

# HYDERABAD HEADLINES

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### DC's Epic Recovery: 6-Wicket Win

STADIUM 11

### Aishwarya Rajesh in Nag's 100th

BOX -OFFICE 12



Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the first phase of Census 2027 today, by completing his own self-enumeration, marking India's first fully digital and self-enumeration census.

NEW DELHI

## SHORT TAKES



### CM REVANTH EMBARKS ON TWO-DAY ELECTION TOUR OF KERALAM

In the context of the electoral campaign for the Kerala Legislative Assembly, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy engaged in activities in Trivandrum, Alappuzha, and Ernakulam on Wednesday. Accompanied by Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, the Chief Minister also took part in a roadshow within the Kayamkulam Assembly constituency of Alappuzha district. Revanth Reddy is currently undertaking a two-day visit to the state in relation to the Kerala Assembly elections.

HYDERABAD



### INDO-ARAB RELATIONS: A NEW CHAPTER?

President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed's swift and symbolic visit to Riyadh to attend King Faisal's funeral marked a significant diplomatic gesture that strengthened India's ties with Saudi Arabia and the Arab world, earning widespread appreciation from regional leaders.

OPINION 06

# Nallamala's 'Amarnath' Draws Massive Crowd

### Vasthunam Vasthunam Lingamayya



NAGARKURNOOL, APRIL 1:

The annual Saleshwaram Jatara witnessed a massive surge in devotees on Thursday as over two lakh pilgrims converged deep within the Nallamala Forest to seek blessings of Lingamayya Swamy. Resonating with chants of

devotion, pilgrims undertook a challenging journey to reach the revered cave shrine. The trek began at Farahabad gate, followed by a 30-kilometre drive through rugged terrain and a strenuous 5-kilometre descent on foot into a 400-foot-deep gorge. Despite steep valleys and

narrow rocky pathways, devotees of all ages, including the elderly and children, braved the difficult route, many relying on wooden sticks for support. At the heart of the valley lies the sacred site near the Saleshwaram Waterfall, where cascading waters naturally bathe the Shiva Lingam

inside the cave temple. Rituals are being traditionally conducted by members of the Chenchu tribe, preserving centuries-old customs.

Devotees also took ritual dips in the natural pools, believed to possess medicinal properties due to

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## Bhubharathi' portal pilot implementation begins today

HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

Minister for Revenue, Housing, and Information & Public Relations Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy stated that in alignment with the vision of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and with a commitment to delivering a lasting resolution to land disputes in Telangana, transformative reforms have been instituted within the Revenue department. In line with this initiative, a comprehensive

portal named 'Bhubharathi' has been created to facilitate transparent and efficient services for farmers by integrating the Land, Survey, and Registration departments into a unified platform.

Taking the first step toward resolving land disputes, the portal is set to be launched on a pilot basis in five mandals of Telangana beginning April 2.

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## 100 Cr Property Saved HYDRAA Ends 3-Year Land Grab in Shastripuram



SPECIAL 02

## KTR demands immediate formation of Kazipet Railway division

HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

BRS working president K. T. Rama Rao has written a detailed letter to Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnav, urging the immediate formation of a new Railway division with headquarters at Kazipet in Telangana.

In his letter on Wednesday, KTR highlighted that the ongoing restructuring within the South Central Railway and operationalisation of the South Coast Railway has placed an excessive operational burden on the Secunderabad Division. As per the latest restructuring data, the Secunderabad Division currently spans 2,755 track kilometres, which is expected to expand to approximately 3,150 track kilometres with the addition of the Wadi-Raichur and Vishnupuram-Binagar double line sections.



This significantly exceeds the optimal administrative range observed across Indian Railways divisions.

For comparison, divisions such as Vijayawada and Guntakal operate around 2,200 track kilometres, while Guntur division remains under 900 kilometres. This stark imbalance makes Secunderabad division an outlier in terms of size, complexity, and traffic density.

