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Police mishandling of case leads to murder in police custody

Sangareddy: The role of Zaheerabad police came under scrutiny after the murder of a woman by her husband, while being brought to the police station, after the woman allegedly eloped with her friend. The woman's husband, who was travelling in the car along with a police constable whipped out a knife and plunged it into her throat killing her. The technical custodial death brought into sharp focus the role of Zaheerabad police, which allowed the assailant husband to sit along with the woman and their relative in the rear seat. The police constable accompanying them was in the front passage seat when the gruesome murder took place.

Three youths killed in road crash on Sagar Road

Hyderabad: In a tragic road crash, three persons died after a speeding car hit a scooter and a pedestrian at Hastinapuram on Sagar Road on Wednesday. According to police, the man, whose identity was not immediately disclosed allegedly driving a car under the influence of alcohol rammed into a two-wheeler and a pedestrian in the morning. The vehicle reportedly dragged the victims for nearly 100-meters before overturning. The victims have been identified as Shiva and Sandeep, students of Mahaveer Engineering College, who were travelling on the motorcycle. A third youth, who was walking along the road, also died in the incident. His identity was yet to be known.

Trump announces 50% tariffs on nations supplying weapons to Iran

WASHINGTON, APRIL 8

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday said any country supplying Iran with military weapons will face immediate 50% tariffs with no exemptions, announcing the duty in a social media post one day after agreeing to a two-week ceasefire with Tehran.

He said the United States will work closely with Iran, which has undergone "regime change", and will be talking about tariff and sanctions relief with Tehran.

"We are, and will be, talking Tariff and Sanctions relief with Iran," Trump said in a social media post. Trump said there would be no enrichment of uranium and said many of the 15 points in the US plan proposed to Iran have been agreed to. — with Agencies

Shippers said on Wednesday they needed more clarity on the terms of the US-Iran ceasefire before resuming transit through the Strait of Hormuz, as Iran issued fresh warnings about any vessels attempting to sail through the waterway. The six-week conflict had brought traffic through the strait - a chokepoint for about 20% of global oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments - close to a standstill, pushing global energy prices sharply higher. Iran said it would offer safe passage in coordination with its armed forces, though its coastguards warned on Wednesday that any ship attempting to sail without permissions would be "targeted and destroyed".

The energy crisis caused by the Iran conflict will not be short-lived, an EU Commission spokesperson said on Wednesday. EU Commission spokesperson



Anna-Kaisa Ikonen told reporters that around 8.5% of the bloc's LNG, 7% of its oil and 40% of its jet fuel and diesel travels through the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has mostly blocked access to during the war. "What we can already foresee is that this crisis will not be short-

lived," she said. "It's a very, very important choke point, obviously."

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has confirmed Tehran's participation in Pakistan-facilitated peace talks with the US in Islamabad, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Wednesday. Shehbaz said he held a "warm and substantive" telephone conversation with President Pezeshkian, hours after the US and Iran agreed on a conditional two-week ceasefire that included the opening of the Strait of Hormuz for shipping. "I conveyed my deep appreciation for the wisdom and sagacity of the Iranian leadership in accepting Pakistan's offer to host peace talks in Islamabad later this week to work jointly for the return of peace to the region," he said. "President Pezeshkian reaffirmed Iran's participation in the upcoming negotiations and expressed appreciation for Pakistan's efforts, while conveying his best wishes for

the people of Pakistan," Shehbaz added.

The United States will work closely with Iran, which has undergone "regime change," and will be talking about tariff and sanctions relief with Tehran, US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday after declaring a two-week ceasefire.

A fresh divergence emerged over the scope of the newly announced ceasefire between the United States and Iran, with Israel on Wednesday asserting that Lebanon is not part of the arrangement, contradicting claims made by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. In a statement, the Office of the Prime Minister of Israel said it supported US President Donald Trump's decision to suspend strikes against Iran for two weeks, subject to Tehran immediately reopening key maritime routes and halting attacks on the US, Israel and other countries in the region.

US President Donald Trump is "impatient" about making progress toward ending the Iran war and has instructed his negotiating team to engage the Iranians in good faith, Vice President JD Vance said on Wednesday. Speaking at an event in Budapest during his trip to Hungary, Vance said a deal was possible if Iran negotiated sincerely, but cautioned that while some parts of the Iranian system were approaching the talks constructively, others were not. He described the situation as a "fragile truce." "He's impatient. He's impatient to make progress. He has told us to negotiate in good faith, and I think if they negotiate in good faith, we will be able to find a deal."



Congress govt turns to CSR as fiscal strain deepens

HYDERABAD, APRIL 8

Facing mounting debt and limited fiscal space, the Telangana government under Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy is turning to corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds to support welfare initiatives in education, healthcare, and conservation. AP news updates

Hyderabad: Amid mounting debt and tightening finances, the Congress government in Telangana is now looking at corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds to support key welfare sectors. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy pitched CSR as a partnership rather than an expense, urging companies to step up spending in education, healthcare and water conservation that are traditionally funded by the State.

At a meeting with corporate representatives on Wednesday, the Chief Minister stressed the need for 100% effective utilisation of CSR funds and invited firms to directly coordinate with the government to implement

projects. He announced the appointment of a dedicated special chief secretary to streamline CSR usage, indicating a clear desperation of the government for funds. City & Local Guides

Corporate representatives expressed willingness to invest in school education, healthcare and heritage conservation, after Revanth Reddy pointed out that companies that benefit from local infrastructure should reinvest in those regions, particularly in improving education standards and skill development. The outreach yielded immediate commitments, with the Raheja Group and Ramky Group pledging Rs 50 crore each, and the Yashoda Foundation Rs 10 crore, primarily for education. The Chief Minister's meeting with corporate companies gained significance at a time when public finances are under stress, with rising liabilities limiting fiscal space for large-scale social spending. By actively mobilising CSR funds, the government appears to be supplementing budgetary constraints through private participation.

Everything Began from Here: Mamata After Filing Nomination for Bhabanipur

Kolkata, April 8

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday filed her nomination papers as the TMC candidate for the Bhabanipur assembly seat, and said everything in her life began from here. Amid a sea of supporters raising slogans of 'Mamata Banerjee zindabad' and 'TMC zindabad', Banerjee led a roadshow from her Kalighat residence to the Alipore Survey Building, where she filed the nomination papers.

She walked nearly 800 metres with folded hands and her trademark smile, greeting party workers lined up on both sides of the road.

"I was born and brought up here in Bhabanipur only. Everything in my life began from here," Banerjee told reporters after filing her nomination papers.

Seeking support for the TMC beyond the Bhabanipur contest, she said, "I would appeal to the people, not just in Bhabanipur but across all 294 seats, to ensure the victory of our candidates. We will win with a bigger mandate."

The TMC had won 213 seats in the 2021 assembly polls.

Banerjee, however, expressed concern over the deletion of names from the electoral rolls and said her party would again move a court against the freezing of the voter list.

"I am really pained that so many names have been deleted from the electoral rolls. I fail to understand why the voter lists have been frozen. We will again move a court against it," Banerjee added.

The three-time MLA from Bhabanipur is set to take on BJP candidate Suwendu Adhikari in the high-profile contest.

Those who accompanied her during the nomination filing included Rubi Hakim, wife of Kolkata Mayor



Firhad Hakim, TMC block president of Ward 71 Bablu Singh and Miraj Shah of the Bhabanipur Education Society.

Her family members also accompanied her.

The TMC projected Banerjee's roadshow and nomination filing as a message of Bengal's pluralist ethos in Bhabanipur, a constituency where Gujarati businessmen, Bengali families, Punjabi households and Muslim residents have lived side by side for decades.

The ruling party sought to portray Bhabanipur as a "mini-India" and a symbol of West Bengal's inclusive identity.

The elections to the 294-member West Bengal assembly will be held in two phases - on April 23 and 29. Votes will be counted on May 4.

SC on Sabarimala: Can Define Superstition, Centre Objects

New Delhi, April 8

The Supreme Court on Wednesday observed a nine-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant is hearing petitions related to discrimination against women at religious places, including the Sabarimala temple in Kerala, and on the ambit and scope of religious freedom practised by multiple faiths. A nine-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant is hearing petitions related to discrimination against women at religious places, including the Sabarimala temple in Kerala, and on the ambit and scope of religious freedom practised by multiple faiths.

At the outset, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, asked how the court decides what a superstitious practice is.

"Even assuming that there is a superstitious practice," he said, "it is not for the court to determine that it is superstition. Under Article 25(2)(b) of the Constitution, it is for the legislature to step in and enact a reform law."

"The legislature can say that a particular practice is superstition and requires reform. There are several such statutes and laws, for the prevention of black magic and other such practices," Mehta told the bench, which also comprised Justices B V Nagarathna, M M Sundresh, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, Augustine George Masih, Prasanna B Varale, R Mahadevan and Joyimalya Bagchi.

Responding to Mehta's submission, Justice Amanullah said the statement is too simplistic, as the court has the right and the jurisdiction to hold whether something is superstitious.

"What will follow is for the legislature to deal with. But, in court, you cannot say that whatever the legislature decides is the last word. That cannot be," he said.

Mehta said a secular court cannot decide that a religious practice is mere superstition, because the court may not possess such scholarly competence.

"Your Lordships are experts in the field of law, not

religion," he said.

The solicitor general argued, "Something religious for Nagaland may be a superstition for me. We are in a greatly diverse society. Maharashtra has Black Act. They may say this is the practice prevalent in our area and that's why we protect it under Article 25(2)(b)," Mehta said.

Justice Bagchi asked if witchcraft was part of religious practice, would it not be considered superstition?

"Your argument is that it is for the legislature to take up and prohibit any practice that promotes it (witchcraft). Let us say the court is approached under Article 32 of the Constitution, saying that a religious practice of witchcraft exists, and the legislature is silent. Can the court not use the 'doctrine of unoccupied field' to give directions to prohibit such a practice, keeping in mind... health, morality and public order?" Justice Bagchi asked Mehta.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MUNEERA VIRANI W/O ABDUL HAMEED (old name) born on 13-03-1988 at Adilabad earlier was Holding Passport No. G4096663 DT: 16-07-2007 hereby changing my Name and henceforth in future I would be known as MUNEERA W/O ABDUL HAMEED (new name) H.No. 4-5-629/1/A Bhukthapur, Adilabad -504001 Telangana State.

DECLARANT.
MUNEERA
W/O ABDUL HAMEED

Place: Adilabad
Date: 04-04-2026

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

On the April 9 Assembly elections in Kerala, Assam and Puducherry

Public campaigning for the April 9 Assembly elections in Kerala, Assam and Puducherry concluded on Tuesday and voting will take place in a single phase across all three regions — 126 seats in Assam, 140 in Kerala, and 30 in Puducherry. The results will be declared on May 4. In Kerala, the incumbent LDF led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan is seeking a third consecutive term. No alliance has achieved such a feat in the State, but the LDF mounted an audacious campaign premised on a claim that 'there is no alternative' to the LDF. The emergence of the BJP — it won its first Lok Sabha seat in the State in 2024 — as a notable force in the State has further confused the Kerala electorate. Each of the three formations has accused the other two of having an understanding beneath the open posturing. The UDF is attempting to convert the momentum that it gained in the Lok Sabha and local body elections into an Assembly victory. The LDF is counting on its 10 years of welfare governance. The Congress has replicated its model of guarantees covering key vote blocs such as college students and women. The party managed to resolve the internal disputes over ticket distribution, but senior leaders are angling for the Chief Minister's post, counting their chickens before they hatch. The CPI(M) had to contend with at least four of its senior leaders leaving the party and contesting as UDF candidates.

In Assam, the campaign has been dominated by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is seeking a second term and a third for the BJP-led NDA.

Provide Basic Facilities to MGNREGA Workers: Union District Convenor Anand Kumar



Indian Chronicle. Jade Srinivas. April, 08. "Munjan Anand Kumar, District Convenor of the Agricultural Workers' Union, strongly condemned the negligence of officials towards MGNREGA workers. He made these remarks while interacting with workers on Wednesday at Seethanagar village in Kagaznagar mandal. He stated that it is inhumane that workers, who are risking their lives working under the scorching sun, are not even being provided with basic facilities such as drinking water, shade, and first aid. Due to the lack of minimum amenities at worksites, labourers are facing severe hardships, and despite falling ill, officials are not paying attention, he criticized. He also termed it highly unfortunate that wages for the work done last year have still not been paid. Cheating poor labourers who worked hard is completely unjust, and it should be seen as an economic attack on workers, he said. He demanded that the pending wages be released immediately and that basic facilities be ensured at all worksites. Otherwise, he warned that the Agricultural Workers' Union would launch large-scale protests. He made it clear that the responsibility for the situation lies entirely with the government officials.

Teachers' Union Felicitates Pediatric Specialist for State Award



"Bhukya Ramesh, Bhadradi Kothagudem District Burou, April 8, Indian Chronicle: "The Telangana United Teachers Federation (TUTF) on Wednesday felicitated noted pediatric specialist Dr. Krapa Vijay of Bhadrachalam, who recently received the State Best Service Award. The union leaders honoured him with a shawl and bouquet, appreciating his dedicated medical services to society. "Speaking on the occasion, District Secretary Vijay Kumar said that the award received by Dr. Vijay is not only a recognition of his personal excellence but also a matter of pride for the entire Bhadrachalam region. He expressed hope that Dr. Vijay would continue to expand his services and contribute further to society. "Dr. Vijay was conferred the State Best Service Award by the government in recognition of his outstanding contribution to child healthcare. The award was presented by State Health Minister Damodar Rajanarasimha during a programme held on April 7, marking World Health Day, as part of the Telangana Public Governance-Progress initiative. "Known for his commitment to pediatric care, Dr. Vijay has been providing quality medical services, especially to rural populations. He has earned special recognition for offering accessible healthcare to economically weaker sections and has become a ray of hope for many families. "Among those present at the felicitation programme were Regional Office Convenor TVS Prasad, Mandal President Komaram Srinivas, General Secretary PSV Prasad Babu, Treasurer Ashalatha, Convener Saidulu, senior leader Raja Srinivas, and mandal leaders G. Venkateshwarlu and Tulasiram, among others.

Strict Vigil Required at EVM Godown: District Collector Anudeep Durishetty



"Arvapalli Nagesh Khammam Bureau April 8, (Indian Chronicle): "District Collector Anudeep Durishetty emphasized that strict surveillance and strong security measures must be ensured at the EVM (Electronic Voting Machine) godown. "On Wednesday, the Collector conducted a monthly inspection of the EVM godown located within the Collectorate premises. "During the inspection, he examined the seals of the EVM godown. He also checked fire safety equipment and CCTV cameras, inquiring whether they were functioning properly. The Collector tested the emergency siren and reviewed the duties of security personnel working in shifts. He instructed officials to ensure there are no security lapses. "The Collector also signed the inspection registers. "Collectorate AO K. Srinivasa Rao, Election DT Ansari, and other officials were present during the inspection.

Building a healthy society is possible with safe motherhood: TGIIC Chairperson Nirmala Jayaprakash Redd



"Together efforts are needed to protect maternal and child health: District Collector Praveena "Sangareddy, April 08: Indian chronicle correspondent Sunil. "Building a healthy society is possible only with safe motherhood, said TGIIC Chairperson Nirmala Jayaprakash Reddy. "As part of the Health Week programs organized as part of the Public Administration Progress Plan, a "Safe Mother Day" program was organized on Wednesday at the Medical College Conference Hall under the auspices of the Medical Health Department. "On this occasion, in addition to creating awareness about the necessary health services for pregnant women, a workshop was organized for doctors on topics such as ANC checkups, reducing maternal mortality rates, C-section, high-risk pregnancies, emergencies, and the PCPNDT Act. "TGIIC Chairperson Nirmala Jayaprakash Reddy and District Collector Praveena were the chief guests of the program and inaugurated the program with the lighting of the lamp. "Speaking on the occasion, TGIIC Chairperson Nirmala Jayaprakash Reddy said that the state government is providing all kinds of medical facilities for the health of mothers and children. She advised that regular health check-ups should be done from the beginning of pregnancy and that nutrition should be taken to prevent anemia. She said that doctors' instructions should be followed to ensure the health of the unborn child. She



clarified that it is everyone's responsibility to prevent the marriage of minor girls as many health problems can arise due to pregnancy at a young age. "Speaking, District Collector Praveena suggested that medical staff should work in coordination for safe deliveries and protection of mother-child health. She said that the health of the mother and child can be protected through timely medical tests, vaccinations and nutrition during pregnancy. She said that efforts should be made to bring the maternal mortality rate to zero by working with a comprehensive plan. "He said that there is a need to create widespread awareness about the necessary precautions for new mothers. He suggested that workshops on mother-child safety be organized for the mandal federation women through ASHA and ANMs at every hospital level and steps should be taken to ensure that comprehensive information reaches pregnant women. He also said that the PCPNDT Act should be strictly implemented. "In the program, widespread awareness was created on the importance of maternal and child health protection and safe deliveries. Safe Motherhood posters were unveiled on this occasion. "District Medical Health Officer Dr. Vasant Rao, GGH Superintendent Dr. Muralikrishna, DCHS Dr. Kavitha, Program Officers Dr. Naganirmala, Dr. Shashank, doctors, medical officers and pregnant women participated in this program.

Kagaznagar BJP Town President K. Shivakumar Resigns

"Indian Chronicle. Jade Srinivas. April, 08. "Kagaznagar BJP Town President K. Shivakumar has announced his resignation from the post. He stated that he previously served in the Indian Army and later worked as a Panchayat Secretary, which helped him closely understand the problems faced by the public. He said he was moved by the difficulties people face while running around government offices and leaders, which inspired him to enter active politics. He added that he joined the BJP with a spirit of service, without expecting any personal gain, and with strong belief in the party's ideology and Hindu dharma. Shivakumar mentioned that the party leadership entrusted him with the responsibility of Town President, which he carried out with discipline. He stated that he made sincere efforts towards strengthening the party, addressing public issues, and supporting party workers. Despite facing pressures and challenges during elections, he said he has taken this decision due to certain unavoidable reasons and organizational shortcomings. However, he clarified that he will continue as a primary member of the party and will keep striving for dharma and the nation till his last breath. He expressed gratitude to the district leadership, party workers, and the people of Kagaznagar for their support.



Senior Citizens' Building Inaugurated in Uppal by Former Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy



"Former Corporator assures full support to senior citizens at all times" KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 8 (Indian Chronicle): "Former Uppal Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy stated that they will always stand by senior citizens in all situations. She

assured that support would be extended whenever any senior citizen faces any need or problem. "She was speaking after inaugurating the new building of the Uppal Golden Birds Senior Citizens Association. On this occasion, she said that the idea of having a dedicated building for senior citizens in Uppal led to the construction of this facility. "She recalled that the building was constructed after land was allocated with the initiative of Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy. Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy further mentioned that the state government, under Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, has introduced a special law for the welfare of senior citizens. As per the law, if employed children fail to take care of their parents, 15% of their salary will be directly allocated to the parents. She said this law will act as a protective shield for senior citizens.

The event was attended by Uppal Golden Birds Senior Citizens Association President Mekala Ram Reddy, General Secretary N. Venkatayya Goud, Treasurer Venkatesham, Vice Presidents Jagan Mohan Reddy, Dubba Laxma Reddy, and several other members including C. Manohar, S. Narasimha Reddy, D. Linga Reddy, G. Vijaya Rao, Salla Malla Reddy, Mekala Venkat Reddy, Yadi Reddy, D. Ramaswamy, Dharma Reddy, Gone Prabhakar Reddy, M. Srinivas, T. Gnaneshwar Rao, and executive members along with Congress leaders Telkala Mohan Reddy, Eega Anjaneyulu Mudiraj, Lingampalli Ramakrishna, Boosam Raghunath Reddy, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Venkatesh Gupta, Alwal Bhaskar, Alugula Anil, Janagama Ramakrishna, Eega Rajesh Mudiraj and others.

Grand Celebrations of Icon Star Allu Arjun's Birthday Under the leadership of Youth Kapu Nadu State Vice President Gaddam Ravi



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 8 (Indian Chronicle): "Grand celebrations of Icon Star Allu Arjun's birthday were held on Wednesday at Sri Ramanapuram Colony in Ramanthapur, under Uppal constituency within GHMC limits. The event was organized under the leadership of Youth Kapu Nadu State Vice President Gaddam Ravi and was conducted in a highly (enthusiastic) manner. On this occasion, a large number of colony residents participated in the celebrations. Fans cut a cake and celebrated their favorite actor's birthday with great joy. The area was filled with excitement as slogans from fans echoed throughout. People of all age groups, from children to elders, took part happily, making it a special attraction of the event. Speaking at the event, Gaddam Ravi expressed his happiness in celebrating Allu Arjun's birthday. He wished the actor continued success and hoped he would achieve greater recognition across the country. He also prayed that Lord Sri Venkateswara Swamy of Tirumala Tirupati bless Allu Arjun always. "He further stated that such events play a key role in promoting unity among youth. The celebrations concluded on a joyful note with the distribution of sweets to all attendees. Prominent participants included Sri Ramanapuram Colony President Ramulu, Kathalu Rajesh, Trimurthulu, Sudhakar, Jaipal Reddy, Ramakrishna, Somashekar Appa, Vinod, Minnarao, Naidu, DJ Sai, Devender Chowdary, Lakshmi Nagar Colony Naik team, Shivaprasad, and others.

Outrage Over Illegal Sand Mining Under The Slogan "Our Village Sand - Our Wish"

Indian Chronicle. Jade Srinivas. April, 08. "Illegal sand transportation in Sirpur (T) mandal is taking new forms day by day. Recently, allegations have surfaced that a sand mafia is operating under the slogan "Our Village Sand - Our Wish," setting deadlines for sand extraction and transportation. It is reported that large quantities of sand are being excavated and transported from local streams and ponds during specific time slots. According to villagers, certain groups have been formed locally, fixing targets like "how many tractor loads can be transported within a given time," and are continuing sand mining activities day and night. The fact that this is happening without the notice of authorities is raising serious suspicions. "Despite having no valid permissions for sand excavation and lacking proper vehicle documentation, the illegal transport continues fearlessly. In some cases, even vehicles that were previously caught are reportedly paying penalties and returning to the same illegal activities. These unauthorized excavations are causing streams to deepen excessively, affecting groundwater levels and leading to serious environmental damage. Farmers and villagers have expressed deep concern over the situation. People are now demanding that the concerned authorities take strict action and put an end to the illegal sand transportation being carried out under the banner "Our Village Sand - Our Wish." They are urging strong measures against those involved in these unlawful activities.

