of privilege make it harder to speak out.



"There's this attitude — you've got so much in life, thoda seh lo, don't complain. So I don't think my voice has that credibility yet. There will be backlash, and it might take away from the cause," she added. However, she said that a lot of other women in the film industry have also called out the deepfakes. Several actors across the film industry have spoken out against the growing misuse of AI. Alongside Janhvi Kapoor, stars like Rashmika Mandanna have flagged viral morphed videos, while Aishwarya Rai Bachchan reportedly explored legal options after explicit AI-generated content surfaced online. Anil Kapoor has also taken legal action to safeguard his personality rights in the digital space. Globally, actors such as Scarlett Johansson have raised concerns about how easily deepfake technology can be misused.

Disclaimer: This report discusses incidents of digital harassment and the psychological impact of AI-generated deepfakes. The information provided is for educational and awareness purposes and does not constitute professional psychological or legal advice.