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## Telangana declares April 5 & 14 as state functions

Rs.92 lakh allocated for celebrations

HYDERABAD, APRIL 1

The Telangana government has announced grand official celebrations for the birth anniversaries of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram, scheduled on April 14 and April 5 respectively, designating them as 'State Functions'. A high-level Jayanthi Celebrations Committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Minister for Scheduled Castes Development, with senior officials and public representatives as members, to ensure smooth conduct of the events. The government has approved an expenditure of Rs.92 lakh, including Rs.62 lakh for district-level events and Rs.30 lakh for celebrations at the state headquarters.

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# WAR IS EASY.. EXIT IS EXPENSIVE

## TRUMP'S IRAN GAMBLE ENTERS THE DANGEROUS ZONE

A 5-week promise has turned into a grinding conflict, exposing the oldest truth in power politics: wars obey their own logic, not presidential timelines.

BY C SUBRAHMANYAM

The United States' rapid entry into war with Iran under Donald Trump is now colliding with battlefield reality. What began with confident projections of a swift victory has stretched into a costly and uncertain conflict. With casualties rising, oil markets shaking, and no decisive outcome in sight, Washington faces the same strategic trap that haunted past American wars. When Donald Trump went public on February 28, declaring major combat operations against Iran, the messaging was unmistakable. Swift. Surgical. Decisive.

The promise was bold:

cripple Iran's nuclear capability, neutralise its missile systems, weaken its naval power, and trigger internal collapse. A four-to-five-week campaign, he suggested.

That script has now unravelled. Five weeks in, the battlefield has refused to cooperate with political timelines. Iran has absorbed the initial shock, recalibrated, and retaliated. The war has not ended. It has settled into a dangerous rhythm.

THE WAR THAT REFUSES TO END

The numbers tell a sobering story. Civilian casualties in Iran

have reportedly crossed into the thousands. U.S. military losses, though far smaller, are no longer negligible. Missile exchanges continue. Strategic infrastructure has been hit. Oil routes are under threat. The Strait of Hormuz is no longer a distant risk but a live pressure point. This is no longer a short campaign. It is a developing theatre.

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# Convergence Meeting Held at Cyberabad CP Office



## Building Trust: Satyamurti Vemula Elected National Vice-President of Builders Association of India

Samudrala Kiran, Correspondent



MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI

In a unanimous decision, Vemula Satyamurti from Telangana was elected as the National Vice-President of the Builders Association of India. The election officer announced the result in Mumbai on Tuesday, noting that the vote was unanimous. During his remarks after the announcement, Satyamurti pledged to elevate contractors' issues to the government and to pursue practical, implementable solutions. He emphasized that as many middle-class families continue to chase the dream of home ownership, the construction sector faces a range of challenges, and he intends to provide timely guidance to help navigate those hurdles. Expressing gratitude, Satyamurti said he was honored to be elected unopposed to the role and thanked everyone who supported him throughout the process.

**A comprehensive convergence meeting was held today (01.04.2026) at the Cyberabad CP Office Auditorium.**

### HYDERABAD

The meeting was chaired by Cyberabad Commissioner of Police Dr. M. Ramesh, IPS, along with CMC Commissioner G. Srijana, IAS, and Hyderabad Metro Water Supply & Sewerage Board Managing Director Ashok Reddy Korem, IAS. Representatives from TGIIC, GHMC CMC, HMDA, R&B, NHAI, HGCL, HMRL, TGSPDCL, HYDRAA, South Central Railway, and other departments participated in the meeting.

### The following issues were discussed:

- A dedicated customer care number will be provided by Cyberabad Municipal Commissioner to ensure quick and efficient rectification of any issues that may arise during the monsoon season. The concerned authorities will respond promptly to these complaints and take necessary action to resolve them, ensuring public safety and convenience throughout the monsoon period.
- A discussion was held with Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority regarding manholes and storm water drains. It was agreed that during the rainy season, excess rainwater would be diverted into storm water drains. The difference between storm water manholes and sewerage drains manholes are explained to Police Staff.
- Under the Cyberabad Commissionerate limits, 54 water-logging points



were identified and placed before the Cyberabad Municipal Commissioner for action. The CMChas reviewed the list and assured that rectification work will be taken up at the earliest possible time.