Indiramma Sarees Distributed in Danavaigudem



"Arvapalli Nagesh Khammam Bureau April 8, (Indian Chronicle): "Khammam Member of Parliament, Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy, distributed Indiramma sarees sanctioned by the state government to eligible beneficiaries holding ration cards in Danavaigudem on Wednesday. "Speaking on the occasion along with Revenue Minister Ponguleti's camp office in-charge Tumburu Dayakar Reddy, he stated that the state government is giving high priority to women's welfare. He assured that all eligible beneficiaries would receive benefits through schemes like Indiramma housing and other welfare programs. On the occasion of Congress leader Kondal's birthday, a cake was cut and greetings were extended. "Several local leaders and representatives, including Maddulapalli Market Chairman Harinath Babu, Corporator Lalitha Rani, Challa Krishna, Jangam Bhaskar, Krishna Goud, and Bhattapothula Kiran Kumar, participated in the event. "Foundation Laid for Amma Hotel at Tallampadu "At Tallampadu, a bhoomi puja ceremony was conducted for the establishment of a new Amma Hotel along the main road. MP Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy attended the event and conveyed his best wishes to the management. He expressed hope that the hotel, already known for its trust and quality, would achieve similar success at the new location as well. "18:26, 8/4/2026] +91 96187 88997: End

Worshipping Goddess Saraswati brings all auspicious blessings: Discourse by Bangarayya Sharma



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 8 (Indian Chronicle): “Renowned spiritual speaker Brahmarshi Pasharla Pati Srinivasa Bangarayya Sharma visited and offered prayers to Goddess Siddhi Saraswati, the embodiment of Trishakti, who is manifested at the premises of Chinna Cheruvu in Ramanthapur on Wednesday. “Speaking on the occasion, he said that worshipping Goddess Saraswati not only brings auspiciousness but also enhances knowledge and wisdom. He noted that the goddess, who has manifested between the sacred trees—banyan, peepal, and neem—is highly divine and bestows ??? (auspicious) blessings upon devotees. He further explained that worshipping Goddess Saraswati leads to the attainment of knowledge, intelligence, academic growth, and excellence in arts. As the presiding deity of education, music, and fine arts, her blessings help students, teachers, and artists gain concentration, memory power, and creativity. He emphasized that performing daily prayers to Goddess Saraswati is highly beneficial. Among those present at the event were Shankhanada Ganti Nagesh Sharma, temple devotee Dharankar Balaji, Raghu Goud, and others.

Surprise Inspection at Bambara Gram Panchayat – Review of Development Works



“Indian Chronicle. Jade Srinivas. April, 08. “A surprise inspection was conducted at the Bambara Gram Panchayat office by District Panchayat Officer (DPO) Bikshapathi. During the visit, he examined the registers related to the Gram Panchayat and reviewed the overall administrative functioning. He provided suggestions to the staff regarding proper maintenance of records, work performance, and implementation of government schemes. The Panchayat Secretary, Dharmiah, was instructed to main-

tain all registers accurately and ensure that entries are updated on time. “The DPO emphasized that all development works in the Gram Panchayat should be carried out transparently and in accordance with established rules and regulations. This inspection served as a guideline to further improve the functioning of the Panchayat. On this occasion, DPO Mr. Bikshapathi and Wankidi MPO Khaja Azizuddin were felicitated by Sarpanch Bendarre Krishnaji and Vice-Sarpanch Jadi Santosh.

Complete Young India Integrated Residential Schools as per Schedule: District Collector Anudeep Durishetty

“District Collector Anudeep Durishetty stated that the government has undertaken the construction of Young India Integrated Residential Schools with international standards to ensure a bright future for children. “Avnreddy Khammam Town Reporter April 8, (Indian Chronicle): “On Wednesday, the Collector visited the Paleru constituency and conducted a surprise inspection of the ongoing construction works of the Young India Integrated Residential School at Ponakallu in Khammam Rural Mandal. During the visit, he reviewed the construction quality, examined building layout maps on-site, and issued several instructions to the officials. “He directed authorities to ensure proper development of link roads, internal roads, and uninterrupted electricity supply at the school premises. The Collector emphasized that the institution is being developed with modern facilities and aims to provide both quality education and encouragement for sports activities among students. “Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the initiative is designed to prepare students to compete at a global level by providing advanced infrastructure and proper planning in the education system. He added that the government’s objective is to establish these integrated institutions to deliver high-quality education in the future. “He urged officials to work in coordination to speed up construction and complete the works efficiently, ensuring access to education for all sections of society. He also mentioned that five Young India Integrated Residential Schools have been sanctioned in Khammam district and are currently under construction. “The Collector highlighted that these residential schools would bring revolutionary changes in the education system and play a crucial role in shaping a better future for underprivileged children. He instructed officials to ensure quality construction and timely completion so that the



schools are ready for the upcoming academic year. He also directed them to regularly submit progress

reports as per the schedule. “Officials including Education Department EE Buggayya, Khammam Ru-

ral Mandal Tahsildar M. Vinayender Reddy, and others were present during the inspection.”

KTR likely to meet Jeevan Reddy in Jagtial on Thursday

Jagtial: BRS working president KT Rama Rao is likely to meet senior leader T. Jeevan Reddy on Thursday and invite the latter into the party fold. It is learnt that Rama Rao will visit the residence of the senior politician in Jagtial and invite him into the party officially besides discussing various issues about joining and others. The BRS leader already spoke to

the senior leader over the phone on Wednesday. Jeevan Reddy, who recently resigned from the Congress party due to differences with party leadership, is contemplating to join the BRS. Though party leaders have already discussed various issues with the senior politician, Rama Rao is going to meet Jeevan Reddy to invite him into the



party officially, it is learnt. Jeevan Reddy is likely to join the BRS in the presence of its president K Chandrashekar Rao on April 13.

Journalists Urge Restoration of Railway Concessions MP Assures Support Arvapalli Nagesh Khammam Bureau



April 8, (Indian Chronicle): “Representatives of the Working Journalists of India (WJI), Khammam district unit, submitted a memorandum to Khammam Member of Parliament Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy on Tuesday, requesting him to take up the issue of restoring railway travel concessions (railway passes) for journalists with the Central Government. Responding to the appeal, MP Raghuram Reddy said that the issue is already on his radar and assured that he would raise it with the Central Government

and make efforts to ensure its restoration. “During the meeting at his camp office in Khammam, WJI State Secretary Nara Subrahmanyawara Rao (NS Rao), District Convener Gantela Anand, Co-conveners Amaraneni Ramakrishna and Nagaraju Devara, Khammam Assembly Constituency Convener K. Kalyan Chakravarthy, and district leader Boddupalli Ravinder explained the difficulties being faced by journalists due to the discontinuation of railway concession passes. “They pointed out that these concessions, which had been available to journalists across the country for decades, were temporarily suspended by the Central Government during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although railway services have since fully resumed and conditions have normalized, the concessions for journalists have not yet been reinstated. “The representatives also reminded the MP that a Parliamentary Standing Committee had earlier recommended the restoration of these concessions. They emphasized that journalists, especially those working in rural and district areas, need to travel frequently for news coverage, and the concession passes provide significant financial relief. The continued suspension, they said, has placed an additional financial burden on journalists.”

Khammam Police Commissioner Inaugurates Shuttle Badminton Court

“Arvapalli Nagesh Khammam Bureau April 8, (Indian Chronicle): “Khammam Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt inaugurated a newly constructed shuttle badminton court at the City Armed Police Headquarters premises on Wednesday. The facility is part of a recently developed modern sports complex under the police welfare initiative. “Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner emphasized that effective utilization of the sports complex would help improve both physical and mental well-being. He stated that modern amenities, training, and coaching facilities have been made available for police personnel and their families. He encouraged them to take advantage of these resources to stay mentally refreshed and excel in sports. He further highlighted that the shuttle badminton court has been made accessible to police staff to promote physical fitness. Special focus has been placed on ensuring the health and wellness of police personnel and their families through such initiatives.”



The Commissioner also appreciated the efforts of police staff who worked tirelessly in constructing the sports complex and presented them with appreciation certificates. “Additional DCPs (AR) Kumaraswamy and Vijay Babu, AR ACPs Sushil Singh and Narsaiah, SB ACP Mahesh, CCS ACP Server, Reserve Inspectors Kamaraju, Srisailam, Sambasiva Rao, Suresh, Nagul Meera, and Inspectors Rajireddy Ramakrishna, among others, attended the event.

Positive Outcomes from “Basti Bata” Program in Venkat Reddy Nagar Division – Issues Resolved

— Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel “KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 8 (Indian Chronicle): “The “Basti Bata” program conducted earlier in Vasavi Nagar Colony, Street No. 5, under Venkat Reddy Nagar Division, has yielded positive results. Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President Akarapu Arun Patel, along with electricity department officials, had visited the area to assess local issues on the ground. “During the visit, residents brought to his attention the problems caused by old electric poles and dangerously hanging main wires in their street. Locals expressed concern and fear over potential accidents due to the hazardous condition of the wires. Responding promptly to the residents’ concerns, Arun Patel, with the support of Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, took up the issue with the concerned electricity department officials and explained the seriousness of the situation. Acting swiftly, the authorities replaced the old electric poles with new ones. The hanging main wires were removed, and new cable wiring was installed, permanently resolving the issue. “The residents of Vasavi Nagar expressed their gratitude to the officials and Akarapu Arun Patel for addressing their problem



on a war footing. Medchal District Youth Congress leaders Kishore, Chota, Rajesh, Sarvaya, Kanthiah, Kumar, Shekhar, Gautham, along with colony residents and party workers, participated in the program.

Nutritious Diet is Key to Pregnant Women's Health Warangal MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya

“Devulapally Srinivas, Warangal Bureau | April 8 (Indian Chronicle) : Warangal MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya stated that creating comprehensive awareness regarding women’s healthcare is of utmost importance. As part of the ‘Praja Palana Pragathi Plan’ (People’s Administration Progress Plan), the MP attended as the chief guest at the ‘Safe Motherhood Day’ program, organized by the District Medical and Health Department on Wednesday at the conference hall within the Integrated Collectorate Office in Hanamkonda. Speaking on the occasion, MP Kavya emphasized that raising awareness among women regarding the consumption of Iron and Folic Acid tablets before conception is crucial. Noting the recent rise in issues such as birth defects and autism, she stressed the necessity of ensuring proper nutrition and seeking medical advice during the very planning stages of pregnancy. She suggested that the Medical and Health Department undertake special awareness campaigns to address this issue. “She further stated that there is a need to increase public awareness regarding conditions such as anemia and sickle cell disease. While cases of hemoglobin deficiency are relatively low in the Warangal region, she advised against complacency, urging for continuous monitoring to be maintained. She emphasized that pregnant women must undergo all necessary medical examinations—particularly the TIFFA scan, which helps detect abnormalities in the fetus—at the prescribed stages of pregnancy. Finally, she highlighted that in addition to physical health, special attention must also be paid to the mental health of pregnant women, particularly during the post-delivery phase. It was stated that family health would improve by raising awareness among mothers of infants regarding mental health and nutrition. “Medical officials were directed



to take measures aimed at reducing the number of Cesarean deliveries and encouraging normal deliveries. Furthermore, it was noted that maternal and child health could be enhanced by creating widespread awareness regarding family planning. MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya urged medical and health staff to work with greater responsibility in effectively delivering to the public the various initiatives undertaken by the government for the protection of women’s health. Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy, City Mayor Gundu Sudharani, Deputy Mayor Rizwana Shameem Masood, DM&HO Dr. Appiah, along with several women corporators, Sarpanches, women Sub-Inspectors, and other female officials, participated in this program.

Step Forward for Establishment of Government Degree College in Uppal



Administration moves following request by MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy.....KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 8 (Indian Chronicle):.....The state government has initiated steps towards the allocation of land for establishing a Government Degree College in the Uppal Assembly constituency. The Chief Minister's Office responded to a proposal seeking land allocation for the construction of a government degree college in Uppal, Bhagayat, or nearby areas. "Acting on the request made by Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, the government has issued directions to the concerned officials. The Medchal-Malkajgiri District Collector has been instructed to prepare a comprehensive report on the availability of suitable land, site selection, and other technical aspects, and to submit it to the government at the earliest. "With this development, the process of establishing a Government Degree College in the Uppal region is expected to gain momentum. This initiative will improve access to higher education for students and contribute to the overall development of the area.

Road Closure Notice Due to Construction Works Former Chiluka Nagar Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen

"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 8 (Indian Chronicle):.....Due to the commencement of new CC road construction works from Thursday morning, the road stretch from Thene Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Beerappa Gadda to Bank Colony Park will be temporarily closed, informed former Chiluka Nagar Corporator and former Standing Council Member Bannala Geetha Praveen. Residents of Beerappa Gadda, Bank Colony, Prashanth Nagar, and Dharmapuri Colony, along with pedestrians, vehicle users, school-going students, employees, and devotees visiting the temple, may face some inconvenience. The public is requested to use alternative routes during this period. Devotees visiting the temple are especially advised not to bring vehicles and instead come on foot for darshan. "She further stated that the construction works will be closely monitored and completed at the earliest, ensuring that the new road is made available for public use as soon as possible.



Unofficial activities in distribution of government scheme benefits Maddunur Sarpanch complaint to MPDO, Tahasildar



Jagithyal Correspondent), April 8 (Indian Chronicle): "The Maddunur Sarpanch Galipelli Bharati Mahesh, along with ward members, complained to the MDO and Tahsildar on Wednesday, alleging that some individuals are distributing government scheme benefits to beneficiaries in Maddunur village, Buggaram mandal, Jagithyal district, without the involvement of the gram panchayat council, unconstitutional, and without following protocol. The Sarpanch stated that the individuals are distributing CMRF checks directly to beneficiaries unofficially, which is unconstitutional. The Sarpanch, deputy Sarpanch, and ward members requested the MDO and Tahsildar to investigate the unofficial activities in the distribution of government scheme benefits in the gram panchayat and take necessary action."

MLA 'Naini' laid the foundation stone for the construction of the temple.

"Devulapally Srinivas Warangal Bureau (Hanmakonda), April 8 (Indian Chronicle): Warangal west MLA Naini Rajender Reddy said that he will always help in the construction of the temple and he is very happy to participate in the construction of the new temple along with the people of the colony. On Wednesday, the foundation stone of the Pochammathalli temple was laid at Chaitanyapuri Colony under Hanamakonda 61 Division with the courtesy of the local people. MLA who attended the program as the chief guest performed special pooja by beating a coconut and started the construction work of the temple amidst the chanting of Vedic scholars. He stated that the construction of this temple by the local people will contribute to the spiritual development of the region. The MLA assured that he will always support the development of the colony and the needs of the people. Local leaders, residents of the colony and others participated in this program.



Call to Attend Kavitha's Party Formation Meeting on the 25th— Appeal by Telangana Jagruthi Uppal Constituency In-charge Gopu Sadanand

"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 8 (Indian Chronicle):.....Telangana Jagruthi President Kalvakuntla Kavitha is set to announce the formation of a new political party on the 25th of this month. The party formation meeting will be held at Adhya Convention, near ORR Exit No. 6, Munirabad in Medchal district. "Telangana Jagruthi Uppal constituency in-charge Gopu Sadanand, along with State Youth Wing members Koppula Arjun, Sampath Rao, and Shraman Dev, appealed to people from Uppal constituency in Medchal district to attend the meeting in large numbers. "On Wednesday, wall posters related to the new political party to be launched by Kavitha were unveiled near the Ambedkar statue at Uppal crossroads. "Speaking on the occasion, Gopu Sadanand stated that through the "Jagruthi Janam Baata" program, Kavitha has understood the problems of common people. He expressed confidence that people would voluntarily attend the meeting in large numbers, as the new party aims for the development of common citizens and the vision of a socially just Telangana. "He further said that the development of Telangana and the realization of a socially equitable state are possible only under Kavitha's leadership. "The event was attended by



Telangana Jagruthi Uppal Auto Union President Sridhar Goud, Rangu Srikanth Goud, Praveen, Gopi, Mahender, Vijaya, Vennela, Harika, Swaroopa, and others.

CM's Relief Fund A Boon for the Needy Warangal MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya Distributes CM's Relief Fund Cheques



"Devulapally Srinivas, Warangal Bureau (Hanamakonda), April 8 (Indian Chronicle): Warangal MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya stated that the Chief Minister's Relief Fund has proven to be a boon for the underprivileged sections of society. She noted that the government responds promptly and extends assistance to poor families facing financial hardships the moment they apply for medical treatment aid. On Wednesday, she distributed CM's Relief Fund cheques to beneficiaries at her MP camp office located in Kanakadurgamma Colony, Hanamakonda. Speaking on the occasion, MP Kadiyam Kavya clarified that the government

stands in support of every eligible individual seeking assistance, transcending party lines. She mentioned that relief fund cheques worth a total of ₹3.50 lakhs were handed over to 10 distressed individuals. The MP opined that the CM's Relief Fund is immensely beneficial for safeguarding public health and alleviating the burden of emergency medical expenses. She further asserted that the Congress government is committed to working towards the development of all sectors within the state, emphasizing that the welfare of the people remains the government's primary objective. Local public representatives, party leaders, activists, beneficiaries, and others participated in this program.

Gender determination is a crime under law..Government hospitals are safe Strict action for negligence in medical service

"Mulugu District Superintendent Dr. Palakurthi Jagadeeswar"Mulugu/Venkatapuram. Indian Chronicle. April 08. "As part of the 99-day Prajapalana Pragati Plan, an awareness conference on pregnancy sex determination tests and care was held at the Social Hospital Venkatapuram in celebration of the Medical Health Week. District Super Dent Dr. Palakurthi Jagadeeswar was the chief guest and inaugurated the program. On this occasion, he said that pregnant women should take proper nutrition from the first stage of pregnancy and should undergo regular check-ups at the government hospital. He said that by following the doctor's instructions, the mother and baby will be healthy. He said that going to a private hospital for delivery would be a financial loss and the resources available in the government hospital should be utilized. Similarly, taking pregnancy sex tests is prohibited under law and those who commit such acts will be punished according to law, he said. Subsequently, a meeting was held with the staff of the hospital and ordered that there should be no negligence



in the medical services and to provide quality services to the patients. He said that strict action will be taken against those who neglect their duties. In this program the superintendent of the hospital Dr. Today Suresh Kumar, Dr. Prasad, Dr. Pradeep, Shivaji, Senior Nursing Officers and others participated.

Special Drive Against Vehicles Without Number Plates: Traffic Inspector



"Avnreddy Khammam Town Reporter April 8, (Indian Chronicle): "Traffic Inspector Satyanarayana has warned that strict action will be taken as per law against two-wheelers being driven without number plates. Traffic police conducted surprise inspections across the city as part of a special drive targeting vehicles without proper number plates. "The inspections were intensified under the orders of Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt and supervised by Traffic ACP Srinivasulu. Authorities stated that vehicles without number plates are often used in crimes like chain snatching to avoid identification. "During the drive, such ve-



hicles were seized, and fines were imposed. Vehicle owners were fined up to ₹14,000 for not having proper number plates, while those involved in wrong or opposite driving were fined up to ₹1,700. After paying fines and installing valid number plates, owners were allowed to reclaim their vehicles. "The inspector emphasized that negligent parking is a major cause of road accidents. He also advised parents not to allow minors to drive vehicles and urged all motorists to carry valid documents at all times and wear helmets. Citizens were requested to clear pending challans and cooperate with traffic police in following road safety rules to help prevent accidents.

Water Distribution Camp Set Up at Venkat Reddy Nagar Bus Stop by Supra Voluntary Organization— Camp inaugurated by Chairman Gaddam Sai Kiran



"KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, April 8 (Indian Chronicle):.....Under the aegis of the Supra Voluntary Organization, a "water distribution camp" was set up near the Venkat Reddy Nagar bus stop in view of the intense summer heat. The camp was inaugurated on Wednesday by the organization's Chairman, Gaddam Sai Kiran. "Colony elders, leaders from various community groups, and other



dignitaries participated in the event and appreciated the service activities undertaken by the organization. They stated that the camp, established with the aim of quenching the thirst of passersby, would be highly beneficial to the public. On behalf of the Supra Voluntary Organization, heartfelt thanks were extended to everyone who contributed to the success of the program.

Yamunanagar sugarcane farmer writes success story with wide row spacing technique, earns Rs 15 lakh annually



GNS News Agency, April 8

In Haryana's Yamunanagar district, progressive farmer Nirmal Singh has reaped rich rewards by adopting the wide row spacing technique in sugarcane cultivation, earning nearly Rs 15 lakh annually by producing an average of 425 quintals of cane per acre in 30 acres. This technique also helps him conserve water, considering sugarcane is one of the most water-guzzling crops and requires massive amounts of water over a long growing season. Nirmal, 41, is a graduate who began helping his father with farming at Gillor Majri village at the age of 17 and later chose to become a full-time farmer. For the past 15 years, Nirmal has been using the wide row spacing technique—a method of sowing cane in rows four feet apart instead of the traditional 2.5 feet. And the result has been remarkable. Singh says he earns nearly Rs 15 lakh annually from his produce on 30 acres, with a profit of Rs 50,000 per acre, compared to an average of Rs 30,000 for traditional farmers.

In Haryana, the state government has declared the current maximum State Advised Price (SAP) for sugarcane at Rs 415 per quintal. Nirmal explains the wide spacing reduces the number of rows per acre from 90 to 50, but the crop grows healthier, stronger and more resilient than traditional farming. "There is no need for labourers, almost all work, including harvesting, is done mechanically," Nirmal adds. The technique also slashes the input cost. Only 18-

20 quintals of cane are needed for sowing per acre, compared to 35 quintals in the conventional method. Water use is cut nearly in half. According to Agriculture Department officials, wide row sugarcane cultivation reduces water use by nearly half, requiring an estimated 9-10 lakh litres per acre compared to 18-20 lakh litres under the conventional method. "In wide row cultivation, an acre can be irrigated in just 50 minutes, compared to over two hours in traditional ways. Considering the sugarcane crops require about 20 irrigation cycles in a season, the water conservation is immense. If all sugarcane farmers adopt this method, it will help conserve water to a greater extent," Nirmal points out. Haryana Additional Cane Commissioner Mahavir Singh says, "The state government has increased the incentive to sugarcane farmers for adopting the wide row spacing technique from Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000 per acre this year. The technique not only boosts profits and saves water, but also improves the quality of juice extracted from the cane, besides addressing the problem of chronic agricultural labour shortage." Yet, despite promising results and government announced incentive, the wide row spacing technique adoption is limited. Singh estimates only about 10 per cent of farmers use this method.

On March 7, Haryana Cooperation Minister Arvind Kumar Sharma stated that the average yield of sugarcane in the state has shown a continuous decline from 2020-21 to 2024-25, with the sole exception of 2022-23. The minister explained that the total production of sugarcane during 2025-26 is estimated at 536.24 lakh quintals, which is 37.55 per cent (322.54 lakh quintals) lower than the 858.78 lakh quintals produced in 2020-21. He further informed that in 2020-21, the area under sugarcane cultivation stood at 246,357 acres, which rose to 263,499 acres in 2021-22 and further to 266,142 acres in 2022-23. However, after 2022-23, the cultivated area has been continuously declining. "Due to the reduction in the area under sugarcane cultivation, the availability of sugarcane for crushing in sugar mills has declined. For the current year, it is estimated at 509.47 lakh quintals. As a result, the working days of sugar mills are expected to be limited to 108 days," said Sharma.

Bengaluru auto drivers reject Indian Oil's advice to temporarily switch to petrol amid LPG crisis

GNS News Agency, April 8

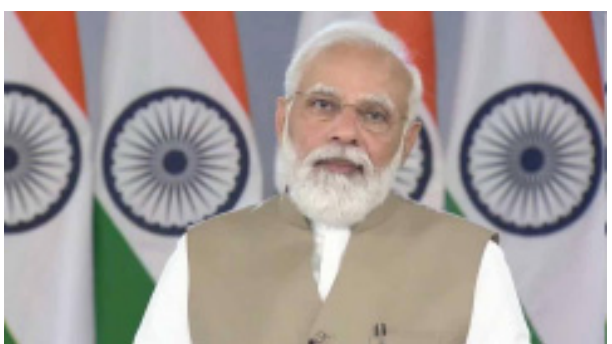
As the auto LPG shortage in Karnataka continues and gas stations remain closed, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) Sunday urged autorickshaw drivers to temporarily switch to petrol to ease pressure on supply stations. However, drivers have said that the dual-fuel system is not a viable solution for daily commercial operations. In a statement, IOCL noted that it has significantly ramped up its LPG supply in Karnataka. Average daily supply, which stood at 43.5 metric tonnes (MT)/day in February, rose to 59.53 MT/day in March and then to 68.53 MT/day as of April 4. Despite this increase, the system is under strain. Of the 72 oil marketing company (OMC) outlets in the state, IOCL operates 55. While private players operate over 300 stations, nearly 80 per cent of private outlets have become non-operational, leading to a massive influx of vehicles towards auto LPG dispensing stations (ALDS) operated by public sector undertakings (PSUs) like IOCL. In its statement, IOCL also said that pricing disparities are influencing driver behaviour.

"PSU-operated outlets, including those of IOC, are retailing Auto LPG at Rs 89.52 per litre in Bengaluru, whereas private marketers are selling between Rs 99 and Rs 105 per litre. This difference has led to a significant shift in customer preference toward PSU-operated ALDS, resulting in increased footfall and longer wait times at these stations." IOCL noted that 70 per cent of the autorickshaw fleet is equipped with dual-fuel capability, allowing operation on both auto LPG and petrol. "In light of current conditions, users are encouraged to temporarily switch to petrol



as an alternative fuel. Similar transitions have already been observed in markets such as Puttur and other areas where OMC-operated ALDS are limited, demonstrating the practicality of this approach," it said. "Auto LPG continues to remain available across the OMC network. However, in case of longer waiting times, customers are encouraged to utilise the dual-fuel capability of their vehicles and switch to petrol to ensure uninterrupted mobility," IOCL added. However, the situation on the ground is bleak, as gas stations have closed, forcing many autorickshaw drivers to park and wait. Autorickshaw Drivers Union (ARDU) general secretary Rudra Murthy, in his response to IOCL's statement, told The Indian Express that it is impossible to fill petrol and run the operations. "These autorickshaws have a petrol capacity of barely 1-2 litres. Most have not used petrol mode for years, resulting in extremely poor fuel economy and potential engine issues. It is definitely not a solution for drivers who cover 100-150 km a day," Murthy said.

Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project: K-RIDE encashes Rs 57 crore bank guarantees after L&T dispute



GNS News Agency, April 8

The Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka) Limited, or K-RIDE, has successfully encashed performance bank guarantees worth Rs 57 crore issued by Larsen & Toubro (L&T) through YES Bank, following an arbitration tribunal's rejection of L&T's plea to block the move. The guarantees were linked to civil works under Corridors 2 and 4 of the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project (BSRP). K-RIDE completed the encashment on Saturday (April 4), after the tribunal upheld its position that L&T had defaulted on both corridor contracts and terminated the agreements unlawfully, outside the stipulated contractual terms.

The dispute escalated after L&T terminated the agreements and obtained a commercial court stay against the encashment. L&T also invoked the arbitration clause, leading to the formation of a tribunal comprising retired Supreme Court and high court judges to review claims from both sides. The commercial court subsequently referred all related matters to this tribunal. The tribunal's refusal to grant L&T an injunction cleared the way for K-RIDE to proceed. The dispute arose after K-RIDE allegedly failed to provide the required land, prompting L&T to halt work on two corridors since March last year: the 25-km Mallige Line (Bennigenahalli-Chikkabanawara) and the 46-km Kanaka Line (Heelalige-Rajanukunte). L&T had entered into two agreements with K-RIDE for Corridor-2 and Corridor-4 on August 26, 2022, and December 12, 2023, respectively, and the contract period was extended up to September 2026

and October 2026, respectively, upon request by the contractor. It can be recalled that the Union government approved the 148km Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project in October 2020, and the deadline for the completion of the project was 2026. The foundation was laid in June 2022 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, almost a year before the Karnataka Assembly elections. However, the project faced several hurdles, including land acquisition and many more.

India's largest single shield hard rock TBM for Thane-Borivali Twin Tunnel project

GNS News Agency, April 8

India's largest hard rock TBM 'NAYAK' deployed for Thane-Borivali Twin Tunnel project (Image: MMRDA/Photo enhanced with AI) India's largest hard rock TBM 'NAYAK' deployed for Thane-Borivali Twin Thane-Borivali twin tunnel project: The tunnelling work is set to commence on the Thane-Borivali Twin Tunnel project. Being implemented by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), the 11.84-km-long project is expected to significantly enhance connectivity and reduce travel time from 1.5 hours to just 15 minutes. Thane-Borivali Twin Tunnel project TBM The project involves constructing twin tunnels under the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, along with access roads linking the Western Express Highway at Borivali and Ghodbunder Road at Thane. The two tunnels will be built using the most advanced TBM (Tunnel Boring Machine) technology to ensure safe, efficient and eco-friendly construction with minimal ground disturbance. This most advanced TBM, named Nayak, is the country's largest single-shield hard rock tunnel boring machine. Another TBM, Arjuna, is also set to be launched soon. Each TBM measures 86 metres in length and features a cutter head diameter of 13.34 metres. A total of four TBMs will be deployed, two each from the Borivali and Thane ends.

Mann accuses BJP, Congress and SAD of promoting nepotism, criminal elements



GNS News Agency, April 8 Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann targeted opposition parties on Sunday while dedicating projects worth ₹28.68 crore to the people of Jaito, Faridkot. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Sunday attacked the BJP, Congress and Akali Dal, questioning their record in power and accusing them of promoting "nepotism and criminal elements" in politics. Criticising the Centre over poverty and rising hardships, Mann said the 2022 mandate for the 'jhaadu' (AAP's electoral symbol) has begun to realise the dreams of freedom fighter Bhagat Singh. The chief minister was addressing a gathering after unveiling projects worth Rs 28.68 crore, including the upgradation of the Community Health Centre into a 30-bed hospital and key investments in drinking water and sports infrastructure, in Faridkot's Jaito.

Announcing to enact a stringent anti-sacrilege law with provisions of no bail for one year and life imprisonment at a special Assembly session called on April 13, Mann held the 2027 elections "as a clear choice, as the Congress symbolises the legacy of anti-Sikh riots, the Akali Dal stands discredited, and the AAP represents a governance-driven alternative committed to building a 'Rangla Punjab'." "Every

vote cast to Akalis will be a mandate in favour of the sacrilege of Guru and Gurbani. The Akalis bruised the psyche of every individual through the desecration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji. Akalis disrespected the Bani of the great Guru Sahiban and ordered firing on the innocents in Behbal Kalan and Bargari," the chief minister said.

Mann said, "The Akalis should be booked for the genocide of generations as the drug trade was patronised by them and flourished during their long misrule. The hands of these leaders are drenched with the blood of millions of youth who fell prey to drugs supplied in the state in their official vehicles." Attacking SAD leader Bikram Singh Majithia, Mann said, "Everyone knows that this family was a stooge of the Britishers and was conferred the title of 'Sir' by them for hobnobbing against patriots. The family had feted General Dyer, the perpetrator of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on April 13, 1919, by hosting a dinner for him after that heinous incident. This act exposed their anti-national and anti-Punjab mindset." "Not only this, but the family also ensured that General Dyer was bestowed siropa and forgiveness at the Golden Temple. What's even more shocking is that Jathedar Arood Singh, who granted the siropa, was the maternal grandfather of former Lok Sabha MP Simranjit Singh Mann," the chief minister said.

Mann said people would have three pens to choose from in 2027. "The first pen is the Congress with red ink symbolising an attack on Sri Harmandir Sahib, riots of 1984 and other anti-Sikh stances. The second pen is of Akalis with one ink of desecration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. And, the third pen is AAP, which is transforming Punjab into Rangla Punjab through path-breaking initiatives." The chief minister said, "The land of Jaito has always written history, and it deserves our salute. Whether it is literature or struggle, whenever the need arose in any field, Jaito has always stepped forward and stood at the forefront."

In first such arrests in sticker extortion case, two cops held; role of 4 more under probe

GNS News Agency, April 8

In the first arrests involving the personnel of the Delhi Police in the sticker extortion racket case, the Crime Branch has apprehended an assistant sub-inspector and a constable, The Indian Express has learnt. A syndicate operating in the Capital, which was busted last November, allegedly blackmailed traffic police personnel using purported videos showing them accepting bribes. The accused officers have been identified as Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Jitender, posted in South Delhi, and Constable Praveen, posted at Adarsh Nagar police station in North West Delhi. The role of at least four more police officers — suspected to be in collusion with the alleged extortionists — is currently said to be under scrutiny. "Their involvement is being examined and appropriate action will be taken," a source said.

The total number of arrests in the case has now gone up to 10, including the leaders of three gangs — Raju Meena, Jeeshan Ali and Rinku Rana. The syndicate allegedly violated the pollution-control and traffic regulations in the Capital by allegedly assuring transporters that no challan would be issued against their vehicles bearing the stickers that were sold to them by the gangs. The gangs also allegedly pressured or bribed traffic police personnel, while filming them, to let the vehicles with stickers pass without penalising them for violations.

Sources said the two arrested policemen acted as intermediaries between the extortionists and the victims. "Prima facie, it appears that the accused duo functioned as mediators. They would approach the targeted traffic police officers and offer to 'settle' the matter for a negotiated amount," a source said. The probe has further revealed that the arrested policemen allegedly helped the gangs identify vulnerable or 'high-value' targets among officers, helping the syndicate function. Officers said the arrested officers were in touch with Rajkumar alias Raju Meena, one of the alleged kingpins of the racket. This sticker extortion racket unearthed by the Delhi Police is part of a larger organised



syndicate that had been operating across the Capital for over a decade. The racket had come on the radar after Raju Meena allegedly asked for sexual favours from female traffic police personnel for not releasing their videos. Subsequent investigation led the Crime Branch to uncover the involvement of multiple gangs running parallel operations in the city with structured roles, informers, and digital coordination through messaging platforms. Investigators have busted at least three such extortion gangs so far. The gangs are believed to have systematically targeted traffic personnel, exploiting fears of disciplinary action and reputational damage by using spy cameras. Operatives allegedly recorded interactions during routine checks, often editing or manipulating footage to suggest bribery. These clips were then used to blackmail officers, who were threatened with departmental action or public exposure. Investigators found that the network functioned through a dual system, targeting both commercial vehicle drivers and traffic police personnel. These gangs sold illegal "entry stickers" to transporters for a monthly fee, allowing vehicles to bypass restrictions such as no-entry norms and avoid challans. In several cases, even high-value fines were allegedly settled for nominal amounts through illicit channels, pointing to a parallel enforcement mechanism.

Congress releases first list of 243 candidates



GNS News Agency, April 8

The Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) on Sunday released its first list of 243 candidates for the April 26 local body elections in the state. The BJP and the AAP are yet to announce their nominees. The elections in 15 municipal corporations, 84 municipalities, 34 zilla panchayats and 260 taluka panchayats in Gujarat are scheduled on April 26 and the results will be declared on April 28.

The list of 243 candidates include names for municipal

corporations of Ahmedabad, Rajkot and Vadodra, Morbi, Jamnagar and Bhavnagar. The Congress said it has chosen its strong and grassroot-level workers for various wards of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC). The party has repeated four sitting councilors — Shehzad Khan Pathan, Nirav Baxi, Jagdish Rathod and Rajshree Kesari — from their same seats. Pathan, who was the Leader of Opposition in the AMC, has been fielded from Danilmda ward, senior Congress leader Rajshreeben Kesari from Chandkheda, deputy leader of opposition at AMC Nirav Bakshi from Dariyapur and Jagdish Rathod, the Congress whip at AMC, from Amraiwadi. Omprakash Tiwari, who recently joined the Congress from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), has been given a ticket from Sardarnagar. Party sources said that nearly 1,000 forms for party tickets were received from Ahmedabad city alone. For 48 wards, the AMC has a total of 192 seats. Starting early, the Congress completed the process of collection of forms last month. The second list of Congress candidates is expected to be announced on April 7 or 8. Elections will be held on a total of 1004 seats in the 15 Municipal Corporations. The last date for filing nominations is April 11. Scrutiny of nomination papers will be undertaken on April 13, and candidates will be allowed to withdraw their nominations until April 15.

Teen mowed down by DTC bus in Azadpur, hunt on for absconding driver

A 19-year-old youth was allegedly mowed down by a DTC bus in Northwest Delhi's Azadpur on Sunday evening, police said. "A PCR call was received at 5:30 pm at Adarsh Nagar police station. A man was lying injured at the spot. He was taken to Babu Jagjivan Ram Memorial Hospital where doctors declared him dead," an officer said. According to the police, the incident happened around 5 pm when the teen, identified as Akash, was crossing a busy stretch in Azadpur. Investigation revealed that he was allegedly hit by a DTC bus and the driver got off the bus and fled the site, police said. They said Akash worked as a labourer and lived in Sahipur village in Shalimar Bagh. "The family of the youth has been informed about the death. Footage of CCTV cameras installed in the area is being examined to establish the exact sequence of events, and the route that the DTC bus



was plying on. Efforts are also being made to identify the driver with the help of the vehicle's registration number. A search for the accused is on," a police officer said.

Two main perpetrators arrested aboard train in Haryana' Rewari: Punjab DGP



GNS News Agency, April 8

The Counter Intelligence Wing of the Punjab Police has arrested two main perpetrators aboard a train near Rewari in Haryana in connection with the blast outside the BJP headquarters in Chandigarh, taking the total number of arrests in the case to seven, Punjab Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said.

Divulging details about the latest arrests at a press conference here, DGP Yadav said the latest arrests were made on Saturday night in a joint operation with the Haryana Police's Special Task Force (STF). The DGP identified the two arrested accused persons as Gurtej Singh and Amanpreet Singh. "Both are residents of Ratangarh village in Punjab's Rupnagar district. They were working as bike operators for ride-hailing service provider Rapido," the DGP said.

Accompanied by ADGP (Counter Intelligence) Amit Prasad, ADGP (Internal Security) SK Verma, IGP (Intelligence) Dr Sukhchain Singh Gill, AIG (SSOC) SAS Nagar Deepak Pareek, Yadav said, "With the latest arrests, all seven accused involved in the case are now in the police custody." The duo was arrested a day after five persons — identified as Balwinder Lal, alias Shami, Jasvir Singh, alias Jassi, Charanjit Singh, alias Channi, Rubal Chauhan and Mandeep, alias Abhijot Sharma — were arrested in this connection, police said, adding one hand grenade and one .30 bore Zigan pistol were seized from their possession. Both the accused had been on the run since the blast, and Punjab Police teams were tracking their movement. They were traced aboard a train near Rewari in Haryana and arrested, the DGP said. Accused Amanpreet Singh has a prior criminal

record, with FIRs for theft and snatching registered against him in SAS Nagar and Bilaspur in Himachal Pradesh, respectively, the DGP said. The DGP said, "The arrested accused were motivated and directed by ISI-backed foreign-based handlers Baljot Singh, alias Jot, in Portugal and Harjeet Singh Laadi in Germany, and were promised a monetary reward of Rs 2 lakh for carrying out the attack."

"Acting on their foreign handlers' directions, the accused persons coordinated the delivery and execution of the attack," the DGP said, adding the accused used multiple cutouts and sub-modules to execute the attack. Yadav said during the preliminary questioning that Gurtej revealed he had been in contact with a foreign-based handler approximately six months ago via social media platforms. "Acting on the handler's instructions, Gurtej and his co-accused Rubal Chauhan and Mandeep, alias Abhijot Sharma, collected the consignment of arms and grenades from Jasvir, alias Jassi, at Bharapur village in SBS Nagar on March 28. Subsequently, Gurtej took Amanpreet along to carry out the attack," the DGP added.

"On April 1, after conducting a recce, Amanpreet hurled the grenade, while Gurtej recorded the act on his mobile phone for his handlers, and both fled the scene," he said. "Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) is behind this incident. ISI intelligence officers were coordinating all activities of the accused persons through their agents in India," the DGP said. Yadav thanked the Director Generals of the Chandigarh and Haryana Police, recognising the vital role played by the Chandigarh Police and the Haryana Police STF in unravelling the entire conspiracy and apprehending the accused. Police are also probing how the attack was allegedly planned from Germany and Portugal, and who else may be involved in the network. "More crucial revelations are expected in the coming days," they said. On Sunday, six accused persons were produced before Civil Judge (Junior Division)-cum-Judicial Magistrate First Class Kirandeep Singh by the State Special Operations Cell (SSOC) team of the Punjab Police. The seventh accused was already produced before the court on Saturday. After a hearing, the court remanded all six accused to three days of police custody. During this period, the police will conduct intensive interrogation to uncover further details related to the attack and any larger conspiracy behind it.

ED also probing Nashik godman case, harshest punishment to Kharat: CM

GNS News Agency, April 8

The decision has been taken following the guidance of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. CM Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday confirmed that the ED is now investigating self-styled godman Ashok Kharat for financial fraud alongside SIT probes into sexual exploitation. While promising strictest action against self-styled godman Ashok Kharat, chief minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said, "The Enforcement Directorate is also investigating the case."

The state government had already set up a Special Investigation Team to investigate the case. At least eight cases of women exploitation have been registered against Kharat. Apart from that all aspects related to financial fraud, illegal land acquisition and others are being thoroughly probed. New details are emerging every day. As people are now confident and coming forward to provide information related to Kharat, Fadnavis said. The chief minister was interacting with media at Nashik. He held a meeting with spiritual leaders and religious organisations to discuss the Kumbha Mela.

"Anybody, who in the name of faith does wrong, will be punished. There was no question of tolerating such abuse by individuals. Kharat will get harshest punishment. There can be no two opinions on this, he asserted. "The case will be taken to its logical end. Through investigation we will get to the roots of the case and all those involved will be subjected to punishment. Kharat will get harshest punishment," Fadnavis revealed. Responding to the role of ED, he said, "We had set up SIT which is pursuing the case very seriously. It has done a good job. The ED is also looking into certain aspects related to land etc. They are already working on the case." All those responsible for facilitating or involved in the crime committed by Kharat in name of faith will be probed and punished, he assured. Earlier, last week CM had made a detailed statement in the state legislative



assembly based on the preliminary findings in the Kharat case that has sent shock waves across Maharashtra and country.

Maharashtra police had tracked and established the identity of six women who fell prey to the fake godman. Of these five women victims and a husband of one woman victim filed a complaint in the police station. Based on these complaints Kharat was arrested by Nashik crime branch. Acknowledging the seriousness and sensitivity of the case, the government has constituted the SIT headed by deputy police commissioner Tejasvi Satpute. Kharat had claimed to possess supernatural powers, and used his influence and the faith of his believers to coerce them into engaging in sexual acts, under pressure. Earlier, police had raided Kharat's office, residence, farmhouse and trust. They have seized Rs 6 lakh cash, lap top, DVR, revolver, live cartridges, fired cartridges and shells. Almost 33 acres of land, farm house, gold, plots in various parts of state, a Pune flat in the name of his daughter have been seized. Till now Rs 40 crore property have been registered. The probe is underway to find out property and assets in the case.

Consumers can buy 5-kg LPG cylinders from agencies with valid ID, no address verification needed; ban on sale from godowns



GNS News Agency, April 8

The Delhi government on Sunday said that consumers can now purchase 5-kg LPG cylinders from gas agencies by producing a valid ID without any need for address verification, also announcing a complete ban on the sale of cylinders directly from godowns. The move is said to be aimed at improving access to cooking fuel, particularly for migrant workers and temporary residents. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said a dedicated control room has been operationalised to curb illegal activities such as hoarding and black marketing. To further assist migrant workers, 11 dedicated help desks have been set up at select HPCL outlets that will provide information about nearby distributors, the government said. Oil marketing companies (OMCs) have also issued instructions to distributors stating that sales from godowns are illegal and will invite strict action.

The government also maintained that LPG supply in the city is stable and being closely monitored, adding that people have been advised not to throng gas agencies or storage points as cylinders booked by consumers are being delivered directly to their homes within the stipulated

time. "LPG supply in Delhi remains fully stable and under control. Citizens have been urged to stay calm, avoid rumours, and cooperate with the administration while relying on the established delivery system," CM Gupta said.

Citing data from April 4, the government said that 1,14,679 LPG bookings were recorded in Delhi, and 1,31,335 cylinders were delivered. It said deliveries exceeding bookings indicate that pending demand is also being cleared and the supply system is functioning smoothly. The average delivery time for domestic LPG cylinders currently stands at 4.24 days, it added. The government said that enforcement has been stepped up, with Delhi Police conducting raids at 17 locations. Officials from the Food Supplies department have also inspected 76 gas agencies and storage sites.

Electrician murdered over financial dispute

Hyderabad: An electrician was murdered at Wadi e Saleheen, in city outskirts over some financial issues. The victim Mohd Nazeer, alias Nabbu, (22), resident of Wadi e Saleheen under Balapur police station area went out of the house to discuss some issues with a group of persons who include Fahad and three others.

During the discussion the four people stabbed Nazeer with knives and hit on his head with bricks resulting in his death on the spot. Soon after on information the Balapur police reached the spot and after preliminary investigation shifted the body to mortuary. DV Prabhakar Reddy, ACP Adibatla said that four persons Fahad, Dastagir,

West Asia conflict: Morbi tile makers want to switch to PNG, but higher prices remain a hurdle



GNS News Agency, April 8

Ceramics manufacturers in Gujarat's Morbi have extended their industry shutdown till May 1 — two weeks beyond the earlier deadline of April 15 — after Gujarat Gas Limited announced new piped natural gas prices that tile makers say make restarting production financially unviable. The shutdown, which began on March 17, was triggered by a fuel supply crisis amid the war in Iran. Most of Morbi's tile-making units run on propane-LPG, all of which is imported from the Persian Gulf. The blockade of the Strait of Hormuz has disrupted this supply, pushing tile makers to seek piped natural gas (PNG) as an alternative. It is the new PNG prices quoted to these "returning" users that have now deepened the crisis.