- Cyberabad Police requested Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited to increase the height of the central median to discourage pedestrian crossing, improve overall road safety, and reduce accident risks. HMRL has assured that the issue will be rectified.
- The Electricity Department assured that electrical poles causing obstruction to the free flow of traffic will be removed in response to the request made by Cyberabad Police.
- TGIIC assured that necessary road widening or expansion works will be undertaken at locations where traffic congestion or obstruction is identified.
- HMDA Commissioner stated that nearly 3,000 water tankers have been arranged to supply water to citizens.

For this purpose, he requested the Cyberabad Police to permit the movement of these tankers during no-entry timings in Summer Session.

- Cyberabad Municipal Commissioner assured that all pending works will be completed at the earliest. The corporation further confirmed that suitable locations for new foot overbridges will be identified and construction will be taken up accordingly, with ongoing works being expedited.
- Cyberabad Municipal Commissioner assured that suitable locations for skywalks will be identified and constructed at required locations to improve pedestrian flow and safety.
- Society for Cyberabad Security Council, in coordination with Mindspace IT Park and associated corporate stakeholders, has identified approximately 2 acres of land near Raidurgam Metro Station and has submitted a request to the Commissioner of CMC Corporation for the development of parking

facilities. The council has also assured that funding will be provided through CSR funds.

- Cyberabad Municipal Commissioner has assured that all pending traffic signal works will be completed at the earliest to ensure smooth traffic management. The department will also conduct a survey to identify new locations where additional traffic signals are required based on current traffic density and safety considerations. Furthermore, existing traffic signal systems will be inspected, and necessary rectification, repairs, or upgrades will be carried out to ensure proper functioning, synchronization, and visibility for road users.
- Cyberabad Municipal Commissioner has assured that necessary signboards will be installed and properly maintained at all required locations to improve road safety and guidance.
- Cyberabad Municipal Commissioner has assured that the ongoing flyover works

will be fast-tracked and that proposals for new flyovers will be identified and taken up for completion.

- Cyberabad Police requested the Urban Forest Department to survey and identify trees posing safety risks or obstructing traffic, and to take necessary action for their removal.
- Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency assured that a comprehensive action plan will be prepared to ensure immediate response during the forthcoming monsoon season, in coordination with concerned departments including Cyberabad Municipal Corporation, Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority, and the Electricity Department etc.
- The Commissioner of Police Cyberabad Offered all departments to utilize the Facility at Integrated Command and Control Centre for better coordination and to bring all response mechanisms under a single platform. All departments accepted the proposal and assured that a representative from each department will be provided.

Cyberabad Admin DCP T. Annapurna, IPS., Kukatpally DCP Ritiraj, IPS., Traffic DCP -II Sheshadrinireddy, IPS., SB DCP Y.V.S. Sudheendra, Traffic DCP-I Ranjan Ratan Kumar, SOT DCP Shoban Kumar, SCSC CEO Naved, HMDA/HGCL CGM Ch. Param Jyothi, HYDRAA Addl Director V. Papaiah, TGSPDCL Chief Engineer Pandya, R&B Superintending Engineer K. Ravi Shankar, HMDA Executive Engineer Ch. Ramesh Babu, R&B Dy Executive Engineer Ms. B. Saritha, and K. Ravi Shankar, Superintending Engineer (Roads), Ch. Ramesh Babu, Executive Engineer (HMDA), and Ms. B. Saritha, Deputy Executive Engineer (Electrical) also participated.

## Delimitation plan a "political design against South," alleges BC Dal chief

### HYDERABAD

BC Dal National President Dundra Kumara Swamy has strongly opposed the proposed delimitation exercise, calling it a "grave injustice" to Southern States. Addressing a gathering of caste association leaders, Swamy alleged that the move to increase Lok Sabha seats by 50% could dis-

proportionately favour Northern States, weakening the federal representation of the South, and also result in structural imbalance. Warning of a potential imbalance in federal structure, Swamy said such a move could allow governments to be formed without adequate southern representation, undermining constitutional principles. He urged the Centre to ensure fair and balanced

representation, stressing that the exercise should strengthen national unity rather than create regional disparities. Emphasising the need for balance, he urged the Union government to ensure that any delimitation exercise preserves the existing regional equilibrium and guarantees fair representation to all States. "The process must strengthen, not strain, the unity of the nation", he noted.