To be sure, the industry is bearing the brunt of the global energy shock — when The Indian Express visited Morbi on March 19, most tile units had shut down because their propane-LPG stocks were depleted. Skeleton crews were carrying out maintenance work; the rest of the workers had been told there was no work for them, at least till April 15. These workers — mostly migrants from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Odisha — were heading home, catching long-distance trains from Morbi, from Rajkot 66 km to the south, or from Ahmedabad 200 km to the east. More than four lakh workers are employed in the ceramics cluster, with another couple of lakh in allied industries. Paid roughly Rs 15,000-18,000 a month through job contractors who brought them to Gujarat, several said they were still owed months of back pay. Sanitaryware workers were spared this disruption. Their units, which run on PNG rather than propane-LPG, remained fully operational. But sanitaryware which runs more by manual labourers than the tile units which are largely mechanised, accounts for only 17% of factories in the Morbi cluster, while the other 83% make wall, floor and vitrified tiles.

In a letter to industrial customers in Gujarat and the Union Territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli on April 1, Gujarat Gas Limited quoted a price of Rs 23 per cubic metre higher for propane users switching to PNG than for its regular PNG customers. For returning users, this works out to Rs 88 per

cubic metre plus 6% GST — nearly twice what they were paying for propane-LPG. "When we shut down the units, we were paying Rs 52 per cubic metre for propane-LPG. Now, they are asking us to pay Rs 93 for PNG, including GST, which is disproportionate to what regular users pay. We cannot operate at these rates," said a tile unit owner.

Morbi accounts for 90% of India's Rs 75,000-crore ceramic industry. Of the roughly 800 units in the cluster — 650 major and 150 minor — around 500 are tile makers running on propane-LPG, consuming about 55 lakh cubic metres per day. For regular PNG users, the April 2026 prices are tiered based on consumption over the six months from September 2025. Morbi accounts for 90% of India's Rs 75,000-crore ceramic industry. Of the roughly 800 units in the cluster — 650 major and 150 minor — around 500 are tile makers running on propane-LPG, consuming about 55 lakh cubic metres per day. The remaining 150-odd sanitaryware units use PNG, consuming about 25 lakh cubic metres per day. The new pricing stems from a central government notification of March 9, which set a unit's Daily Contract Quantity (DCQ) at 80% of its average consumption over the previous six months. Since tile makers had little or no PNG usage in that period — having switched to propane-LPG, which was cheaper — they are now classified as non-regular users and charged the higher rate.

All units in Morbi have been Gujarat Gas customers since 2007, said Narendra Sanghat, newly elected president of the Wall Tiles Division of the Morbi Ceramics Manufacturers Association (MCMA), which announced the shutdown. Most had kept their pipeline connections active, paying minimum bills, even while running on propane-LPG. "The irony is that the tile units had only moved to propane-LPG because it was cheaper than PNG," he said. The pricing gap — 35% higher for returning users — is what the industry says is untenable. "Quoting two different prices to two parts of the same industry disturbs the sector's balance," said Manoj Arvadiya, president of the Vitrified Tiles Division of MCMA. "We can't buy gas at such high prices. So, we've decided to extend the shutdown." The impact is especially acute for tile makers because of their thin margins and high volumes. Sandip Kundiaria, president of the Floor Tiles Division of MCMA, explained: "If a sanitaryware unit has a single product for Rs 3,000, even a Rs 100 price increase can be absorbed. But tile units sell products at Rs 12-15 per foot — a Rs 10 hike is a major increase. Customers expect prices to fall and won't buy at current rates. And if a customer orders 3,000 boxes and sells only 1,000, they are stuck warehousing the rest at a loss." Sanitaryware units are relatively better placed. Unlike tile makers, they have always run on PNG, and their consumption is lower. But even sanitaryware units are feeling the strain. Raw material costs have risen sharply, and petroleum-based inputs like sheet covers and packaging have also become more expensive.

Cast your votes, it's time to avenge voter deletions: Mamata in Murshidabad

GNS News Agency, April 8

Continuing her attack on the Election Commission (EC) and the BJP over the controversial Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday urged people to cast votes, saying it was time to avenge the deletion of voters' names in West Bengal. "Banglar manusher protti je osomman kora hoyeche, taar rajnoitikh protishodh neoyar somoy esheche. SIR-er karone je oshonkhyo manusher mrityo hoyeche, tar badia neoyar somoy ekhon (The way the people of Bengal have been insulted, it's time to take its political revenge. For those countless people who died due to SIR, it's the time now to avenge it)," said the TMC supreme as she held a padyatra in support of her party's candidate in Berhampore.

"Tara punoray nirbachon korar cheshta kore. Ami tader porikolponar kotha shunechi. Protiti kormokortake bechhe bechhe niyog kora hoyeche. Kintu Banglar manush amader sathe aache. Eta nishchit korun jeno prokrito votera chara onyo keu vote dite na paare. Tara jodi amader kormider ED ebong CBI diye bhoi dekhon cheshta kore, tobe bhoi paoyar kono proyogon nei. Amra jani tader kibhabe mokabila korte hoy (We know they will try to hold a repoll.) I have heard about their plans. They have carefully selected every official. But the people of Bengal are with us. Everyone should ensure that, apart from genuine voters, no one else can cast votes... If they try to scare you with ED and CBI, there is no need to get afraid. We know how to tackle them," the chief minister added.

The TMC chief alleged that the ongoing SIR exercise — which she dubbed a tool for deletion rather than addition — has led to the removal of lakhs of names from the electoral rolls, predominantly targeting Bengali-speaking citizens, Hindus, Muslims, and Rajbanshis. She claimed that in her own constituency of Bhabanipur alone, 40,000 voters were deleted. "Even BJP supporters will not vote for them this time. People of Bengal hate the BJP, which is why they are bringing in outsiders in trains and buses," she added. The chief minister compared the BJP's central leaders to "migratory birds" and "cuckoos of spring" who appear only during the elections. "The babus of Delhi come once in a while. They don't even visit every place. They give Rs 500 to people to bring them to their programmes with hired goons and outsiders," Mamata alleged.

Revisiting her "washing machine" metaphor, she accused the BJP of using central agencies like the ED and CBI to harass TMC workers while shielding their own. She



further criticised the EC for the mass transfer of nearly 500 West Bengal officials, claiming it was a move to facilitate the entry of "drugs, cash, and arms" by weakening state oversight. In a bid to appeal to Bengali asmita (pride), Banerjee slammed the BJP-ruled states for harassment of migrant workers from districts like Murshidabad. She mentioned the case of Sunali Khatun, a pregnant woman allegedly "pushed back" to Bangladesh. She also took a swipe at the BJP's perceived interference with food habits: "In BJP-ruled states, people are not allowed to eat fish, eggs, and meat. Fish and meat are offered to Goddess Kali as prasad. Will Bengalis now be told what to eat?" She urged voters to guard Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) until the final counting day. "We are the Pandavas; they are the Kauravas," she declared, asserting that the BJP government in Delhi would "fall in 2026" while Bengal would rise to "capture Delhi."

Speaking at a rally in support of Mohammed Nur Alam in Samsarganj and Mohammed Amirul Islam in Farakka, the chief minister accused the BJP of spreading canards against her that she did not do much for the interest of the Muslims, maintaining that she has fought hard against the implementation of the Waqf (Amendment) Act. Claiming that she and her party will never allow the establishment of detention camps in the name of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), Mamata said, "That is why you (BJP) are being vengeful against me." She sought to remind that the Election Commission's authority over the state's administration is till completion of the election process. Claiming that names of Hindus were also deleted in the SIR exercise, Mamata said, "I am from a Hindu family; names of my family members have also been deleted." She also alleged that the BJP was "spreading venom" in the name of religion, which stands for humanity.

Stock markets drop in early trade on surging oil prices, war escalation fears

Mumbai: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined in early trade on Monday as crude oil prices climbed amid fears of further escalation in the West Asia war. Relentless foreign fund outflows also dented markets' sentiment. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 270.13 points to 73,049.42 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 93.60 points to 22,619.50. Later, the BSE benchmark traded 509.77 points lower at 72,822.60, and the Nifty quoted 141.20 points down at 22,571.90. From the 30-Sensex firms, Reliance Industries, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Sun Pharma, InterGlobe Aviation, Adani Ports and ICICI Bank were among the major laggards. Trent, Titan, Tech Mahindra and Bharat Electronics were among the gainers. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, climbed 0.74 per cent to USD 109.8 per barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 9,931.13 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs), however, bought stocks worth Rs 7,208.41

crore. "With uncertainty over the West Asia conflict looming large the market will continue to be volatile responding to potential good and bad news. The potential for further escalation of the war is high in the next few days. The market will be keenly watching the response of crude prices to war-related events," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said. In Asian markets, South Korea's benchmark Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 index were quoting higher. US markets were closed on Friday for Good Friday. "Comments from US President Donald Trump indicating potential escalation if key supply routes are not restored have kept risk appetite in check. This continues to keep crude oil and global uncertainty as dominant drivers for markets," Hariprasad K, Research Analyst and Founder, Livelong Wealth, said. Equity markets were closed on Friday due to Good Friday. On Thursday, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled higher by 185.23 points or 0.25 per cent at 73,319.55. The Nifty closed at 22,713.10 up by 33.70 points or 0.15 per cent.

Israeli airstrike hits building near Iran's capital, at least 25 killed



GNS News Agency, April 8

Israel and the United States carried a wave of attacks on Monday (April 6, 2026) that killed more than 25 people in Iran. Tehran responded with missile fire on Israel and its Gulf Arab neighbours as U.S. President Donald Trump's deadline for Tehran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz loomed.

Explosions rang out into the night in Tehran and low-flying jets could be heard for hours as the capital was pounded. Thick black smoke rose near the city's Azadi Square after one airstrike hit the Sharif University of Tech-

nology grounds. Later, Israel's army said on Monday (April 6) it had completed a wave of strikes against "regime targets" in Tehran. "A short while ago the IDF completed a wave of strikes on Iranian regime targets in Tehran," the Israeli military posted on Telegram. Iranian media reported the strikes and damage to buildings there, as well as a natural gas distribution site next to the campus. It wasn't immediately clear what had been targeted on the grounds of the university, which is empty of students as the war has forced all schools in the country into online classes.

Multiple countries over the years have sanctioned the university for its work with the military, particularly on Iran's ballistic missile program, which is controlled by the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard. The Guard and other security forces have been using secondary sites as rally points as their bases have come under repeated attack during the war. Meanwhile, the state-run IRAN daily newspaper said in an online message that an airstrike in a residential area of Qom killed at least five people. Qom is a holy Shiite seminary city just south of Tehran. It wasn't unclear what the target of the strike was. Iran has not provided overall casualty figures from the war in days. It also hasn't discussed its material losses.

Defiant Iran ramps up attacks after Trump warning



Netanyahu's commands. "Iran's ally Russia also condemned Mr. Trump's threat. Moscow said Washington should abandon "the language of ultimatums" and return to negotiations, according to a Russian readout of Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's latest call with his Iranian counterpart. Many residents of Tehran seemed indifferent to Mr. Trump's invective, with young Iranians exercising, flying kites and holding picnics in a large park in the city's west on April 5. U.S. airman rescue The New York Times reported that the rescued U.S. airman, a weapons systems officer, was equipped with a pistol, a beacon and a secure communications device to coordinate with rescuers. Two of the aircraft meant to transport him and his rescuers to safety were stuck inside Iran and had to be destroyed to prevent them from falling into Iranian hands, The Times and CBS reported. U.S. forces used three other planes to carry out the airman and his rescuers, reports said.

Iran's military said it destroyed four U.S. aircraft involved in the operation, which it said used an abandoned airport. Iranian media reported five people were killed in strikes during the operation. Footage released by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps was presented as showing charred, smoking wreckage of an American aircraft scattered across a desert area. Iran claims it downed the fighter jet and the crew ejected, while U.S. media reported only the plane was shot down. Washington has not confirmed what caused the plane to come down. Gulf nations reported a wave of fresh strikes from Sunday to Monday, with Kuwait saying it was working to intercept a barrage of missiles and drones fired towards the territory. The United Arab Emirates also said on Monday that its air defences were responding to a missile and drone attack.

It came after UAE authorities in Sharjah said they were dealing with an "incident" in the key port of Khor Fakkan following an Iranian strike. Israel's army also said Monday (April 6) it had identified a fresh wave of missiles launched from Iran towards the country. UAE presidential adviser Anwar Gargash warned Iran that targeting its Arab neighbours "will actually concretize the American role" adding the UAE was ready to "join any American-led effort, international effort to secure navigation in the Strait of Hormuz." "Choose peace" In Iran, local media reported several attacks on residential areas over Tehran Monday, while the state broadcaster said that gas outages hit parts of the capital after a strike on a university. Israel's army said early on Monday (April 6) it had completed a wave of strikes against "regime targets" in Tehran. On another front, Lebanon has increasingly been dragged into the conflict since Iran-backed Hezbollah resumed targeting Israel. Israel has struck back and pushed forces into southern Lebanon, with the army chief Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir visiting there Sunday and pledging to intensify strikes against Hezbollah. UN peacekeepers in Lebanon have warned that attacks by Israel and Hezbollah near its positions "could potentially draw return fire." The Israeli military and medics said a missile fired from Iran hit a residential building in the northern city of Haifa, injuring four people. The war cast a shadow over Easter celebrations, with Pope Leo XIV using his first Easter blessing as pontiff to urge leaders to "choose peace".

Neutrality of polls can't be assured if EC is dependent on contestants: Justice Nagarathna

GNS News Agency, April 8

Supreme Court judge Justice B.V. Nagarathna, while highlighting that the Election Commission is the primary institution entrusted with maintaining the integrity of polls, has said that if those who conduct elections are dependent on those who contest them, the neutrality of the process cannot be assured. The apex court judge raised a critical concern regarding the structural independence of those tasked with overseeing the ballot while delivering the Rajendra Prasad Memorial Lecture at the Chanakya Law University in Patna on Saturday (April 4, 2026).

Citing a 1995 verdict where the Supreme Court recognised the Election Commission as a constitutional authority of high significance, entrusted with ensuring the integrity of elections, she said, "The concern, once again, was structural: if those who conduct elections are dependent on those who contest them, the neutrality of the process cannot be assured." Justice Nagarathna said elections are not merely periodic events but a mechanism through which political authority is constituted. "Our constitutional democracy has amply demonstrated smooth changes in government due to elections being held on a timely basis. Control over that process is, in effect, control over the conditions of political competition itself," she said. The Supreme Court judge said power is not exercised only through formal institutions but also through the processes that sustain them, including elections, public finance, and regulation.

"A constitutional structure that seeks to restrain power must therefore go beyond its classical forms and address these fourth-branch institutions. A set of institutions, while not always fitting within the classical tripartite scheme, is



nonetheless central to the maintenance of constitutional order," she said. Justice Nagarathna said the unmistakable lesson of history is that constitutional collapse occurs through the disabling of its structure, and the violation of rights merely follows.

"The dismantling of structure, in turn, occurs when institutions stop checking each other. At that moment, elections may continue, courts may function, laws may be enacted by Parliament, and yet, power is effectively not restrained because the structural discipline no longer exists," she said. The apex court judge also urged the Centre to view states as "coordinates and not subordinates" and asserted that the separation of powers was a "constitutional arrangement of co-equals." Justice Nagarathna also called for keeping aside "inter-party differences" in the matter of "Centre-state relations", underscoring that governance must not depend on "which party may be ruling the Centre and which other party may be ruling at the state level".

Find a fare balance for Namma Metro



GNS News Agency, April 8

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (BMRC), which runs the Namma Metro service in Bengaluru, got a report on fare revision from a fare fixing committee (FFC) in December 2024. This was the first time a third party was recommending the fares for the service, akin to a regulator's tariff determination. When the report was implemented, there was a public outcry and the fare was brought down from the recommended levels. Stung by losses, after one year, in February 2026, the corporation once more sought to raise the fare, but again there was a public outcry and the raise put on hold.

What ails Namma Metro?

The FFC, constituted by the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry and approved by a Cabinet Committee, consisted of a retired Madras High Court judge, Justice R. Tharany, as Chairman, and Additional Secretary to the Ministry Satyendra Pal Singh and former Additional Chief Secretary, Karnataka, E.V. Ramana Reddy as members. The appointment letter names the members of the committee and the duration of work, but does not mention the Terms of Reference. This was left to Section 35 of the Metro Railways (Operation and Maintenance) Act, 2002. Two FFC members and three BMRC officials toured Singapore and Hong Kong to study the Metro systems operating in those cities. It cost ₹13 lakh for the two members and another ₹12 lakh for the officials. The FFC visited Delhi and Chennai Metros also. The main purpose of the study and the report was to improve the financial position of the BMRC, which is in the red, and earn enough money to service at least the foreign debt. But it could not do it owing to a pushback from the public and traffic experts. The reasons for the criticism are as follows: the fare is unaffordable; it is the highest compared with fares in Mumbai and Delhi; and costs are inflated, based on flawed calculations.

The report determined the current fare revision from previous seven-year-old fares from three components: consumer price index, electricity rates, and maintenance and administration expenditure, each with its weight in the final basket in 2024. While the first two can be understood as efficient costs, since the BMRC is not responsible for them, the last is the corporation's own increase in maintenance and administration costs which have increased by 366% over seven years — this figure is inconsistent with their own 7% cap of this head for future years. The other metros face different conditions. Those at Mumbai and Hong Kong have more riders and good non-fare revenue — for instance, from ads and rents from commercial space. Delhi has government subsidy; so does Singapore and even Chennai. Besides, Mumbai and Delhi do not have free bus commute for women, as Bangalore has, leading to a lower revenue potential. In Singapore, the metro is the dominant mode of

transport with bus and MRT accounting for 42% of commuters, cars 36%, walking 18% (the city-state has footpaths), and taxis and cycling 4%. Besides, Singapore has addressed traffic jams with a high-priced permit auctioned in the market mandatory to drive on its roads and peak-load pricing to use certain roads in business districts during peak hours. These push the demand over to MRT. Last-mile problem

In Bangalore, the legendary traffic snarls — which have brought it as much infamy as pollution to Delhi — should push people to metro, but the last-mile problem remains, which militates against such a switchover. Almost every car owner has a scooter, but where will she park near the metro and how will she commute from the destination to her office, without getting fleeced by autorickshaw drivers? Market has addressed this issue in Mumbai. When thousands of passengers are disgorged at the Churchgate station in Mumbai at 9.30 a.m., one sees a series of taxis and a long queue of passengers getting four each into these share taxis and going to their office paying as little as ₹15. On the contrary, in the J.P. Magar Metro station in Bangalore, five to 10 autorickshaws stay parked, but they demand upwards of ₹60 even for a commute of 1-2 km. Market has developed in Mumbai; it has not in Bangalore.

While the FFC has looked at the Mumbai Metro, it should actually be looking at the suburban electric trains and their fares in the metropolis. Without them and their very low fare structure, one cannot even imagine Mumbai being so mobile. Do they make losses? Not sure, the trains, without doors, may have been completely depreciated out; the only running cost is the staff salaries and electricity. There should be a 150% load factor (people hanging out of train).

Which one you choose? Low fare and huge number of commuters, whose livelihood itself depends on those trains, or high-fared Vande Bharats, half-empty as European trains? What is the secret of the former being etched in the lives of people? The secret is subsidy. It should not be a balancing subsidy, calculated ex-post, which will militate cost efficiency, but a subsidy determined ex-ante. The FFC has set itself two objectives: affordability for consumers and financial sustainability in the long run for the organisation. Since the government has a taxation instrument, apart from the price instrument which businesses have, sustainability is not an issue, as long as government is willing to give subsidy. From a public finance point of view, it is optimal. For reaching social optimum, the organisation will let consumers come in till they cover just the marginal cost, unlike a businessman who will equate marginal revenue to marginal cost, and thereby restrict the output/service. In our parlance, the BMRC should lower prices till capacity utilisation is maximum. But it should not suffer losses; so government subsidy, ex-ante. It is on this premise that Zohran Mandani promised free metro for New Yorkers and won the election. In India, Jayalalitha, in her tenure as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, did the same for Chennai buses, mandated very low fares, and earned the goodwill of the people and votes of the electorate. It is somewhat like newspaper, or better still, e-paper, pricing. Charge low with newspaper readers who have an elastic demand, increase your circulation and charge high from advertisers, who have inelastic demand and can pay for your eyeballs. That is what Hong Kong metro is doing: significant revenue from non-fare box. The fare is only \$1 or so. You can even have a single slab and fixed price as in the New York or Paris metros. Metros should look at commuters as their constituency, just like teachers should look at their students. While profit is maximised by the firm equating marginal revenue to marginal cost, economic efficiency is achieved by equating price to marginal cost. The argument is fixed costs are sunk costs, and need not be recovered, as Government has the taxation route to mop up the resources. The fixed cost becomes a sunk cost, which has no influence in pricing. Once the investment is made, the focus should be on maximising capacity utilisation. The author is a retired RBI Chair Professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, and former Regulator Member, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India. Views expressed are personal.

As U.S. sanctions deadlines expire this month, exporters urge government to revive oil-rice barter trade mechanism with Iran

GNS News Agency, April 8

The government's acknowledgement on Saturday (April 4, 2026) that it is procuring oil and LNG from Iran after a gap of seven years has sparked hope for Indian traders that it may consider restoring trade with Iran and its interest in the Chabahar port, even as U.S. sanction deadlines loom again in April. The U.S.'s temporary sanctions waiver for Russian oil specifically for India expires on Sunday (April 5), while another general waiver for all countries will expire on April 11. In addition, the U.S. waiver for Iranian oil will expire on April 19, and its six-month waiver for India's stake in Chabahar port ends on April 26.

On Friday (April 3), the Ministry of External Affairs said it "remains engaged" with the U.S. and all parties on the issue of Chabahar, while officials expressed hope that Washington would consider extending the waivers on oil, given that the war in West Asia continues, with no end in sight. However, there's no clarity on whether the government will reject U.S. President Trump's demands if the U.S. decides to re-impose sanctions.

Iran's continued restrictions on the Hormuz Strait are a big concern, say exporters, given that more than 80% of India's Basmati exports are destined for West Asian countries and a large number of export consignments are currently stranded in the Strait, stuck in transit at ports or on the high seas, leading to heavy financial losses for them. In a letter to Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, the Punjab Rice Millers Exporters Association urged the government to arrange a barter agreement with Iran, exchanging Iranian crude oil for Indian rice shipments. "This one significant step would ease India's oil crisis and revive our traditional trade with Iran," association director Ashok Sethi told The Hindu, adding that the exporters are urging the government to make use of the "Rupee payment mechanism", a corpus fund managed through UCO Bank set up in 2012 for commodities trade. He added that this would help farmers clear the stocks of Basmati rice from the previous crop season ahead of the new kharif sowing season from May.

If activated, the mechanism would also help India pay for crude oil from Iran, although at present Indian refiners are not taking very large quantities of it, given the high prices, low availability and the need to recalibrate refineries for it. In 2019, the Modi government ended imports of Iranian and Venezuelan oil due to alleged U.S. pressure, and began to reduce imports of Russian oil in November 2025 because of the U.S.'s 25% penalty tariff, which was removed in Feb-



Government faces choices on oil imports, trade and Chabahar port

ruary 2026. After Mr. Trump threatened another 25% tariff for any trade with Iran, MEA officials pointed out that these were at minimal levels of \$1.6 billion in 2024, dropping from about \$15.7 billion in 2014. The government also pulled out all staff and prepaid its investment commitment of \$120 million to Iran in November 2025 for the Chabahar port development project, indicating it was prepared to end the project due to the U.S. sanctions threat.

"On this particular issue (Chabahar port), the sanctions waiver that was given to us is valid till April 26, 2026. The Government of India remains engaged with all concerned in order to address the implications of these developments," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at a briefing. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has stressed that decisions on buying oil were commercially driven, denying the U.S. claims that it "allowed" India to buy Russian oil by issuing the waivers so as to keep oil prices low. Despite that, the price of oil has remained high, at more than \$110 per barrel. "Amid Middle East supply disruptions, Indian refiners have secured their crude oil requirements, including from Iran; and there is no payment hurdle for Iranian crude imports as per some rumours being circulated," the PNG ministry said on Saturday (April 4), adding that India now imports crude oil from over 40 countries. All eyes are now on whether the imports will continue, even if the U.S. snaps back any of its sanctions in April.

Menus shrink & footfall down, LPG crisis shakes Ahmedabad eateries



GNS News Agency, April 8

The central canteen of the Gujarat University in Ahmedabad caters to around 400-500 students daily. For the canteen, situated within the university campus near NRS Computer Hall, the strain of the LPG shortage is quite visible. Operated by Upadhyay Caterers for the past two years, the canteen almost ran out of LPG in the weekend when its supplier provided them with two cylinders with a promise that they will get more in the next three-four days. The canteen is being headed by Devrambhai Trivedi and operated by Suresh Chandra. Talking about the shortage and the manner in which they are dealing with it, Chandra said that they have removed several items such as aloo paratha, dabeli, sandwiches, bread pakoda and noodles from the menu. "Our clientele is down by nearly 40-50%," Chandra said while adding that unlike other commercial eating joints they are not converting to coal-based alternatives of LPG in the kitchen. "We cannot compromise on students' health," he reasoned, citing concerns over smoke and pollution. According to Chandra, as they have received two cylinders by the weekend, they hope to get a few more in the next three-four days as promised by their supplier. The Central University of Gujarat (CUG) almost saw a crisis coming when on April 1, the mess committee chairperson put out a notice to its students stating that the mess menu was being curtailed to "tide over the disruption".

Citing the geopolitical situation that had led to the short supply of gas all over, the office bearer said in the notice that the university had made alternative arrangements to ensure the mess ran uninterrupted. Gujarat coal use at Sindhu Bhavan Road in the Western part of the city, Dakshini 24 — a restaurant serving south Indian cuisine — has almost completely shifted kitchen operations to coal-fired chulha for the past over 15 days. (Express Photo)

The university is located in Kundhela village of Vadodara and has a student strength of over 1,225 with a hostel accommodation provision for 692 students. The Indian Express found that the crisis did not really affect the university.

H B Patel, the Registrar of CUG, Vadodara, told The Indian Express, "On April 1 afternoon a circular was issued for curtailing the mess menu anticipating shortage owing to the prevailing conditions. However, within hours, we received the supply of LPG. The supplier received the mess requirement of an average of 5-6 LPG cylinders daily in the evening. So the circular was withdrawn the same evening." Earlier, as reported by The Indian Express, the operator of the canteen at B J Medical College of Ahmedabad too has been facing the shortage of LPG supply. The operator had stated that they were facing a problem, but could not cut down on the menu since the college's guidelines mandate to serve at least two subsidised on the plate. With the shortage of LPG supply, the operator said that they might shift to a wood-fired stove to continue their operations at the canteen.

The Indian Express reached out to many other canteens of educational institutions in Ahmedabad over the issue. However, none of them were inclined to speak. Like the campus kitchens, the popular commercial eating joints too have been facing the short supply of LPG. And their response to the same has been more varied. Manek Chowk in the old-city of Ahmedabad is one of the most famous street food places for the locals. And here too operators are resorting to various means to deal with the LPG shortage. Arvind Modi, convener of Manek Chowk Food Association, who runs Khodiyar Sandwich at Manek Chowk for the past 16 years, said that he has LPG that can last only till Monday. And after that, if he does not get refill of the LPG, Modi will have to shift to an electric grill that was bought recently as a temporary solution following the crisis. Modi said that the shift will bring its own challenges for him.

"On weekends, when the crowd increases, speed becomes very important," he said, noting that electric grills take longer than LPG. With a regular footfall of 80 to 90 customers, doubling on weekends, he estimates business has dropped by nearly 50 per cent due to the LPG shortage.

honour law garden area outlet Happy Street at Law Garden area in the city is another popular eating hub in west Ahmedabad. Happy Street at Law Garden area in the city is another popular eating hub in west Ahmedabad. Satish Patel, owner of Honour Restaurant and president of the Happy Street Food Association, said a single cylinder lasts barely two days. Patel says they are dealing with the crisis on a daily basis. On Sunday, he had an LPG cylinder that can last for one or two days. Patel expressed concerns that he might have to shut down his restaurant if they do not get regular LPG supply. He adds, "Everyone faces the problem." To deal with the rising costs, Patel is mulling an option of increasing the prices of food items on his menu.

According to Patel, he has already shut down his Naranpura branch in Ahmedabad city owing to LPG shortage and manpower issues. Another landmark eating joint in old Ahmedabad is Chandravilas Restaurant in Ratan Pole. The restaurant is 125 years old and following the LPG crisis, it has shifted its kitchen completely to coal-based chulha and electric coils, and dropped tea from its menu. Its owner Malav Joshi said that there was no clarity from suppliers on LPG availability and normalisation of the situation.

The restaurant, which typically serves 60 to 70 customers a day and up to 200 on weekends, has seen business fall by around 50 per cent. Joshi also pointed out that cutting items such as tea has affected footfall, as it was a regular draw for customers. Hotel ZK on the Relief Road in Ahmedabad city has taken a more definitive route by fully transitioning to coal-based cooking. Owner Bilal Shaikh, whose restaurant dates back to 1994, said they have avoided cutting menu items due to a loyal customer base and the increased demand during Eid (March 21). However, this has significantly increased costs. "Earlier we used 50 kg coal with gas, now we are using 100 kg (coal)," he said, adding that expenses have doubled from around Rs 1,500-1,600 earlier to nearly Rs 3,800 owing to shift to coal-based cooking.

Meanwhile, the eating joint Raipur Bhajiya House near Kankaria Lake in the city is in a phase of gradual transition. Owner Mehul Thakkar said they are operating on their last cylinders while shifting to electric induction, a move already implemented at their Shyamal and Vastrapur branches. The outlet, established in 1989, has seen a 25

per cent drop in footfall from its usual 200 to 300 customers a day. Highlighting a key challenge, Thakkar said induction cooking affects the 'live' experience, food now needs to be prepared in advance as it takes longer to cook compared to LPG, altering both service speed and customer interaction.

The LPG shortage has forced Mehta Chavana, another eatery in Maninagar area of East Ahmedabad, to stop serving rotis and parathas, affecting both regular service and bulk orders. Owner Ankit Mehta said the outlet is facing LPG cylinder shortage, forcing them to say no to large orders. "Sometimes we have to refuse big orders because we don't have enough gas," he said. To continue operations, the eatery has shifted partially to coal and induction cooking. Items like fafda and puri sabzi are still being prepared, but the absence of roti-based items from the menu has impacted demand. Mehta said the business has seen an overall decline of nearly 50%, attributing it to the LPG shortage along with seasonal factors such as exams and reduced discretionary spending. He added that around 10% of customers have been diverted specifically due to the unavailability of rotis.

The outlet is now in the process of securing a Piped Natural Gas (PNG) connection, though delays persist. Mehta said the full menu, including rotis and parathas, will only resume once LPG gas supply stabilises or the PNG connection becomes operational. Similar adaptations have been witnessed at other parts of the city. Gujarat restaurant footfall The restaurant, which typically serves 60 to 70 customers a day and up to 200 on weekends, has seen business fall by around 50 per cent. At Sindhu Bhavan Road in the Western part of the city, Dakshini 24 — a restaurant serving south Indian cuisine — has almost completely shifted kitchen operations to coal-fired chulha for the past over 15 days. Owner Sachin Patel said, "It's difficult to run a business without LPG... working without gas is nearly impossible, but we are managing everything on chulha." The crisis has also led to specific menu cuts.

"We aren't serving rasam and Kerala appam with Kerala curry right now," Patel said, noting that most other items are being continued despite the constraints. He pointed to severe supply issues, saying, "Even if we offer Rs 5,000, it's hard to get a gas cylinder." The restaurant has applied for a PNG connection, but with a three-month process timeline, Patel said reliance on coal remains the only immediate option.

Gidima, another restaurant serving south Indian food on Sindhu Bhavan Road, has a similar story. As the LPG shortage has led the owners to a shift in cooking methods and a reduction in menu offerings. Founders Kamesh and Paril Patel said the kitchen has moved significantly towards induction-based cooking. "We have switched to induction-based cooking," Kamesh said, adding that these adjustments have been necessary to keep the kitchen functional. The restaurant has cut nearly 20% of its menu, specifically removing items that require longer cooking time on gas. "Anything that takes a lot of time on gas, those menu items have been cut down," Kamesh said.

gujarat eating joints The eating joint Raipur Bhajiya House near Kankaria Lake in the city is in a phase of gradual transition. (Express Photo) To cope with the constraints, the kitchen has also increased batch cooking. "We kept items that were giving us 80% of our revenue," said Paril. However, he acknowledged that the current setup is not sustainable, adding that a shift to PNG will be necessary in the long term. At Simran Restaurant in the old city, the LPG shortage has led to intermittent shutdowns of kitchen operations, directly affecting service, particularly for online orders. Owner Shahul Khan said that when gas supply runs out, the kitchen is forced to shut entirely until new cylinders arrive.

"Many times we have to close the kitchen. Just two days ago, we had to shut and wait until supply came," he said. To manage the situation, the restaurant has introduced a coal stove as a backup, which was brought in recently to maintain continuity during supply gaps. Despite the disruptions, Khan said the impact on revenue is limited as short-ages have so far not consistently coincided with peak evening hours. He added that the issue is affecting all three of his outlets in the city, and the restaurant is considering a shift to a PNG though costs remain a concern.

Weapon of mass distraction: Congress slams Govt.'s delimitation proposal

The Congress launched a scathing attack on the Modi government on Sunday over its delimitation proposal related to the implementation of the women's reservation law, saying it will benefit larger and populous states more and is nothing but a "weapon of mass distraction". The Opposition party also alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "hoodwinking" people by claiming that the strength of the southern States in the Lok Sabha will not go down under the proposed changes as the gap in the number of seats between the more populous States and others will increase.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary in-charge of communications Jairam Ramesh said, "The PM is up to his usual tricks of making misleading statements that are meant to deceive. He says South Indian states will not be hurt in any way if the strength of the Lok Sabha is increased by 50% and the number of seats of each state in the Lok Sabha is also increased by 50%."

"This is hoodwinking the people of the country in which the PM has unique expertise," he said. For example, the difference between Uttar Pradesh's and Kerala's seats in the Lok Sabha is now 60 and Mr. Modi's proposal will increase it to 90, he said.

Similarly, the difference between Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu will increase from 41 to at least 61, Mr. Ramesh said, adding that such examples can be multiplied. "Mr. Modi is bulldozing a proposal that will work more to the benefit of larger and populous states since their already large numbers will get further magnified," the Congress leader said.

It is not just south India but States like Punjab and Haryana and those in the northeast that will also see their relative influence decline, he argued. "The nation is facing a serious economic and foreign policy crisis. All that the PM is bothered about is pushing through an increase in the strength of the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas without meaningful consultations and widespread public debate. This is nothing but a Weapon of Mass Distraction (WMD)," Mr. Ramesh said. Tagging Mr. Ramesh's post, Congress MP Manish Tewari said Jairam Ramesh is absolutely prescient and the framing by PM Modi is absolutely erroneous. "The framing must be how much will Southern India,

Gurgaon's waste standoff: RWAs push back on waste rules



Around 6 km from the bustling DLF Cyberhub in Gurgaon's Sector 23A. Here, residents wake up daily to an unpleasant sight — and smell. The area around their homes, which have come up in Carterpur village, is littered with garbage. The residents of plots that cost Rs 3 crore or more cannot escape the stench — especially when the wind blows.

The area where the housing colony is located is among the 186 "garbage vulnerable points" identified by the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) — locations where waste is consistently dumped but is rarely collected. Last month, as part of the enforcement of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026 — which came into effect on April 1 — the MCG had asked Sector 23A to register as a bulk waste generator (BWG).

Under these Rules, BWGs are required to process wet waste on the premises and ensure the collection, segregation, and transportation of solid waste — either independently or through empanelled agencies — to secondary collection points. But residents have resisted the move, arguing that the MCG needs to set its house in order first.

"Their (MCG's) own bins are often overfilled or turned upside down... and are unusable. No one wants to live with a constant stench, so there will be resistance if waste-processing units come up near their homes," said Bhawani Shankar Tripathy, general secretary of the sector's Residents' Welfare Association (RWA). According to Tripathy, RWAs, especially of the sectors under the Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP), lack the capacity to function as BWGs without the necessary support. "Land, electricity, personnel and infrastructure will be needed. The policy says urban local bodies will not provide finances but other support. So why not manage waste processing at the ward level under

a councillor instead of burdening the RWAs?" he asked. Tripathy maintained that there is ambiguity over the definition of "premises" — whether it includes non-gated communities, along with village and HSVP plots. Also, there is lack of clarity on user fees once BWGs are implemented, Tripathy said. "We (RWAs) are a voluntary body, not an authority to direct residents to segregate waste. Even placing bins risks turning a site into a dumping spot. Residents don't want even leaf composting near their homes, forget wet waste processing," he said.

Gurgaon's waste Suncity township off Golf Course Road has been a bulk waste generator (BWG) under the solid Waste Management Rules for more than two years now. (Express Photo by Abhinav Saha) However, some societies have demonstrated that decentralised waste management is possible — although at a cost. Suncity township off Golf Course Road, which has registered as a BWG, operates a biogas plant to treat wet waste and composting pits for horticulture waste.

"We have a biogas plant to treat wet waste, and we spend Rs 45,000 per month to operate it. For horticultural waste, we have pits for composting... We use the produce to maintain our 16 parks and two central verges, along with nurseries. We spend Rs 67,000 per month on it, including diesel expenses and pruning. Also, Rs 93,000 is spent on door-to-door collection of waste every month. In the last three years, we have processed 4 lakh kg of wet waste," RWA chairperson Kusum Sharma said. Acknowledging that community bins often become dumpyards, Sharma said residents of Suncity keep their waste at home until it is collected. Compliance with BWG norms remains uneven across Gurgaon. A highrise society in East Gurgaon recently received a show-cause notice from the Haryana State Pollution Control Board for alleged non-compliance with BWG norms. It was asked to take corrective measures to segregate and recycle waste, while processing the waste onsite.

Residents of the society, however, complained of the lack of coordination among agencies within the MCG. "On the one hand, we have no idea what the MCG does with hazardous waste, where they are incinerated and how recycling of dry waste is done. On the other, pressure is being put on us despite us having complied with norms, while MCG conducts annual inspections... The pollution control board could have easily accessed the details they have sought from the MCG portal," said a resident, requesting anonymity. The push for compliance has come following scrutiny by the MCG. In February, citing orders of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on the illegal dumping of waste in Haryana, the MCG had directed that BWGs, institutions or agencies causing environmental damage, would be fined Rs 25,000 for the first offence and Rs 50,000 for the second violation. General (non-bulk) littering would attract a fine of Rs 5,000 for the first offence and Rs 10,000 for the second. These fines would be imposed on the spot by authorised officers. If the guilty person or institution failed to deposit the fine, the amount would be recovered as land revenue arrears, officials said. The fines collected would

Bhatti attacks LDF record in Kerala, promises good governance

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu on Saturday appealed to voters in Kerala to elect candidates backed by the United Democratic Front (UDF) in the forthcoming Assembly elections, saying it was necessary to restore welfare delivery, good governance and secular administration in the State. Campaigning in the Pathanamthitta constituency and other parts of Kerala, Mr. Vikramarka alleged that the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government led by Pinarai Vijayan had failed to honour the assurances made during the previous elections and that governance standards had declined sharply.

"The CPI-M has no fear of god or the people. They disrespected Lord Ayyappa, the deity of Sabarimala; and they humiliate and threaten the people of Kerala. God and people are going to punish them in the election," he said in the district where the shrine is located.

He cited allegations of irregularities related to the Sabarimala temple, rising unemployment and large-scale migration of young people abroad in search of jobs. Senior citizens, he said, were being ignored and denied adequate social security support. Kerala, once known for its secular

be utilised by the MCG to improve solid waste management and processing in the city.

Between January 1 and February 3 this year, 36 cases of burning garbage in the open have led to fines totalling Rs 1.8 lakh. For dumping construction and demolition (C&D) waste in public places, 57 challans have been issued, leading to the recovery of Rs 13.05 lakh. Another 32 cases of littering in public places have attracted Rs 1.6 lakh in penalties. Chaitali Mandhotra, co-convenor of United Gurugram RWAs, an umbrella body of more than 60 residents' associations, said they have been encouraging their members to apply as BWGs. "Nothing can be better for the environment than registering as BWGs, but societies, especially older ones, need handholding and support from the government. Even if a sector arranges its own finances, some sort of maintenance should be provided by the government/ civic body. Else, there will be registrations on paper — and perhaps only around 30% of waste will be actually processed," Mandhotra said.

MCG Additional Commissioner Ravinder Yadav told The Indian Express that compliance would be strictly enforced when it comes to sectors/ societies registering as BWGs. "Rules are rules. We are running awareness campaigns and will support RWAs, but they will have to comply — either on their own or through empanelled agencies," he said. "In the first phase for BWG registration, we are focusing on gated societies. In the next phase, plotted colonies will be brought in. At present, around 2,500 institutional BWGs are registered," he added. Maintaining that field audits of agencies which will handle BWGs are already underway, Yadav said, "Our joint commissioner (Swachh Bharat Mission) is conducting field visits to audit preparedness and readiness of such agencies. Any sector not complying with the rules will face strict action." As per current norms, the agencies selected to handle BWGs will initially be empanelled for three years, officials said.

"Subject to satisfactory performance and fulfilment of conditions, it can be extended for another two years. No extension will be granted after the total period of five years, though the agency will be eligible to apply afresh. The empanelment can be terminated at any time due to unsatisfactory performance or administrative reasons," an official said. The agencies must ensure 100% door-to-door collection of only segregated waste, officials said. In cases where an agency is unable to process the waste on its own, it will have to enter into an agreement with an authorised recycler. The waste has to be transported in GPS-equipped covered vehicles with separate, colour-coded compartments for different types of waste.

Officials said agencies may set up waste processing units on BWG premises, or build their own composting centres or solid waste processing units, which must have weighbridges and fire safe-ty systems, and be compliant with environmental norms. The city's waste management system has been in a limbo since June 2024, when the contract of the agency responsible for door-to-door collection, transportation and processing of municipal solid waste was terminated due to inefficiency. Since then, MCG officials acknowledged, the city has been relying upon a range of stopgap arrangements — often involving informal migrant labour hired by contractors.

The RWAs, meanwhile, have been making their own arrangements for door-to-door collection of garbage, which is sent to secondary collection points by such labourers. Last June, the MCG had planned to issue four zone-wise tenders for doorstep waste collection by agencies/ contractors, against an earlier practice where a single agency was responsible. Prior to that, the civic body had thought of hiring two or three agencies, officials said.

According to officials, on April 2, the MCG received administrative approval for a door-to-door (D2D) waste collection proposal, and a tender will be floated soon. The plan proposes two agencies to manage Gurgaon's four municipal zones for five years, with 800 vehicles, including e-rickshaws for narrow lanes. At present, the MCG collects waste free of charge from households, using 330 vehicles.

"Garbage vulnerable points will be eliminated with the help of the D2D tender. In tandem, with legacy waste processing underway, the size of the Bandhwari landfill will start reducing. Vehicles will ensure door-to-door collection and transportation to secondary points," Yadav said. This would address the frequent complaints of garbage accumulation in the streets and public spaces, he added.

In line with the proposed tender, the MCG has launched a month-long 'Intensive Sanitation Drive' from April 1 to strengthen cleanliness systems and ensure higher sanitation standards across the city, civic officials said. According to an order issued by MCG Commissioner Pradeep Dahiya, the campaign focuses on "elimination of garbage vulnerable points, effective mechanised and manual road sweeping, regular cleaning of internal roads, markets and public places, as well as proper disposal of garden waste". Dahiya had earlier said that Gurgaon generates around 1,200 tonnes of waste daily, around 40% of which comes from BWGs. Officials said that as per MCG's action plan, the target is to clear 16 lakh metric tonnes of fresh and legacy waste at the Bandhwari landfill by March 2027. "Two agencies have been appointed, and they have started work recently on processing legacy waste," Yadav said. The agencies have been tasked with processing 400 tonnes per day in the current quarter, with the capacity set to increase to 1,600 tonnes per day by the end of the year, officials said.



ethos, high literacy and humanistic traditions, was no longer reflecting those values, he said. Accusing the ruling Left of abandoning communist and Marxist principles, Mr. Vikramarka claimed that political violence and 'goondaism' had taken their place. In contrast, he said, Congress ideology stood for peace, secularism and accountable governance.

Why Indian airlines are among the worst hit by the Gulf conflict



of international operations, even though international flights account for only about 30% of the airline's overall network. Many IndiGo aircraft are now idling overnight at several airports during hours that were once used to operate frequent back-and-forth flights to Gulf destinations. "It is costlier to keep aircraft flying than to keep them parked," the airline official cited earlier said. Several other factors are also driving up operational costs for airlines. Jet fuel prices in India have risen by about \$50 per kilolitre since January to \$150 per kilolitre, while aircraft operating Gulf routes are also facing additional war-risk insurance premiums of about ₹18,000 per seat. Though airlines have announced a fuel surcharge of upto ₹400 on domestic routes (and higher for international routes), these barely cover 10% to 12% of the ticket fare, executives say. The unpredictability of flight schedules to the Gulf caused by security threats, along with last-minute slot allocations by airports in the region, leaves airlines with little time to sell seats, contributing to the underutilisation of aircraft. Most flights to these destinations are operating with very few passengers. Redeploying their idle aircraft on Southeast Asian routes is not a viable option for airlines, as that market is already oversupplied and earnings per passenger per kilometre are significantly lower than on Gulf routes. The same holds true for domestic services, where margins are thinner and airlines must additionally contend with VAT and other levies on aviation turbine fuel that do not apply to international flights. In India, fuel alone accounts for about 40% of airlines' operating costs. For Air India, the challenges are even greater as its flights to Europe and the U.S. are now forced to take a longer southerly route to avoid Iranian airspace, with some U.S. services also requiring fuel stops. This comes on top of the earlier closure of Pakistani airspace following Operation Sindoor last April.