## Surabhi Ravindar Rao Vows to Fortify BJP and Deliver Welfare Schemes

Samudrala Kiran Correspondent

### MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI



BJP state executive member Surabhi Ravindar Rao said that strengthening the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is his clear objective. He stated that he earned a second term as a state executive member by working with dis-

cipline and delivering results in the role entrusted to him. In the past, party leadership

had given him the chance to contest as a corporator. Ravindar Rao said he would continue to work to bring BJP's principles and the central government's public welfare schemes to the people. He promised to keep raising the issues faced by the public with authorities. He noted that the central government provides funds to states to support the welfare of the poor and that

this work is significant. He praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi as one of the world's strongest leaders, saying Modi has undertaken the duties of the prime minister for a third term and selflessly serves the welfare of the poor. Several BJP leaders and supporters congratulated Surabhi Ravindar Rao on his appointment as a state executive member.

### CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

## Bhubharathi' portal pilot implementation begins today

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The Minister said the government has decided to move forward in the future by making necessary modifications and additions based on the results obtained here.

Srinivas Reddy, who is currently on a visit to Kerala, held a teleconference with the revenue officials on Wednesday regarding the launch of this portal.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister stated that this integrated 'Bhubharathi' portal has been designed from the perspective of the farmer, and he directed officials to take appropriate measures to ensure that the general public—particularly the farming community—does not face any difficulties. The Minister announced that the initiative is being implemented on a pilot basis starting April 2 in the Kusumanchi mandal of Khammam district, Aswaraopeta mandal of Bhadrachari Kothagudem district, Amangal mandal of Ranga Reddy district, Vatpally mandal of Sangareddy district, and Kosgi mandal of Narayanpet district.

The respective district collectors were instructed to pay special attention to the maintenance of the portal. The Minister stated that a portal has been designed to enable farmers to access land-related ser-



boundary disputes; however, they can now access this information directly from home through the 'Bhubharathi' portal without having to go anywhere. As soon as a farmer logs in, the details of their land holdings become visible. Upon completion of the survey, a survey map is generated and uploaded to the Bhubharathi portal. Throughout this process—from the initiation of the registration application to its completion—SMS alerts are sent to the citizens' registered mobile numbers at every stage. Ponguleti stated that land-related issues have become a major obstacle in the lives of farmers, and the Integrated Bhubharathi Portal represents a pivotal step forward in providing a permanent solution to them. The Minister said a transparent system is being introduced to enable farmers to access all services directly from their homes, marking the beginning of a historic transformation within the revenue administration.

## Nallamala's 'Amarnath' Draws Massive Crowd

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the forest herbs flowing through the streams. Meanwhile, district authorities led by Badaavath Santosh have intensified security and crowd management measures. Forest officials have enforced strict entry and exit timings between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. to ensure safety from wildlife.

Medical camps have been established at Rampur Penta base camp to assist pilgrims suffering from dehydration and minor injuries. The Forest Department has also issued a strict "Zero Plastic" directive, setting up checkpoints to prevent littering within the reserve.

The temple, which remains open only for a brief period around the Chaitra Purnima, is expected to witness continued heavy footfall until April 3. Authorities have advised commuters on the Hyderabad-Srisaillam highway to brace for traffic congestion near the Mannanur checkpoint over the next 24 hours.

## Telangana declares April 5 & 14 as state functions

### > FROM PAGE 1

Additionally, Rs.10 lakh each will be allocated to co-chairpersons for organizing the events in a befitting manner. Strict guidelines have been issued prohibiting the use of the celebrations for political campaigning or speeches, reinforcing their official and commemorative nature. The Scheduled Castes Development Department has been directed to oversee all arrangements and ensure dignified observance across Telangana.