As a result, flight times have lengthened sharply. A Delhi-London service now takes around 12 hours, compared with about nine hours last year. Flights to New York, which must now stop in Rome for refuelling, can take close to 20 hours instead of roughly 15 hours earlier. However, finding an opportunity in the Gulf crisis, Air India has announced 78 additional flights to various destinations in Europe and the U.S. Industry executives say travel demand is already beginning to soften. "As far as westbound travel is concerned, only essential trips are likely to take place, with many passengers postponing their plans," one executive said. Airlines are also seeing a slowdown in inbound travel from Southeast Asia, where many passengers typically connect onward on Indian carriers to their next destinations. Domestic connecting traffic from inbound international travellers has also weakened, in early signs of the broader impact on the industry.

While the aircraft are not formally grounded, airlines are flying them once every three to four days to keep them serviceable, and because parking stands are scarce at several airports. Gulf routes key for Indian carriers. For many Indian carriers, destinations across the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait account for the bulk of their international flying, reflecting the presence of more than 90 lakh Indians living across the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. But flight restrictions and heightened military activity in the region led to about 2,600 flight cancellations by Indian carriers in the first nine days after tensions between Iran and Israel escalated on February 28. While operations in Oman are normal, major hubs such as Dubai, Doha, and Abu Dhabi continue to face severe disruptions and intermittent suspensions.

In more normal times, roughly half of all international passengers flying to or from India travels on a Gulf route, using hubs such as Dubai, Doha, and Abu Dhabi to connect onward to flights to the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Nearly four crore passengers travelled between India and the Gulf in 2025, making it the country's largest international aviation corridor by far. Traffic from India to the region is about 4.6 times larger than to Europe and nearly 29 times bigger than the U.S. market for Indian carriers, according to an analysis of data from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. While Air India Express was originally set up in 2004 to serve a very specific market — low-cost travel between southern India and the Gulf for migrant workers — it has repositioned itself since the Tata Group took over. Even so, around 30% of its total flights are to Gulf destinations and it continues to be a dominant player in airports across north Kerala's Kochi, Kannur, and Kozhikode, and in Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu. At the full-service arm, Air India, the Gulf accounts for about 20% of total international flying. And at IndiGo, whose international network is largely short-haul, West Asian routes make up around 35% to 40%

Why did the SC allow passive euthanasia? | Explained

On March 11, in India's first judicial approval of passive euthanasia, the Supreme Court allowed the withdrawal of life support for Harish Rana, 32, who had been in a vegetative state for nearly 13 years following a fall. The Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and K.V. Viswanathan said that medical boards and Mr. Rana's family had both said that treatment had become futile and was not in his best interest. It held that the right to life included the right to die with dignity.

What is passive euthanasia?

A simplistic view holds that passive euthanasia involves a negative act or an omission, such as withdrawing or withholding life support, while active euthanasia is an intrusion or positive act, such as administering a lethal injection. Active euthanasia is currently illegal in India. However, the latest judgment helps us understand the difference in a more nuanced way. The Court noted that withdrawing life-sustaining treatment, such as switching off a ventilator, is a positive act. Relying on a simplistic 'act versus omission' test could wrongly place withdrawal of life support outside legal protections for passive euthanasia. Justice Pardiwala explained that the distinction lies in the source of harm: active euthanasia introduces a "new, external agency of harm, such as a lethal injection." Passive euthanasia does not involve a new risk of death, but the removal of an artificial barrier, which then allows the natural trajectory of life to continue and reach its inevitable conclusion. When a ventilator is withdrawn, death is "accelerated" only in the sense that the patient dies sooner than they would have if the machine had continued.

What did the Court say about the 'right to die'?

The Court said there comes a point when even the state's interest in preserving life must yield to an individual's right to die with dignity. It said, "Temporarily keeping alive a terminally-ill patient who is brain dead or in a persistent vegetative state, solely because doctors are able to leverage the technological advancements in medicine, and compelling such patients to endure a slow, agonising death, cannot fully be compatible with the constitutional ideal of dignity." The Court observed that as the end of life approaches, a loss of control over human faculties denudes life of its meaning. It declared that the right to live with dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution extends beyond the preservation of life to encompass the right to die with dignity for a patient with an irreversible medical condition.

The Court also remarked that the term 'passive euthanasia' is obsolete. It said the term 'euthanasia' in India would strictly refer only to active euthanasia. The usage 'withdrawing or withholding of medical treatment' would replace the term 'passive euthanasia'.

What is the 'best interests' test?

The test is based on the common law principle that any medical treatment constitutes a trespass against the person and must always be justified. The 'best interests' inquiry does not ask whether it is in the patient's best interest to die, but whether continuing life support through Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration, as was done in Mr. Rana's case, artificially serves their best interest. The Supreme Court said there is no narrow, straight-jacket formula to understand what would be in the best interest of an unconscious or incompetent patient; that would require both medical and non-medical considerations. The Court explained that, at its core, the 'best interests' inquiry is anchored in a strong presumption in favour of preserving life, reflecting the sanctity of life. But this presumption was not absolute and may be displaced when medical treatment artificially and futilely prolongs the suffering of a patient with an irreversible medical condition.

What have been the past positions in India on the 'right to die'?

The Supreme Court and the Law Commission of India have often addressed the right to die. In 1996, in Gian Kaur v. State of Punjab, a Constitution Bench distinguished between an attempt to suicide and abetment of suicide from



"acceleration of the process of natural death". It held that the right to live with dignity also includes the right of a patient to die with dignity when life was already ebbing out. In 2006, the 196th Law Commission of India Report recommended that a terminally ill patient's decision to discontinue medical treatment should not attract criminal liability if such withdrawal was in their best interests. In 2011, the tragic case of the nurse, Aruna Shanbaug, in Maharashtra, saw the Supreme Court grapple with questions on the right to die amid a legislative vacuum. It prompted the Court to draw guidance from comparative jurisprudence and foreign legal frameworks. The Court then laid down guidelines permitting withholding of medical treatment for terminally ill patients with no chance of recovery. A year later, the Law Commission, in its 241st Report, reiterated its 2006 suggestions. Four years later, the Health Ministry published a draft law, The Medical Treatment of Terminally-Ill Patients (Protection of Patients and Medical Practitioners) Bill, 2016, but no follow-up has been made in the past decade. In 2018, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, in Common Cause v. Union of India, laid down fresh guidelines detailing procedures, including constitution of medical boards, to deal with applications for withdrawal of life support and advanced medical directives (AMDs). The need for judicial intervention arose in the absence of law. One of the judges on the Bench expressed a "pious hope" that Parliament would wake up to enact a specific law.

Daniil Medvedev beats Carlos Alcaraz to reach Indian Wells final

Indian Wells (US): Daniil Medvedev handed top-seeded Carlos Alcaraz his first loss of the year and advanced to the final at Indian Wells with a 6-3, 7-6 (3) victory.

The 11th-seeded Medvedev, from Russia, will face second-seeded Jannik Sinner of Italy. Sinner beat Alexander Zverev 6-2, 6-4. Alcaraz had won 16 straight matches this year, including titles at the Australian Open and Qatar Open. But Medvedev ended the possibility of an Alcaraz-Sinner final. Medvedev had dropped his last four meetings with Alcaraz, including a loss in the Indian Wells final in 2024. This was Medvedev's first victory over him since the US Open semifinals in 2023. Sinner made quick work of Zverev, beating him in 1 hour and 23 minutes. Sinner notched six aces against the fourth-seeded Zverev. Zverev won his first eight points on serve, but Sinner broke him in both the fifth and seventh games to secure the first set. Sinner now leads the head-to-head series against Zverev 7-4. Neither Medvedev nor Sinner has dropped a set yet in this tournament. Sinner has won his last three matches against Medvedev, including in the US Open quarterfinals in 2024. In the women's doubles final, Taylor Townsend and Katerina Siniakova beat Anna Danilina and Aleksandra Krunic 7-6 (4), 6-4. The victory marked Townsend's first title at Indian Wells and Siniakova's second. Siniakova also won in 2023 alongside longtime partner Barbora Krejčíková.

What is the Essential Commodities Act? | Explained



As the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz exposed the vulnerability of India's supply chain for cooking gas, the majority of which is imported, the Union government invoked the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. While long-term steps are needed to diversify and reduce reliance on global suppliers and expand strategic reserves, the Act is a crucial emergency tool for now. It allows the Centre to direct refiners to boost domestic LPG production, prioritise household consumption, and regulate the allocation of natural gas.

What is the Essential Commodities Act?

The Act empowers the Union government to control the production, supply, and distribution of commodities, including drugs, fertilizers, foodstuffs, edible oils, fuels, and seeds. Under Section 3, the government can issue orders to maintain or increase supplies, to prioritise production of any essential commodity, or to secure their equitable distribution and availability at fair prices. It can set prices and stock limits, prevent sales, control storage, transport, and distribution, and prevent hoarding and black marketing. In the recent past, the law has been invoked to manage shortages of wheat, sugar, and pulses. During the COVID-19 lockdown, it was invoked to prevent hoarding, black marketing, and profiteering of a range of goods.

Why has it been invoked now?

Facing U.S. and Israeli strikes, Iran has retaliated by attacking oil-producing neighbours in the Persian Gulf that hosted U.S. forces, and targeting ships in the Strait of Hormuz. While a fifth of the world's oil transits through this maritime chokepoint, it is the disrupted supply of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), or cooking gas, that has sent Indian consumers into a panic. The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana helped to boost LPG coverage in Indian households from about 62% in 2016 to almost 100% now. However, domestic production has not kept up with consumption. In 2024-25, Indian refineries produced 12.8 million metric tonnes of LPG, just 41% of the annual consumption of 31.3 million

tonnes (Petroleum Ministry data). The gap is filled by imports, of which a whopping 90% comes through the Strait of Hormuz. Liquefied natural gas (LNG) is also piped into Indian kitchens, apart from fuelling vehicles, and being used for other commercial purposes. Of India's consumption of 189 million metric standard cubic meters per day, 52% is produced domestically. A quarter of the total consumption is imported from the Persian Gulf.

How does the order affect LPG production?

On March 5, the government ordered all oil refineries in India to channel their propane and butane streams into LPG production, rather than using them for petrochemical manufacturing. A revised order on March 9 specified that SEZ oil-refining companies and petrochemical complexes are also to be included. It added that propylene, butene, and other elements of the C3 and C4 streams were also to be used for LPG production only. Apart from state-run refiners, such as Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL), Chennai Petroleum, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, and the Numaligarh Refinery, the order is also directed at private refiners such as Reliance and Nayara Energy. The government claims that its order has already increased domestic production of LPG by at least 25%, though that still leaves a 50% gap in supplies to be met by imports. All LPG is to be supplied exclusively to IOCL, BPCL, and HPCL, which have been directed to supply cylinders only to domestic households. The de-prioritisation of commercial kitchens has already resulted in restaurants, hostels, and hotels downing shutters or limiting their menus.

How does this regulate natural gas supply?

The March 9 order on natural gas does not impact production, but rather establishes a priority-based allocation framework for gas distribution, overriding any existing contracts. Top priority will go to piped natural gas for households, compressed natural gas for transport, gas needed for LPG production, and pipeline compressor fuel. Supplies to these sectors will be maintained at 100% of their average consumption over the past six months, subject to availability. Fertilizer manufacturers will get 70% of their needs, though this may change if the war continues to disrupt supplies as kharif sowing gets into full swing in summer. Supplies to tea, manufacturing, and other industries have been capped at 80%.

Some petrochemical facilities run by ONGC, GAIL, and Reliance will face partial or full curtailment of LNG supply. Gas allocation to oil refineries will drop to 65% of their usual needs.

A cradle of care: How Kerala fights infant mortality

Discussions on the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) of Kerala have surged after an exchange between Rajeev Chandrasekhar, president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Kerala, and Rajya Sabha MP of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] John Brittas, went viral. Kerala's IMR hit an all-time low of 5 (per 1,000 births) according to the 2023 Sample Registration Survey (SRS) report, released last year, as against the national average of 25 (per 1,000 births). Kerala is the only State in India with a single-digit IMR, even lower than the USA (5.6). Ten years ago, the Kerala Health Department aimed to bring down the IMR to a single digit from 12. Veena George, State Health Minister told The Hindu.

A project organised by the Health Department of Kerala and the State branch of the Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP) achieved the desired result when the SRS report came out in 2018, as the State achieved the single-digit IMR of 7 for the first time. Kerala has been steadily reducing the rate over these years. A planned achievement

A combined effort, without compromising its importance at any point, is the main reason for this achievement, said Ms. George, adding that the Health Department has planned and implemented many schemes such as 'Hridayam', 'KARE', and 'Shalabham' to bring down the IMR. The 'Hridayam' scheme provides treatment for heart-related diseases to children from birth till 18 years of age. Through this scheme, heart disease screening is conducted for all babies born in the government hospitals. The screenings are also conducted in homes, Anganwadis, and schools to ensure extensive care to children. According to the government data, about 8,000 children have undergone heart surgeries since it was launched in 2017. What makes it more relevant is that 15,686 of the total registered 24,222 children are infants.

Kerala Against Rare Diseases (KARE) prevents and manages rare diseases. This ₹250-crore project, launched in 2024, provides free care to tackle rare diseases through early detection, treatment, and support. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there are over 5,000 rare diseases globally. More than 200 children are being offered free treatment and allied services under the scheme. The Shalabham (butterfly in Malayalam) project screens children for any birth defects from the time they are born up to the age of 18 years. The Health Department ensures bi-annual screening in immunisation sites, Anganwadi Centres, schools, and in community settings. According to Rahul U.R., the State Nodal Officer of Child Health and Rare Diseases, Kerala's achievement in bringing down IMR is the result of decades of social investment and a strong health system, rather than a single intervention.

"Hello... Are you alright? Do you have enough money for medicines? Please let us know if you need something." Keralites who have spent quarantine days at home would have gotten a call like this from an ASHA worker at least once. The hard times of the COVID pandemic showed how organised and deep rooted the Health Department is. Kerala has an extensive network of Public Health Centres, Community Health Centres and a robust community health workforce that are instrumental in fueling all the ventures of the Health Sector. ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, and Junior Public Health Nurses (JPHNs) do regular home visits for newborn babies and mothers.

The case of Attappadi is a classic example of how efficient this system is. The largest tribal settlement in Kerala had an IMR of 28.6 when the health department made its intervention ten years ago. The government analysed the reasons for infant mortality and prepared a list of women with high-risk pregnancies. The Health Department organised a team called 'Pendrika Kootta' (women's group). The team made sure that constant care was given to the pregnant women. ASHA and Anganwadi workers, along with SC/ST activists, played in unison in bringing down the IMR of Attappadi to 6.3

"A number of health centres were made in the settle-



ments inside the forest to avoid pregnant women travelling long distances for a health check-up," Ms. George said.

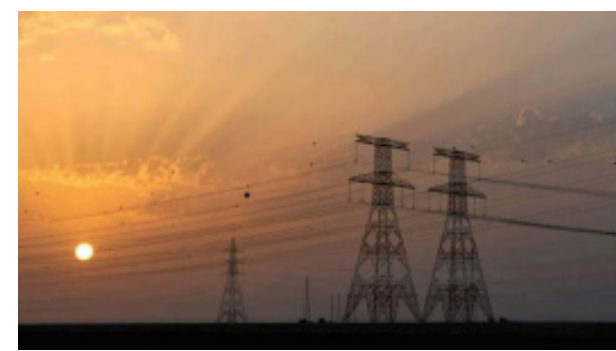
An early start. High female literacy and women's empowerment make the job easier, said Dr. Rahul. The basic awareness in modern medical science adds to this. The foundation of this structure had been paved centuries ago. "Opening of a Tamil class for medical study at Trivandrum," reads the headline of a government-commissioned article in Kottayam CMS college's magazine - Vidyasamgraham released in 1864. The article invited people to learn "English" medicine - the nickname of allopathic medicine - for the use of commoners in day-to-day life. The Travancore government, in the same period, allotted financial aid to private clinics that worked alongside the free government medical clinics. The government gave generous aid to private bodies to establish dispensaries and treat leprosy patients. Flashback to five more decades, experiments on modern medicines were conducted, when the State was ruled by three kingdoms, namely Travancore, Cochin and Kozhikode.

The queen who ruled the Travancore from 1810 to 1813 - Ayilyom Thirunal Gowri Lakshmi Bayi - started a vaccination department in her princely state when people were sceptical about using allopathic medicines. To convince her subjects to participate in this pioneering vaccine drive against small pox, she made the people from the royal family get vaccinated first. This was a remarkable building block to the medical edifice later acclaimed as "Kerala model" health care. The next step Kerala's next goal is "zero preventable infant death." It has been closely examining "near-death cases." Learning about every possible threat to infants can help the health department achieve it. Also read: Registry of persons with rare diseases to be developed. "Disease caused by the changing lifestyle is one of the challenges to this goal. Sometimes, pregnant women migrating from other States is also a challenge to an extent," said Ms. George. Evidence-based policy making and rapid adoption of innovations are the specialities of Kerala's health sector. "One reason for the growth of our health system is the plans that we developed by learning from our experiences," Ms. George said, adding that this helps in the refinement of the system.

Unidentified woman brutally killed in Medchal, probe on

Hyderabad: A woman was brutally murdered by unidentified persons near the Sri Ramalingeswara Swamy Temple in Medchal in the suburbs on Sunday evening. According to police, locals noticed the body near the temple premises and alerted the authorities. Upon receiving the information, the police teams reached the spot and took up the investigation. A preliminary investigation suggested that the assailants had slit the woman's throat and killed her. The victim is believed to be between 35 and 38 years old. Her identity is yet to be established. A case has been registered and an investigation is underway to identify the victim and trace those responsible for the murder.

Relief to wind, solar generators: Electricity regulator delays stricter grid stability rules



the implementation of the order remains subject to writ petitions pending before the Delhi High Court. Meanwhile, industry players have cautioned that the tighter norms could dent revenues and further strain the financial viability of projects.

The new rule seeks to reduce the gap between what the electricity generators commit to supply versus what they deliver. Currently, renewable energy accounts for over 50% of India's installed power capacity, although its share in actual electricity generation remains below 30%. In its order, the CERC underscored that grid stability concerns have intensified with the rapid scale-up of renewable energy. When wind and solar capacity were relatively small, deviations from schedule did not materially threaten system balance. However, as the scale of renewable injection grows, even moderate forecasting errors can translate into large absolute deviations, which, in turn, affect frequency, reserve deployment and ancillary service requirements, the order read. "Large unscheduled over-injections or under-injections require balancing through reserves or ancillary services, impose costs on the system and potentially affect frequency stability. If such costs are not internalised by the entities causing deviations, they are ultimately borne by consumers," it noted.

Under new regulation, deviations for wind and solar generators will no longer be assessed solely against available capacity. Instead, the calculation will shift to a blended denominator that factors in both available capacity and scheduled generation. A key element of this framework is the weighting parameter "X", which will be reduced in a phased manner over time, gradually moving the basis of deviation assessment closer to scheduled generation. To enable the transition, the CERC has outlined a phased roadmap, with separate trajectories for solar and wind, reflecting differences in forecasting accuracy. "Over time, it has been established that Solar-based Projects have greater generation predictability than wind-based projects," the order read, adding that the allowed margin for error before deviation charges kick in will get smaller from April 1. For solar and hybrid projects, the permissible deviation band will be narrowed from +/- 10% to +/- 5%. For wind projects, it will be reduced to +/- 10% from +/- 15%.

Wind and solar generators in India have been given more time to adjust to tighter grid rules as the country's top electricity regulator has delayed the rollout of stricter deviation norms by a year. These norms — meant to penalize firms when they produce more or less electricity than promised — will now start in April 2027 instead of April 2026. Power generators have to declare in advance how much electricity they will supply to the grid. If they generate too much or too little, it can disturb the balance of the power system, forcing grid operators to adjust supply from other sources. The stricter norms aim to reduce these mismatches over time.

Grid operators levy deviation charges — essentially financial penalties — when differences between actual generation and scheduled supply force them to curtail output from other plants to maintain system stability.

For now, renewable energy companies are getting a breather as wind and solar power depend on the weather, making the output harder to predict. While deviation charges still apply to them, they enjoy relaxed norms due to their intermittent nature. However, in its March 31 order, CERC laid out a phased plan to tighten these norms using a more complex calculation methodology. The order aims at aligning deviation rules for renewable energy (RE) generators with those applicable to conventional generators from 2031 onwards. As per CERC, these measures are necessary as India rapidly adds more renewable energy to the grid, where even small forecasting errors can have a larger impact on overall grid stability. Relief to wind, solar generators: electricity regulator delays stricter grid stability rules. However,

Venu Srinivasan obliges request to quit Bai Hirabai Trust, Vijay Singh declines

Venu Srinivasan, the chairman emeritus of TVS Motor, stepped down from the Bai Hirabai Jamsetji Tata Navsari Charitable Institution (BHJTNCI) on Saturday, citing commitments to other businesses. He is a member of several key Tata Trusts boards. It is learnt that he quit following a request from the Tata Trusts management. The resignation came shortly after a dispute over trustee appointments. According to top sources in the Tata Group, Tata Trusts had asked both Srinivasan and the former Defence Secretary Vijay Singh to quit from the Bai Hirabai Trust. While Srinivasan obliged, Singh declined. Former Sir Ratan Tata trustee Mehli Mistry formally challenged the appointment and continuation of two trustees — Srinivasan and Singh — before the Maharashtra Charity Commissioner.

Tata Trusts Chief Executive Siddharth Sharma did not respond to a mail from The Indian Express on the development. Srinivasan said he had no comments, and Singh did not respond to calls and messages seeking clarification. Mistry has contended that the trust mandates trustees to be permanent residents of Mumbai, and belong to the Parsi Zoroastrian faith. He claimed that the two of them do not satisfy these criteria and sought regulatory intervention, including a formal inquiry and sworn declarations from all trustees confirming their eligibility.