## HYDRAA conducts massive crackdown in Hyderabad against encroachments

### HYDERABAD

The HYDRAA removed illegal encroachments on the playground by demolishing the 5 under-construction buildings at Shastripuram Colony of Mailardevpally village in Rajendranagar mandal of Rangareddy district and saved worth ₹100 crore government property on Wednesday.

HYDRAA removed illegal structures in the land allocated for the playground in the 188-acre HUDA-approved layout. It removed five buildings under construction on the 3-storey G Plus and also removed two more single-room structures.

According to this layout, which has more

than 1800 plots, 6,500 yards of land has been allocated for the playground. Even though it is known that the land is allocated for the playground, the local squatters have been selling the plots on the notary for the last 3 years. The construction is being carried out without any permission. GHMC had also issued notices in the past. It had also issued speaking orders that the site would be demolished in 2024. However, construction was going on there without paying attention. Locals complained to HYDRAA about the construction.

The officials inspected the site at the field level along with GHMC and revenue officials. They confirmed that it was allocated

for a sports ground as per the layout. HYDRAA immediately warned against construction and removed the encroachments on Wednesday morning. It removed 5 under-construction buildings and two small rooms. It excluded two other buildings as they already had residences.

The residents of Shastripuram Colony breathed a sigh of relief as the sports ground became available. They expressed happiness over the action being taken as soon as they complained to HYDRAA. They said that they had been intimidated if they had stopped the encroachments. They said that they were able to save the sports ground with the arrival of HYDRAA.

## WAR IS EASY.. EXIT IS EXPENSIVE

### > FROM PAGE 1

And here lies the central problem: there is no clean off-ramp.

### THE STRATEGIC TRAP

Entry into war was rapid and unilateral in tone. Exit pathways are fragmented and uncertain. Military escalation risks regional spillover. Diplomatic channels remain tentative and indirect. Economic consequences are already global.

### HISTORY IS NOT A FOOTNOTE — IT IS A WARNING

The pattern is not new. Harry Truman entered Korea expecting containment, not stalemate. Lyndon B. Johnson escalated Vietnam believing pressure would force resolution. George W. Bush declared early victory before the real conflict began. Each time, the entry was justified as necessary and manageable. Each time, the exit became the real battle. Today, Washington finds itself staring at the same pattern, not as theory, but as unfolding reality.

### THE COST OF CONTINUING VS THE COST OF STOPPING

Every available option carries risk. Continue the war, and the cost climbs: militarily, economically, politically. Pause or withdraw, and the narrative shifts from strength to uncertainty. This is the dilemma now confronting

the White House. Even exploratory peace signals through intermediaries are not translated into concrete negotiations. Tehran is in no hurry. It understands leverage. Time, in this phase, does not weaken resistance, it hardens it. "Wars do not end when leaders want them to. They end when realities force them to."

### THE OIL FACTOR: GLOBAL PRESSURE BUILDS

This is not a contained conflict. Energy markets are reacting sharply. Any prolonged disruption around the Strait of Hormuz sends shockwaves across economies already dealing with inflationary pressures. The threat to Kharg Island, the artery of Iran's oil exports, is not just a military move; it is an economic escalation. The world is now a stakeholder in this war, whether it chose to be or not.

### THE MARINES MOVE IN — A SIGNAL OR A SHIFT?

The deployment of thousands of U.S. Marines marks a significant transition. This is no longer purely an aerial or precision-strike campaign. Ground presence changes the equation. It signals preparedness for escalation. It also increases exposure. Historically, once ground forces enter the frame, disengagement becomes more complex. The stakes rise. So does scrutiny.

### THE REALITY CHECK

The initial narrative was about dominance. The current reality is about endurance. Military superiority has delivered impact, but not closure. Strategic clarity has given way to tactical adjustments. Political messaging is now trying to catch up with battlefield facts.

And the central question remains unanswered: What does victory look like? Without that definition, every passing day deepens the uncertainty.

### WHERE THIS IS HEADING

Prolonged conflict likely if no diplomatic breakthrough. Regional actors may get drawn in. Economic ripple effects will intensify. Domestic political pressure in the U.S. will grow. Strategic ambiguity will persist.

### ENDGAME WITHOUT AN EXIT

Wars begin with intent. They continue with momentum. They end only when conditions allow. Right now, conditions are not aligning for closure. The United States entered this war with speed and certainty. It now faces the far more complicated task of finding a way out, without appearing to retreat, without escalating beyond control, and without redefining its own objectives midstream. That is not a military challenge alone. It is a test of political judgment under pressure.

## KTR demands immediate formation of Kazipet Railway division

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KTR emphasised that the creation of a Kazipet division is both logical and necessary. The proposed division would include key railway sections such as Kazipet-Balharshah, Peddapalli-Nizamabad, Kazipet-Yerrupalem, Dornakal-Manuguru & Sathupalli, Motumari-Vishnupuram, and Kazipet-Wangapalli. These sections together form a coherent and high-density railway network of approximately 1,500-2,000 track kilometres, aligning well with established divisional norms. He further requested reconsideration of certain redistribution proposals. Specifically, he urged that the transfer of the Peddapalli-Nizamabad

section to the Hyderabad division be withdrawn and reassigned to the proposed Kazipet Division, considering its geographical and operational continuity. Similarly, the proposal to shift the Latur Road-Parli Vajinath section to Nanded Division should be revisited to ensure operational efficiency.

Highlighting Kazipet's strategic advantage, KTR noted that it is situated at the intersection of major trunk routes and has witnessed significant infrastructure augmentation. This includes the completion of triple lines towards Balharshah and Vijayawada, as well as the sanctioned quadruple line between Secunderabad and Kazipet, transform-

ing the region into a high-capacity rail corridor, he said. He also pointed out that the establishment of a railway manufacturing unit at Kazipet, along with the development of a Rolling Overhaul (ROH) shed and locomotive maintenance facilities at Mahabubabad, further enhances the region's strategic importance within the national railway network. The proposed Kazipet Division is expected to handle freight-intensive routes, including coal from the Singareni region, cement, fertilizers, food grains, and power sector inputs. Given the high revenue potential and loading density in these routes, KTR stressed the need for focused administrative oversight.

# TGCHE Launched Brochure of PMIS – Round III Pilot Project Extension



**HYDERABAD**

The brochure for the Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS) – Round III Pilot Project Extension, an initiative of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, was formally launched by

Prof. V. Balakista Reddy, Chairman, Telangana Council of Higher Education, in coordination with the Mr. Mr Satyapal Singh, Registrar of Companies, Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Mr. J. Nikhil Chakravarthi IAAS,

Commissioner of Industries Government of Telangana, in the august presence of Mr. J. Rajeshwar Reddy, Joint Director Industries and Director, Digital Employment Exchange of Telangana, (DEET), Ms. G. Harini, Dr. Chandrashekar, Mr. Vamshidhar Reddy, officials of DEET and Ms. Madhurani Shikhare, Centre Head, Logistics Sector Skill Council, Telangana. Mr. Satyapal Singh, Registrar of Companies, Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Mr. Shrikar Anumula, Deputy Director,

Ministry of Corporate Affairs also joined the deliberations.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. V. Balakista Reddy emphasized the importance of the PMIS initiative in providing valuable industry exposure and practical learning opportunities to students across Telangana. He highlighted that such programmes play a crucial role in bridging the gap between academic learning and industry requirements, thereby enhancing employability and skill development

among youth.

The Chairman requested all students to actively utilize this opportunity and derive maximum benefit from the scheme. He further noted that the Telangana Council of Higher Education is committed to supporting initiatives that promote internships, experiential learning, and industry integration as part of its broader vision to strengthen higher education and career readiness.

He also informed that monthly review meetings will be conducted to monitor the progress and effective implementation of the scheme, ensuring that students receive maximum benefit and that the programme achieves its intended outcomes.

The Prime Minister Internship Scheme aims to provide structured internship opportunities to students, enabling them to gain hands-on experience, develop professional competencies, and prepare for future career pathways. The purpose of the meeting was to connect the students to the industry. It was also resolved to constitute a committee with relevant stakeholders to review the progress of Industry-Academia collaboration.