Bai Hirabai Jamsetji Tata Navsari Charitable Institution was established by a deed of trust dated December 7, 1923, and has had the same Board of Trustees as that of Sir Ratan Tata Trust. Tata sources said former Chief Justice of India HJ Kania had taken the view that there was no legal or doctrinal bar preventing non-Zoroastrians from being inducted as the trust's members. In his opinion, its governing framework did not impose any explicit restriction barring such appointments, allowing for a broader and more inclusive interpretation of eligibility for trusteeship. In line with this, RK Krishnakumar, who was a Director of Tata Sons and several Tata companies, was subsequently appointed as a trustee in the year 2000, during the tenure of Ratan Tata as the head of the Tata Trusts. This was seen as a practical affirmation of the earlier view, demonstrating that the trust was willing to adopt a more expansive approach in its governance practices. While the circumstances surrounding Srinivasan's exit from the Bai Hirabai Trust suggest that not all is well among trustees of the Tata Trusts, a Tata source said the trust is a small entity without any stake or voting rights in Tata firms. There was no need for the trust's management to ask them to quit after Mistry filed the com-



plaint with the Charity Commissioner, a source said. Following Srinivasan's exit, all members of the Bai Hirabai Jamsetji Tata Navsari Trust board — except Vijay Singh — are of the Zoroastrian faith. It's part of the Sir Ratan Tata Trust, which is currently headed by Noel Tata.

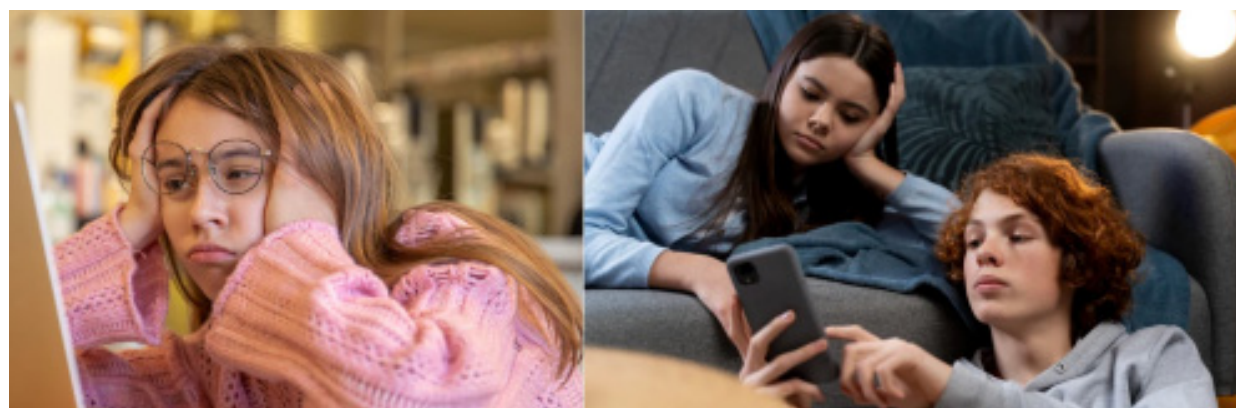
Meanwhile, the board of Tata Sons, expected to meet in June, is likely to decide on an extension for Chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran. Tata Trusts board is expected to meet before the Tata Sons board meeting, sources said. There is currently no proposal from either Noel Tata or any other trustee to introduce a truncated tenure for the chairman, nor to appoint a MD or CEO alongside the chairman at Tata Sons, they added.

"As far as I know, the Tata Sons board will continue to back Chandrasekaran for a third term," said a top-level source in the group. "No director can veto that. I believe the issues raised by Noel Tata are best replied to and discussed in detail at a board meeting as these issues were raised at the board and not through any communication outside the board," the source said. "The dignity of the Chairman of Tata Sons must be maintained and he can never be considered a subordinate, whose explanation is being demanded," he said on the condition of anonymity. On February 24, a decision on the third extension for Chandrasekaran was deferred after he requested the board of the Tata Group holding company to postpone the matter as due to disagreements in the board meeting. While his second tenure will end only in February 2027, Tata Sons directors had earlier cleared the third extension. However, differences came to the fore in the board meeting as Tata Trusts Chairman Noel Tata raised concerns over the losses in some of the group's companies, according to the sources.



challenge the notice through appropriate legal channels. The company plans to seek relief before competent judicial or quasi-judicial forums, signalling the likelihood of a legal dispute. The disclosure of the demand notice has been made in accordance with regulatory requirements under the Securities and Exchange Board of India's Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements Regulations, 2015. Such disclosures are mandatory for listed companies in cases involving material financial implications. Industry observers note that disputes of this nature, particularly those tied to historical mining operations, often hinge on technical interpretations of production limits and regulatory compliance. The outcome of the case could have broader implications for the mining sector, especially in matters related to retrospective assessments.

Brain empty, phone full: Why Gen Z is outsourcing their memory to the cloud



"What exactly is the digital world doing to us?" asks 24-year-old Nitika Jain. It's a question that feels increasingly urgent, and oddly familiar. Across conversations with young adults, a pattern emerges: not panic, but a quiet, creeping awareness that something about how we think, remember, and pay attention is shifting. The term often used to describe this shift is 'digital dementia.' But is that what's really happening? For many in Gen Z, memory has become external. Nitika points to something simple: phone numbers. "There was a time I could recall my best friend's number easily," she says. "Now I just tap a name. I only remember a few important numbers, like my parents'."

This isn't an isolated experience. Passwords, reminders, and even birthdays are now stored in devices. The brain no longer needs to hold them. Anjali Yadav, 23, notices a subtler shift. "Sometimes I don't remember people by their names anymore," she admits. "I recognise them through their Instagram profiles. If you say their name, I pause. But if I see their handle, I know instantly." In both cases, memory hasn't disappeared; it has been outsourced. This phenomenon has a name: cognitive offloading. According to Dr Naeem Sadiq, Medical Director at Plexus Neuro Centre, this is not necessarily harmful in itself. "The brain is adapting," he explains. "Instead of storing information internally, it increasingly focuses on remembering where to find it." In other words, we are not remembering less; we are remembering differently. The phrase "digital dementia" can sound alarming, evoking images of irreversible cognitive decline. But medically, it doesn't hold up. Dr Sadiq clarifies that the term is not an established neurological diagnosis. It was popularised in 2012 to describe concerns that heavy use of technology might weaken memory and thinking skills. However, current scientific evidence does not support the claim that digital usage directly causes dementia. What we are seeing instead are functional and behavioural changes, not structural brain damage in the traditional sense.

In some studies, very high screen exposure, more than four hours daily, has been associated with differences in brain regions linked to attention and memory. However, these findings are still being explored and do not indicate disease. The distinction is important: unlike neurodegenerative conditions, these changes are often reversible, explains Dr Sadiq. If there is one thread connecting all the voices, it is the fragmentation of attention. Anjali describes it simply. "We don't think deeply anymore. We just Google things and move on." Dr Sadiq explains why. "The brain does not truly multitask," he says. "It switches rapidly between tasks. Frequent switching can overload executive functions, affecting attention, planning, and decision-making." This explains why even small tasks, such as doing mental math or recalling directions, feel harder. Not because the brain is weaker, but because it is rarely given uninterrupted time to work. For some, the digital world is not

just a tool, it is the environment itself. Vamsi Vishwanath, 24, an AI engineer, spends most of his day on screens. "Sometimes it feels like 24 hours," he says. After the pandemic, he noticed subtle cognitive shifts. "If someone asks me what day it is, I might not immediately know," he admits. "Even birthdays slip sometimes." He attributes this not just to screen time, but to a lack of variation. "The brain needs different stimuli," he explains. "But if you're always in the same digital environment, it affects you." Vamsi shares how a friend hasn't visited a grocery store in two months, relying entirely on delivery apps. "They don't even know the prices of things anymore," he says. These shifts extend beyond memory into behaviour. Social interactions, too, are changing. "People don't gather like they used to," he adds. "Even in societies full of young people, everyone stays indoors, on Discord, on their phones." Not everyone agrees. Despite these changes, most young people don't describe extreme distress. Instead, there is a sense of mild imbalance. Mayank Rathore, 19, reflects this middle ground. "I don't think I'm forgetting things because of technology," he says. "But I do feel like I use my phone too much." His screen time fluctuates, ranging from under an hour on busy days to up to ten hours when he is idle. "It depends," he shrugs. "But yes, screens are always around." This normalisation is key. Many don't notice the impact until it's pointed out. "When you asked this," Anjali says, "I realised maybe this is happening to me too."

If digital life is so integrated, why do we feel the need to escape it? Nitika describes the cycle vividly. After a digital detox, "you slowly return. First WhatsApp, then Instagram. Eventually, you're back where you started." The question then becomes: why detox at all? The answer may lie in attention fatigue. Constant connectivity leaves little room for mental rest. Notifications, messages, and endless content create a state of low-level cognitive overload. Small interventions, however, can help. Nitika's decision to turn off social media notifications changed her relationship with her phone. "I open Instagram when I choose to," she says. "Not when it pulls me in." Dr Sadiq highlights that children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable. Their brains are still developing, making them more sensitive to excessive digital exposure. In younger children, high screen time has been linked to speech delays, sometimes referred to as "virtual autism." Again, these are associations, not definitive diagnoses, but they underline the importance of balance during early development. If the problem is not technology itself, but how we use it, then the solution lies in recalibration, not rejection. Dr Sadiq suggests practical steps: Interestingly, many young people are already moving in this direction, intuitively. Vamsi steps away when his brain demands it. Nitika controls notifications. Mayank limits his screen time when he can. These are not dramatic lifestyle overhauls. They are small, conscious boundaries.

Nita Ambani gives daughter Isha Ambani's Sabyasachi sari a Chanel 'pearl' twist at Chetak Screen Awards 2026



Last evening, Nita Ambani graced the Chetak Screen Awards 2026 in a champagne gold 'Akash Tara' sari from designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee's atelier — a glittery piece borrowed from her daughter Isha Ambani's wardrobe. Isha had worn the creation for Armaan Jain and Anissa Malhotra's wedding in 2020, pairing it with a choker. Nita kept it simple with a sleeveless golden blouse, letting her accessories do the talking.

For the star-studded event, Nita accessorized with heavy diamond and yellow sapphire earrings, a matching bracelet, and a statement ring. However, the true showstopper was the Patek Philippe Nautilus Haute Joaillerie on her left wrist — a masterpiece retailing for a staggering \$428,450 (approximately ₹3.72 crore). According to the brand's official website, the Nautilus Haute Joaillerie by Patek Philippe is presented in a rose gold model, entirely paved with diamonds in a sophisticated 'snow-setting' across the case, bezel, and bracelet. The dial features rows of stones meticulously arranged to mirror the signature wave relief of the Nautilus women's collection. At its heart, the Caliber 26-330 S self-winding movement beats at a frequency of 4 Hz, ensuring unwavering accuracy. With a 45-hour power reserve, it remains a steadfast and reliable companion for the discerning wearer.

The case, a luxurious 35.2 mm of rose gold, is a masterpiece of craftsmanship. Its slim profile, just 8.65 mm thick, sits gracefully on the wrist, exuding sophistication. The sapphire crystal caseback offers a glimpse into the intricate dance of its 181 parts, a mesmerising view for those who appreciate the inner workings of fine timepieces. But it's the diamonds that truly steal the show. A breathtaking 456 diamonds, totaling 2.25 carats, adorn the case, while the dial is a sparkling sea of 283 diamonds, adding another 1.07 carats of brilliance. This diamond-paved dial, crafted from 18K gold, is a canvas of opulence, with gold-applied hour markers standing proudly amidst the glittering backdrop.

The rose gold strap, seamlessly integrated with a diamond-set Nautilus fold-over clasp, completes this exquisite ensemble. The luxury timepiece is also water resistant at 30 metres per 100 feet. Don't miss out on Nita Ambani's arm candy as well. Nita flaunted the Pearl Ring Maudslayi from the Chanel Fall-Winter 2025/26 collection last night while posing on the red carpet. The minaudière featured an oversized ring with a luminous white sphere, blurring the line between jewellery and accessory. In the current market, the bag is priced above Rs 15 lakh, and is available upon request.

Scientists find evidence of rare form of exploding star with missing black holes

Sydney: An Australian-led study has uncovered evidence of a rare form of exploding star, shedding light on one of the most cataclysmic events in the universe. The study, published in Nature, uses gravitational wave observations to probe how the most massive stars end their lives, strengthening the case for a long-predicted "forbidden gap" in black-hole masses, according to a statement from Australia's Monash University.

At the end of their lives, most massive stars collapse into black holes — objects with gravity so strong that not even light can escape, it said. However, extremely massive stars are thought to become so hot that they are blown apart in a "pair-instability supernova," an explosion so violent that the star is completely destroyed and leaves no black hole behind.

Researchers identified a "forbidden range" of black-hole masses more than 45 times the Sun's mass, where stellar-origin black holes are rare. The gap aligns with models in which such stars explode via pair-instability and leave no remnant.

Project lead Tong Hui, a PhD candidate from Monash University, said the study found a forbidden mass range where stars seemingly don't make black holes. "The only black holes in this mass range are made from merging smaller black holes, rather than directly from stars," Tong Hui said.

Confirming the existence of this gap would help settle a major question about how the most massive stars live and die, and the origin of black holes, the researchers said.

MS Dhoni to have fitness test ahead of Delhi Capitals game; Dewald Brevis inches closer to return for CSK



Ahead of the Punjab fixture, Dhoni not only trained but had an extensive batting session in the MAC B ground. On the eve of the match as well, he batted on the practice pitches in the main stadium without any discomfort. However, the franchise hasn't shown signs of rushing him back and has instead chosen to give him time to fully recover. And there is a strong likelihood that Dhoni could be in contention for the match on Saturday. Brevis had picked up a side strain during the pre-season camp, which meant he hasn't played a game this season. (Brevis had picked up a side strain during the pre-season camp, which meant he hasn't played a game this season.)

Similarly, there is good news with regards to Brevis. The middle-order batsman, who is capable of playing game changing knocks, has been a big miss for CSK in the three matches. Like Dhoni, Brevis had picked up a side strain during the pre-season camp, which meant he hasn't played a game this season. Although he travelled to Guwahati and even to Bengaluru for the match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, he wasn't included in the XI as he was still not 100 percent match fit. Speaking after the loss against RCB, head coach Stephen Fleming revealed Brevis is closer to return. "We hope he is going to be right for the next game. We have five days between the next game. We have been conservative and hopefully, these next five days go as well as we have planned, and he is ready to go. It's a big loss but we are looking forward to getting him back," Fleming said.

Having suffered three straight losses, Chennai Super Kings is likely to receive a huge boost with the injured MS Dhoni and Dewald Brevis nearing full fitness before their next fixture against Delhi Capitals on Saturday. The Indian Express understands that the former captain, who led the franchise to five IPL titles, is likely to have a fitness test in the next couple of days and if he passes it, will take the field against Delhi at Chepauk. Dhoni, who injured his calf during the preparatory camp, hasn't featured so far in the IPL. The 44-year-old, hasn't been travelling with the team to away fixtures and was also absent at Chepauk for the home game against Punjab Kings last Friday. While he has been regularly attending the training sessions with the team, due to the protocols he hasn't travelled to the stadium on match days.

Has Viswanathan Anand predicted the Candidates perfectly? He had picked Sindarov and Caruana ahead of the tournament



the second oldest after Nakamura), who stood out for me was Sindarov. He is extremely aggressive and extremely resourceful," Anand had said. "At the same time I don't see the usual defects - (where), if someone is aggressive, he'll be weak in positional play. He plays some endgames nicely. He gets into good positional play. Even then he gets into chaos. But he gets out of it. I like his resourcefulness. I think we can put him as winner as well," he added.

It's how Sindarov manages the downs that impressed Anand. "He has the ability to score when he's down. He doesn't get too hammered by defeats," Anand had told FIDE. The Indian great's reasons for Caruana, were ticking broader skill sets. "He's still playing creatively. Comes up with new ideas. As a chess player, he's someone you would put out there for people to study and learn from," Anand would praise. Caruana remains the lead on the chasing pack, with R Praggnanandhaa at joint third, needing a bunch of wins to stir up things to make up 2.5 points deficit. When Chess.com had asked how it would be to have a Praggnanandhaa World Championships match in India, Vishy said, "Uh...it'll be very good for India. It's a great match obviously. We'll have two 20-year-olds, future of chess, blah blah blah. It'll be nice. But we'll see."

The we-will-see seemed to factor in the other 20-year-old, Sindarov, who he correctly predicted posed a threat. Anand did not completely discount the abilities of Hikaru Nakamura, who despite his part-time ways, remained sharp. He hasn't quite taken off at Cyprus. Anand would tell FIDE of Nakamura's famous dilemma, using the "You can't eat at two buffets" metaphor. It essentially meant the American often faced pressure of either focussing on winning a game (eating at one buffet), or holding onto a draw to stay in the tournament (eating at second buffet). The loss to Sindarov and Nakamura's 66 minutes taken for one move overexerting, showcased the "two buffet" syndrome.

GNS News Agency, April 8

While picking Fabiano Caruana was predictable and near unanimous, it was Anand's early picking of Javokhir Sindarov that was on the ball. While picking Fabiano Caruana was predictable and near unanimous, it was Anand's early picking of Javokhir Sindarov that was on the ball. Five time world champion Viswanathan Anand, seems to have picked the right names ahead of the chess Candidates, if the standings at the halfway stage are anything to go by.

While picking Fabiano Caruana was predictable and near unanimous, it was Anand's early picking of Javokhir Sindarov that was on the ball. The Uzbek leads with an incredible 6/7 (5 wins, 2 draws), before the back turn of rematches begins. His 4-win streak was halted by Anish Giri with whom he drew. And while things can go terribly wrong still, with experienced Caruana, a point and half behind, Sindarov looks like cruising down the home stretch. Anand, on his part, while speaking to FIDE had been quite prophetic picking his favourites from two ends of the age spectrum. "At the other end of spectrum (from Caruana,

'You knew a star was there': Kevin Pietersen recalls young Virat Kohli's curiosity during early RCB days



GNS News Agency, April 8

India's batting talisman and former captain Virat Kohli has had an illustrious career in all three forms of the game and can arguably be touted as the greatest Indian batter of the 2010s era, where in red-ball and white-ball cricket, he produced some epochal innings that helped India win matches both at home and overseas. Recalling how Kohli was when he was young, former England captain Kevin Pietersen, who played with him at RCB in 2009, said that he was "very inquisitive" and realised that he was set for bigger things in his career.

"Very inquisitive. You knew a star was there. Just the way that he asked questions. How much he wanted to learn. How interested he was in getting better. That was the standout. Hugely curious. Very dynamic in the way he went about his approach to the game," he said on Ranveer Allahbadia's 'The Ranveer Show' podcast. Kohli endured a dream batting run between 2014 and 2018, where he made centuries in England, Australia and South Africa, but the COVID-19 pandemic brought his stellar purple patch to a halt, and during those pandemic years, the right-hander could not get back to those highs and deliver consistent performances, especially in the longest format.

Pietersen revealed that he could not understand how everyone could write a player as good as Kohli off so soon. "I knew Virat from RCB, back in 2009. We have just been buddies since. I have always backed him. I remember how bad a time he had during COVID, and how everybody is like, 'he's finished, he's done'. I was like, 'you can't just write someone who is so good off as quick as you guys have tried to write him off.' People are humans. People are not robots. These guys are not robots, and they will fail," he

added. Kohli eventually retired from Test cricket in May 2025 after playing 123 Tests and scoring 9230 runs at an average of 46.85. His last Test hundred for India came against Australia at Perth in the first Test of the 2024/25 Border-Gavaskar Trophy in November 2024.

Asian Boxing Championships 2026: Indian women sweep semis; six men advance

Ulaanbaatar: On the seventh day of the Asian Boxing Championships 2026 in Mongolia, the Indian women's boxing team continued their strong performance, with Meenakshi and Jaismine achieving unanimous victories in the morning session. Their wins secured medals for all Indian women boxers still in competition, each of whom reached the semifinals. Meanwhile, victories for Lokesh, Akash, and Harsh Choudhary ensured that six Indian men's boxers advanced to the semifinals.

In the women's 48kg category, Meenakshi delivered a confident performance to defeat Japan's Yuka Sadamatsu by a unanimous 5-0 decision, showcasing sharp combinations and strong ring awareness. Similarly, Jaismine dominated in the 57kg division, outclassing China's Ziyi Chen with a decisive 5-0 victory to secure her spot in the semifinals. The results marked an impeccable streak for the Indian women, with every boxer winning a medal and underscoring the team's strength at the continental stage.

In the men's division, Lokesh (85kg) advanced with a 5-0 victory over Korea's Gichae Kim, showing control and precision. Akash also secured a dominant 5-0 win against Turkmenistan's Yhlas Bagtyyarov. Harsh Choudhary beat Kyrgyzstan's Tynystan Alybaev to move into the semifinals.

India currently has six boxers in the men's semifinals, demonstrating a strong overall showing. However, Ankush (80kg) was knocked out after a defeat by Jordan's Hussein lashaish.

RCB overpower Chennai Super Kings with batting blitz, win by 43 runs



GNS News Agency, April 8

Bengaluru: Tim David, skipper Rajat Patidar and Devdutt Padikkal went ballistic with marauding knocks while bowlers maintained fine lines as Royal Challengers Bengaluru crushed Chennai Super Kings by 43 runs in an IPL match here on Sunday. Padikkal (50, 29 balls) and David (70 off 25b) gave a towelling to the clueless Super Kings bowlers in an exhibition of mind-blowing range-hitting, and Patidar supported them with an unbeaten 19-ball 48. The end result of their collective belligerence was RCB's imposing total of 250 for three.

The Super Kings continued to be wimpy with the bat too, finishing at 207 all out in 19.4 overs as the five-time winners sank to their third straight defeat this season. Once Sanju Samson, captain Ruturaj Gaikwad and Ayush Mhatre walked back with just 30 on the board, CSK's chase was doomed. Pacer Jacob Duffy (2/58) did the bulk of damage in this phase, getting rid of Samson and Gaikwad as both fell to Padikkal at first slip. Samson continued to misfire in the IPL for his new franchise post his inspired batting in the T20 World Cup. The Kerala batter tried to be cute against Duffy, steering the ball with a perpendicular bat, whereas he should have attempted the easier option of a cut from that particular body position. He just managed a feeble nudge to Padikkal.

Mhatre's wicket gave veteran pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar his 200th IPL wicket, the second bowler to achieve the feat after Yuzvendra Chahal. Sarfaraz Khan offered brave resistance with a 25-ball 50 but the target was way beyond

them on the night. Sarfaraz was taken out by Krunal Pandya (2/36) and Bhuvneshwar (3/41) returned to oust Prashant Veer (43) to end a 57-run alliance between him and Jamie Overton (37) as the storied Southern Derby ended without any real spark. Earlier, Royal Challengers' march towards their second win on the bounce started when Devdutt constructed two crucial stands — 56 (37b) with Phil Salt (46) for second wicket and 58 (21b) for the third wicket with Patidar. They were important alliances for RCB on a Chinnaswamy track with a hint of slowness in the beginning after CSK asked them to bat first. Salt was the more dominant partner during the second wicket partnership that helped them get over the early dismissal of Virat Kohli (28), who was dropped on seven by Shivam Dube off Khaleel Ahmed. Salt's calculated aggression, a six each off Noor Ahmad and Anshul Kamboj, helped the home side finish the Power Play on a rather happy note of 51 for 1. Salt did not last long post the six-over segment, giving a simple catch to Ahmad in the deep off Dube. The dismissal actually changed the tempo of RCB's innings.