# ACE Awards 2026 Celebrate Excellence at GITAM

**HYDERABAD**

The ACE Awards 2026 at GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, celebrated excellence, innovation, and holistic student achievement, reflecting the institution's vibrant and dynamic campus life. The event brought together students from across academic, cultural, and sporting domains.

The awards recognized outstanding accomplishments in categories such as Innovation & Technology, Creative Excellence,

Social Impact, and Leadership. Sporting excellence was also honored through awards including Best Athlete (Men & Women), Team of the Year, Emerging Sports Talent, and Excellence in Sports Performance.

Student clubs and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) were acknowledged for their creativity, collaboration, and contributions to campus engagement, reinforcing a strong sense of community.

The initiative underscores GITAM's commitment to nurturing well-rounded, future-ready indi-

viduals by encouraging excellence across academic and co-curricular spheres. The evening featured inspiring stories from awardees, fostering motivation and aspiration among peers.

Prof. D.S. Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor; DVVSR Varma, Resident Director; and Ambika Philip, Director – Hospitality & Campus Life, graced the occasion and presented the awards. The event was coordinated by Fiaz Ahmed, Manager, Student Life, and Suraj Vadapally, Manager, Sports.

# India Art Festival returns to Hyderabad at Jubilee Hills Convention Centre

**HYDERABAD**

India Art Festival (IAF), one of India's leading contemporary art fairs, will return to Hyderabad from 03 to 05 April 2026 at the Jubilee Hills Convention Centre, Road No.51, Jubilee Hills. The three-day festival will be open to visitors daily from 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM, presenting thousands of artworks by artists and galleries from across India and abroad.

The 2026 edition marks an important milestone for the festival in Hyderabad as it moves to the centrally located Jubilee Hills Convention Centre, a prime cultural and commercial hub of the city.

India Art Festival has been organised annually in Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru and Hyderabad since 2011 and has grown into one of the country's most accessible platforms for contemporary art. The festival combines gallery exhibitions with an Artist Pavilion, where independent artists present their works alongside established masters, creating a diverse panorama of modern Indian art.

Visitors to the Hyderabad edition can expect to see over 3,000 artworks including paintings, sculptures, drawings, mixed media works and contemporary

interpretations of traditional Indian art forms, offering a wide spectrum of styles ranging from figurative and abstract to experimental visual expressions.

According to Rajendra Patil, Director of India Art Festival, the festival aims to create a democratic and accessible platform connecting artists and Galleries directly with art lovers and collectors.

The Hyderabad edition will feature participation from several art galleries from India and overseas. Galleries such as Pioneer Art Centre, OPS Art Gallery, Gallery Ruki, Shree Yash Art Gallery and Galerie Art Eterne from New Delhi, Studio3 Art Gallery, Dev Mehta Art Gallery, Burgundy Art Gallery, House of Emerge, Tela Art Gallery, Greyscale, Rhythm Art, RS Art Space, Nitya Artists Centre, L Art Cultures, and Art Vista from Mumbai, Kaah - Karjat Art House from Karjat, Uchaan and Eminent Art Gallery from

Gurgaon, Sudha Art Gallery from Noida, Vesa Indian Fine Arts, Gallery Charvi & Sara Arakkal Galerie from Bengaluru, Artsbreeze Art Gallery and Sneha Arts from Hyderabad, Pichwaiwala from Udaipur, Exclusive Art Gallery from Baroda, Gnani Arts from Singapore, Red Leaf Art Gallery from the USA and

Gallery Fankaar from Ujjain will present curated selections of contemporary Indian art.

The art galleries will exhibit works by several prominent modern and contemporary artists including Jogen Chowdhury, Laxma Goud, Ramesh Gorjala, Laxman Aelay, M. F. Husain, P Gnan, Praveen Upadhye, and others.

The festival will also showcase works by several gallery represented contemporary artists including Dev Mehta, Vivek Kumavat, DVS Krishna, Ramdas Lobhi, Sujata Aher, Sanchit Jain, Kalpana Arya, Nidhi Sharma, Sayed Zuber Bakar, Kumar Gaikwad, Shalini Agarwal, Siddharth Shingade, Sachin Sagare and many others, representing a wide spectrum of artistic approaches and mediums. With participation from hundreds of emerging and mid-career artists from across India, the festival offers a rare opportunity for audiences to discover new artistic voices alongside established masters.