Devdutt, who was on 18 off 17 balls till that point, shifted a couple of gears upwards, and smashed Dube for two of sixes and a four as RCB's run rate zoomed past the 10-run an over mark for the first time in the innings. The left-hander fetched his second successive fifty of this IPL through a single off Matt Henry. But he could not stay longer in the middle as an attempt to reverse scoop Jamie Overton left his stumps in disarray. But by then RCB had milked 62 runs between 11 and 15 overs. Once Devdutt trudged back, Patidar in the company of David built magnificently on the foundation.

The Bengaluru side was 153 for 3 after 15 overs, and they added a further 97 runs in the last five overs, also exploiting some poor lines by CSK bowlers at death. Patidar and David were brutal during their fourth wicket association, as the ball flew to all corners of Chinnaswamy, adding 99 runs (36b) for the unbroken fourth wicket. Patidar was severe on Khaleel, who kept pitching the ball in his wheelhouse, carting him for two sixes and a four in his fourth and final over. David biffed Ahmad for three sixes in the 17th over to join the rampage. The Australian made a mockery of Overton in the 19th over, carting him for four sixes, three in row, as CSK's team and bowling frailties were exposed once again.

Shreyas Iyer leads Punjab Kings against struggling Kolkata Knight Riders



GNS News Agency, April 8

Kolkata: A beleaguered and increasingly rudderless Kolkata Knight Riders will need a strong turnaround to halt their poor start when they face an in-form Punjab Kings in their IPL clash here on Monday. The three-time champions may point to the absence of frontline pacers Mustafizur Rahman, Harshit Rana, Akash Deep and Matheesha Pathirana for their early struggles, but the larger issue lies in a flawed team strategy that has left them staring at a third successive defeat. The decision not to retain Shreyas Iyer, who led them to the 2024 title, raised eyebrows, and it has only looked worse in hindsight.

Iyer went on to vindicate himself by leading Punjab Kings to a runners-up finish in 2025, becoming the first captain to guide three different franchises — Delhi Capitals (2020), KKR (champions 2024) and PBKS (2025) — to the finals. In contrast, KKR endured a forgettable campaign last season, finishing eighth for the first time since 2009. Ajinkya Rahane, brought in as captain despite being out of favour in the T20 scheme of things, did silence critics to an extent by emerging as their leading run-getter. But the team's thinking, including the elevation of Abhishek Nayar as head coach in place of Chandrakant Pandit, has come under scrutiny.

Nayar was incidentally the coach of UP Warriorz in

this year's WPL in their bottom-placed finish. The muddled strategy is most evident in their team combination. Despite having three top New Zealand players — Finn Allen, Tim Seifert and Rachin Ravindra — KKR have failed to utilise their resources effectively. Allen has been the only one to get a look-in, while Seifert, the second-highest run-getter in the last T20 World Cup, and Ravindra, a proven spin-bowling all-rounder, continue to warm the bench. Instead, KKR's persistence with Sunil Narine, a franchise regular since 2012, despite his diminishing returns, has raised questions. The situation is further complicated by the inclusion of all-rounder Cameron Green, who has been restricted from bowling by Cricket Australia, leaving the side with two overseas players not fully contributing. Add to that the presence of Rovman Powell, another proven T20 performer, on the sidelines, and KKR's selection calls appear increasingly baffling.

Even their high-profile support staff — Shane Watson, Dwayne Bravo and Andre Russell — has not been able to provide clarity, making one ponder who is actually calling the shots at KKR. While their bowling was expected to be a concern, the batting has fared no better. Rahane's move to promote himself to open has yielded mixed results, and the lineup looks thin beyond No. 5. In their first home match, they were bowled out for 161 in just 16 overs while chasing 227 against Sunrisers Hyderabad at Eden Gardens. The lower middle order, comprising Ramandeep Singh and Anukul Roy, lacks the firepower, while Narine has been pushed down to No. 8, reflecting the lack of a settled plan. In stark contrast, Punjab Kings have everything going their way. Led by Iyer, who knows the Eden conditions well, they come into the match with two wins in two matches. Young Cooper Connolly has been a revelation at No. 3 with 108 runs from two matches, while Priyansh Arya and Prabhsimran Singh have provided explosive starts. Iyer has anchored the middle overs with assurance. Their bowling unit, featuring Arshdeep Singh, Marco Jansen and Vijaykumar Vyshak, looks balanced, while veteran leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal adds further bite. For KKR, among the few positives have been the efforts of Kartik Tyagi and young Angkrish Raghuvanshi, but those sparks alone may not be enough against a well-oiled Punjab unit.

'Mentally disturbing, very painful for me': R Ashwin explains why he quit IPL despite wanting to continue

GNS News Agency, April 8

Ashwin said that while he had backed the reigning champions to win on Sunday, he had hoped to see his former side put in an improved performance. (Reuters Photo) Ashwin said that while he had backed the reigning champions to win on Sunday, he had hoped to see his former side put in an improved performance.

Former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has said that he could have played more for the Chennai Super Kings in the Indian Premier League (IPL), but chose to retire because he did not have the "bandwidth" to continue playing in the league. Ashwin, who retired from IPL cricket in August last year, reflected on CSK's struggles in IPL 2025, saying he did not wish to dwell too much on the season since it was mentally distressing for him. The five-time champions had finished last in IPL 2025 and have lost the first three matches of IPL 2026.

"I am watching the match from a neutral point of view, but remember that I recently spent a disappointing season with CSK, it was a disappointing season for me personally as well. Honestly, in my mind, I could have played more, because emotionally, I just did not have the bandwidth to play." "I don't want to go there, it's mentally disturbing. It was very painful for me. I don't want to go there. I discussed a little, then I said, I started in Chennai, I am finishing in my hometown, it's fine. I decided to retire myself as it would not have created a headache for them (the management) over whether to retain me or release. They would also save Rs 10 crore if I go. I am still disappointed. I had expectations, I



had hope," Ashwin said on his YouTube channel "Ash Ki Baat". CSK splurged Rs 14.2 crore each on Kartik Sharma and Prashant Veer at the 2025 auction. Ashwin felt that the younger crop of players in the CSK setup needed more time to grow and get better. "These young boys, you have to give them good practice, you have to give them intensity, you have to give them atmosphere from here on. How are they going to do this?" he said. Reflecting on CSK's loss to Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Sunday, Ashwin said that while he had backed the reigning champions to win on Sunday, he had hoped to see his former side put in an improved performance. "I had expectations from today. I know, I picked RCB to win, because they have strength. But, I banked on the improvement that CSK showed in the last game.

Dhurandhar sweeps Chetak Screen Awards 2026 with 14 wins



Bollywood blockbuster Dhurandhar swept the Chetak Screen Awards 2026 with 14 wins at a glittering ceremony on Sunday, including Best Actor (Male) for Ranveer Singh, Best Director for Aditya Dhar and Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male) for Akshay Khanna. The film dominated the technical categories too, winning awards for editing, sound design, special effects, cinematography, production design, background score, action, hairstyling and make-up. It shared the Best Costume award with another blockbuster Chhaava. Haq, Suparn Verma's film documenting the landmark Shah Bano case, won Best Actor (Female) for Yami Gautam Dhar's portrayal of Shah Bano, and Best Film for Gender Sensitivity. The evening's other significant recognitions, including for Best Film, went to Neeraj Ghaywan's Homebound, inspired by a true story of friendship and tragedy during the Covid lockdown. Homebound award Karan Johar-backed Homebound won the Best Film award. On stage to receive the award was the entire team, from director Ghaywan and lead actors Ishaan Khatter and Vishal Jethwa to producer Karan Johar and Adar Poonawala, who now holds a stake in Dharma Productions. Khatter dedicated the award to those who fight every day for their identity. "This film is an effort to give voice to the voiceless and I would like to thank everyone for giving our film a voice," he said. The award was presented by Nita Mukesh Ambani, Chairperson, Reliance Foundation, and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The award for Best Film Writing, Story and Screenplay went to Homebound, shared by Basharat Peer, Ghaywan and Sumit Roy. The film also bagged the Best Supporting Actor (Female) award for Shalini Vatsa.

Marking a return after a hiatus of seven years, the awards, instituted by The Indian Express Group in 1995, were presented in a ceremony hosted by actor Alia Bhatt along with actor-comedian Sunil Grover, stand-up comedian Zakir Khan and Saurabh Dwivedi, Editor- Hindi, The Indian Express. Sunil Grover and Alia Bhatt turned hosts for Chetak Screen Awards 2026 Sunil Grover and Alia Bhatt turned hosts for Chetak Screen Awards 2026. The presentation was streamed live on SonyLIV, Sony Entertainment Television, and YouTube, during an evening that belonged equally to blockbusters, quietly powerful films, and to a legend the industry bid farewell to last year.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was bestowed post-humously on Dharmendra. Javed Akhtar, who presented it alongside Maharashtra Chief Minister Fadnavis and Ramesh Sippy, recalled meeting the actor in 1965, when Akhtar was 20 years old and earning Rs 175 as an assis-

tant director. "I have no idea why he shook my hand with so much warmth," he said. He remembered a phone call years later: "I am launching my son. You have to write the script." That film was Betaab. "He was a strange combination of tremendous self-respect, dignity and complete humility," Akhtar said. The award was received by Bobby Deol. "I see the love for my father in all your eyes," said a teary-eyed Deol, adding, "He touched all of your hearts through his work, through his reels, which was a new hobby of his. He unlocked so many hearts — for my brother, for me, for every family member. I still feel like I will go home and tell him, 'Papa, I am bringing your award because you couldn't come...' I am grateful to God for making me his son. Thank you, Screen. Papa, you are the best." In the OTT category, Stolen, inspired by real incidents and following two brothers in a desperate search for a kidnapped baby, won four of five awards: Best Film (Karan Tejpal), Best Actor (Abhishek Banerjee), and Best Script (Karan Tejpal, Gaurav Dhingra and Swapnil Salkar). Best OTT Actor (Female) went to Sanya Malhotra for Mrs., a remake of the Malayalam film The Great Indian Kitchen, in which she plays a newlywed woman navigating regressive patriarchal traditions. In music, Mohit Suri's Saiyaara dominated. Faheem Abdullah and Shreya Ghoshal won Best Playback Singer Male and Female, respectively, for the film's title track. The song itself won Best Song, credited to Tanishk Bagchi, Abdullah and Arslan Nizami. The film's leads, Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda, won Breakthrough Debut Male and Female, respectively. Sitaare Zameen Par, R S Prasanna's sports dramedy produced by and starring Amir Khan as a self-absorbed basketball coach who trains a team of young adults, mostly with Down's Syndrome, for a tournament in three months, received a special award titled 'Screen's Cinema of Courage Award'. It was presented by Karan Johar and Siddharth Roy Kapur.

The evening also paused to remember all those the industry lost in the past year. In a special video segment, the audience rose to honour Dharmendra, Achyut Potdar, Asrani, Chandra Barot, Dheeraj Kumar, Deb Mukherjee, Kamini Kaushal, Manoj Kumar, Partho Ghosh, Pritish Nandy, Rakesh Pandey, Satish Shah, Shefali Jariwala and Zubeen Garg. The event featured a performance by Badshah, and a segment in which Shahzad Ali sang "Ishq Jalakar" and "Karavan" from Dhurandhar in an act composed by Ranjit Barot, with Siddhant Chaturvedi joining on stage. Addressing the gathering, Anant Goenka, Executive Director, The Indian Express Group, thanked actor Vicky Kaushal, whom he said he had called a few weeks ago, asking him not to leak the awards. He thanked all nominees who came without knowing whether they had won. The nominees and winners across 31 categories were selected by the Screen Academy — an independent, not-for-profit body (founding patron Lodha Foundation and supported by Tafe) — comprising over 50 acclaimed filmmakers, artists and cultural voices. The Academy serves not only as a voting body, but as the custodian of standards, safeguarding the integrity and future of the Screen Awards. Some of the Screen Academy members are Abhishek Chaubey, director and screenwriter; Bishwadeep Chatterjee, sound designer; Deepa Bhatia, film editor and director; Jaideep Sahni, screenwriter and lyricist; John Abraham, actor and producer; Kabir Khan, director; Karan Johar, director, producer; Kausar Munir, lyricist and screenwriter; Payal Kapadia, director; Pooja Ladha Surti, editor and screenwriter; Rima Das, writer, director and editor; Vidya Balan, actor; Vinay Kumar, actor, director and theatre researcher. Priya Jaikumar, Professor and Chair of Cinema and Media Studies at the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts, Los Angeles, developed detailed rubrics for Academy members to follow while scoring.

'How do you solve it when there is no problem?': Vignesh Shivan breaks silence on fallout with Dhanush



Vignesh Shivan about Dhanush Director Vignesh Shivan, who worked closely with Dhanush during the making of Velaiyilla Pattathari and Naanum Rowdy Dhaan, described the estrangement with the actor as one of his greatest personal regrets. There are professional relationships, and then there are the ones that shape who you become. For director Vignesh Shivan, Dhanush belongs to the second kind. In a recent interview with television anchor-journalist Gobinath, Vignesh opened up about the two-time National Award-winning actor with a warmth hard to miss and a sadness equally difficult to ignore. "I like Dhanush a lot," he said. "He was my biggest supporter in life. Today, I am here because of him." The connection runs deeper than most people know. Vignesh recalled how Dhanush's birthday, July 28, carries a particular weight for him personally, because it is also the day his father passed away. "Whenever I think of him, I feel for my dad," he said. "I have a lot of love for him."

Two and a half years side by side

The bond between the two men was forged during the making of director Velraj's Velaiyilla Pattathari (VIP, 2014). Vignesh had designed the film's posters and appeared in a small acting role. It was during that period that Dhanush offered to produce Vignesh's sophomore directorial venture, Naanum Rowdy Dhaan (2015), a film that went on to change the course of Vignesh's career and personal life. It

was also on that set that Vignesh met Nayanthara, who later became his wife. During the interview, Vignesh described the closeness of that period with striking detail. "The time when we worked together for two and a half years for VIP, we were always there for each other," he said. "I used to eat only if he had food, throughout the shooting." The words paint a picture not of a working relationship, but of something closer to family.

The weight of a broken friendship What made the interview striking was not just the warmth Vignesh expressed, but the grief underneath it. He spoke about the loss of the friendship with a sense of shame, not anger. "I consider it my biggest loss. If we lose someone with whom we had a great relationship, I consider it a shame as well," he said. "If there was one correct problem and two people split, it can be solved. What can we do if there is no problem? How do you solve that?" The comment carries particular resonance given what the previous years have brought. In November 2024, Dhanush's production house, Wunderbar Films, filed a case in the Madras High Court against Nayanthara, Vignesh Shivan, and their production company Rowdy Pictures, over the use of footage from Naanum Rowdy Dhaan in the Netflix documentary Nayanthara: Beyond the Fairytale. Subsequently, Nayanthara published an open letter on her social media, alleging that she had repeatedly requested a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from Wunderbar Films for two years but had not received one. In the letter, she explained that the footage from Naanum Rowdy Dhaan was included because the film marked the beginning of her relationship with Vignesh. She also accused Dhanush of harbouring a personal grudge against her and Vignesh, as he had sent a legal notice seeking Rs 10 crore in damages after the release of the documentary's trailer. The Madras High Court sided with

Dhanush in January 2025, dismissing Netflix India's petition to reject his lawsuit. The case remains ongoing. What the interview really says

Vignesh did not name the legal dispute in the interview. He did not accuse anyone or offer a timeline of events. What he did instead was speak about the loss itself, with a clarity that felt personal rather than performative. "We feel like, where are we?" he wondered. For a director who has publicly credited Dhanush with giving him his first real break in the industry, the split clearly sits uncomfortably. The irony is not small. Naanum Rowdy Dhaan, the film Dhanush produced for Vignesh, is the same film at the centre of the legal dispute. It is where Vignesh met Nayanthara. It is both the foundation of what he built and, now, part of what has come apart.

'Your craze is more than ours': When Priyanka Chopra and Shah Rukh Khan were stunned by Abhijeet Sawant's fame



Indian Idol has given many singers to the Hindi film industry, including Neha Kakkar, Rahul Vaidya, Monali Thakur, and others, but the place that Abhijeet Sawant, the winner of Indian Idol Season 1, has carved for himself remains unmatched. In a recent interaction, Abhijeet recalled the time when Shah Rukh Khan confessed to being his fan, while Priyanka Chopra also lauded his immense craze among fans.

Speaking to Radio Nasha, he said, "This used to happen a lot with me during that time. I think about these things now, but at that time, it was like a gust of wind. Rohit Bal met me once, and he told me 'You are very precious. Please take care of him.'" Recalling the time when both Shah Rukh Khan and Priyanka Chopra praised him, Abhijeet Sawant said, "We were doing a show in Delhi, I had just won Indian Idol, Priyanka was also featuring in films at that time. But fans had a craze for me." He added, "It was December time in Delhi and there was a lot of fog, so all the flights were getting cancelled and we all were in a room. Stars like Rani Mukerji, Aftab, Shivdasani, Priyanka Chopra, and other 2-3 actors were present in that room. And Rani Mukherjee was speaking to somebody and saying 'Do you what happened yesterday?' The stars were talking very normally to each other. I felt so lucky that I am hearing these stars, like normal bitching was going on. At that time, Priyanka told me that your craze is more than ours. Because I was new at that time and the show had just ended." Talking about Shah Rukh Khan and how his entire family was his fan, he said, "Shah Rukh Khan said this about me on a stage. He said that his whole family watched Indian Idol and they are all my fans, including his sister. It was Shah Rukh who announced my name on the show and people went crazy."

'Your sixes were in India, mine was in Pakistan': Rakesh Bedi recalls Sachin Tendulkar's praise after Dhurandhar 2



Veteran actor Rakesh Bedi has emerged as one of the biggest talking points of the Dhurandhar franchise, thanks to his portrayal of the sharp, witty politician Jameel Jamali. Despite sharing screen space with stars like Ranveer Singh, Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Rampal and R Madhavan, Bedi's performance has stood out, especially with Dhurandhar 2's twist in the climax. In a recent conversation with The Lallantop, the actor spoke about the overwhelming response he has received. He shared that among the many who reached out to praise him was cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar. Recalling the conversation, Bedi said, "He said,

'Rakesh ji, that was amazing! What a six you hit!' I replied, 'You've hit many sixes, but yours landed in India — mine landed in Pakistan.'

During the same interview, Rakesh Bedi also received a call from Vicky Kaushal, which he took mid-conversation. Praising his performance in Dhurandhar: The Revenge, Kaushal said, "I just couldn't control myself — I had to call you. It was such a joy to watch you; every time you came on screen, every gesture, every little detail... I don't have the words to describe it." He added, "The night before last, I watched Dhurandhar: The Revenge and was completely blown away, especially by your performance. Every time you appeared on screen, it was a delight. I'm sure everyone who has seen the film would feel the same." Rakesh Bedi also addressed the ongoing debate around the film being labelled as propaganda. Dismissing the criticism, he said, "Why are you examining a film under a microscope? If it had flopped, you wouldn't be finding faults in it. Many so-called propaganda films have been made before, one on a Prime Minister, one on Atal Bihari Vajpayee, why didn't those work? If a film is working, there are many reasons behind it."

Dhurandhar 2 box office collection Meanwhile, Dhurandhar: The Revenge continued its strong run at the box office on its third Sunday, showing no signs of slowing down. According to trade tracker Sacnilk, the Aditya Dhar directorial earned Rs 28.75 crore net on Day 18 across 14,229 shows. With this, the film's India gross has climbed to Rs 1,213.74 crore, while its India net now stands at Rs 1,013.77 crore. This makes it the first Bollywood film to cross the Rs 1,000 crore net mark domestically, and only the third Indian film overall to do so, after Pushpa 2: The Rule and Baahubali 2: The Conclusion. Internationally, the film added Rs 7 crore on Day 18, taking its overseas total to Rs 392 crore. With both domestic and global numbers combined, its worldwide gross now stands at Rs 1,605.74 crore.

Amitabh Bachchan admits feeling 'disoriented' when he doesn't work every day: 'It only serves to exacerbate anxiety'



Amitabh Bachchan, 83, is known for his discipline, and many of his co-stars have spoken about it over the years. This quality also makes Big B restless when he isn't working, and he recently expressed the same on his blog. The Don actor mentioned how he misses working every day and feels 'disoriented' when he isn't working regularly. In his latest blog post, Big B wrote, "A day that felt somewhat 'lazy'... for no particular reason... but not working every day feels strange to me. When you do not adhere to your fixed daily schedule, the habit you have cultivated over time gets disrupted. Consequently, the day begins to feel somewhat disoriented, whereas on normal days, everything proceeds in a smooth and orderly manner."

He added, "You then find yourself wondering why the day isn't unfolding exactly as you had wished. If we can simply grasp this concept, we can maintain a sense of peace and tranquility in our surroundings. However, for some people, this proves difficult to achieve, and it only serves to exacerbate their anxiety." Amitabh Bachchan has been starring in back-to-back films. In 2024 alone, Amitabh appeared in four films, and after a year's break, he will be seen in the sequel to Kalki 2898 AD. He has also lent his voice to the role of Jatayu in Ramayana. Apart from his film appearances, Amitabh has also hosted one of the longest-running quiz shows, Kaun

Banega Crorepati. He recently concluded the 17th season of the game show and bid farewell with an emotional and heartfelt message to viewers. He said, "Sometimes, we live a moment so deeply and get so lost in it that when it reaches its final point, it feels as though it had just begun, and yet it is ending so soon. Everything feels like it happened just yesterday. I am about to begin the last day of this game, going through these emotions. I've spent one-third of my life... more than one-third of my life, with all of you, and it has been a great privilege."

Akshay Kumar talks about the power of an officer's uniform: Spine seedhi ho jaati hai!

Mumbai: In a recent interaction on the quiz reality show Wheel of Fortune, host and Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar captivated the audience with a deeply moving reflection on his experience of portraying men in uniform. Akshay spoke candidly about the profound emotional and psychological transformation that comes with wearing an officer's uniform.

Reflecting on the sense of discipline and pride it instills, he shared, "Ek baat main bas se zaroor kehna chahunga... jab aadmi uniform pehenta hai na, apne aap reedh ki haddi ko ek akad mil jaati hai. Mujhe nahi pata kya hai aap suit peheno, akad nahi milegi. Lekin jab aap uniform pehente ho, reedh ki haddi mein pata nahi kahan se woh josh aata hai... tadak kar ke seedhi ho jaati hai."

Drawing a comparison with his on-screen portrayal, Akshay added that even donning a costume uniform for a role brings about a noticeable shift in posture and mindset. "Jaise main Rustom film ke andar khada tha... mujhe nahi lagta main hamesha aisa khada ho sakta hoon. Woh nakli uniform thi, lekin uniform ki baat hi alag hoti hai."

Looking back at one of his finest movies, Akshay fondly recalled a powerful line from his film Rustom, a performance that also earned him a National Film Award for Best Actor.