The Hyderabad edition promises to be one of the largest art gatherings in the city, bringing together artists, galleries, collectors and art lovers under one roof to celebrate the diversity and creativity of contemporary Indian art.

# Dr. Ch. Srinivasa Rao selected for Prof. M.S. Swaminathan Award 2024-25

**HYDERABAD**

The Retired ICAR Employees Association (RICAREA) has named Dr. Ch. Srinivasa Rao, Director and Vice-Chancellor of ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR-IARI), as the recipient of the Prof. M.S. Swaminathan Award for the 2024-25 cycle. This prestigious national award, instituted in 2004-05 in collaboration with Nuziveedu Seeds Limited (NSL), recognizes outstanding agricultural scientists for their lifetime achievements and transformative impact on India's food security. The current cycle is especially significant as it coincides with the Birth Centenary Year of Dr. M.S. Swaminathan.

# SCR hits all-time high revenue of Rs.21,211 cr in 2025-26

**HYDERABAD**

The South Central Railway (SCR) has achieved its highest-ever gross originating revenue of Rs.21,211.92 crore in the financial year 2025-26, marking four consecutive years of record-breaking performance. As compared to the previous financial year (2024-25), the zone has seen an increase of 3.12% in 2025-26 backed by excellent performance in both freight and passenger segments.

Freight remained the backbone, contributing Rs.13,835.27 crore with 147.87 million tonnes loaded, while the passenger revenue touched

a record Rs.6,235.37 crore, up 9.11% from last year. SCR also surpassed Railway Board targets by 1.42%, carrying 286.44 million passengers.

Additional segments boosted earnings, including Rs.515.18 crore from other coaching revenue which included parcel revenue, ticket checking penalties, coach booking and so on, and Rs.626.10 crore from sundry sources like catering, parking and non-fare revenue, pay & use toilets, retiring rooms etc. SCR General Manager Sanjay Kumar Srivastava lauded the staff efforts, urging continued innovation and customer-focused growth.

# High demand for nurses in Germany, Japan, says Minister Vivek

**HYDERABAD**

April 1 (NSS): Minister for Labour, Employment and Mines Dr. G. Vivek Venkatswamy stated that there is a huge demand for nurses in countries like Germany and Japan, with salaries up to ₹2 lakh per month.

He informed that a delegation will soon visit Germany to study employment opportunities.

The Minister also said that around 1,000 candidates have already been trained for jobs in the construction sector in Israel. However, the process has been temporarily halted due to the ongoing war situation there. He assured that steps will be taken to resume these opportunities once conditions return

to normal. Earlier, the Minister, along with Principal Secretary Dana Kishore, inspected the TGIC building at Masab Tank in Hyderabad. The Employment and Training department has taken the building on lease to set up the TOMCOM office.

The Minister directed officials to develop the office infrastructure in a way that can provide comprehensive training to students aspiring for overseas employment. He stated that the government aims to create large-scale foreign employment opportunities through TOMCOM.

He further revealed that ₹90 crore has been specifically allocated for TOMCOM under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Deputy Chief

Minister Bhatti Vikramarka. Special training will be provided to candidates on foreign culture, language, and lifestyle to help them adapt better abroad.

Highlighting support for students, the Minister said the ₹2,000 scholarship introduced by the Chief Minister for students studying in Advanced Technology Centres (ATCs) would be highly beneficial. Interested candidates from these centres will be identified and trained for overseas jobs.

He assured that all necessary facilities will be created in the leased TGIC building to provide end-to-end training for students. The Minister also urged youth aspiring for foreign employment to register with TOMCOM to avail these opportunities.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY	
<b>E-TENDER NOTICE No: SA-E17-2025-26-W1-W2 dated 31/03/2026</b>	
Divisional Railway Manager/Electrical/Salem Division, Salem-5 for and on behalf of the President of India Invites E-Tender for the under mentioned works. Online bids only will be accepted. For detailed NIT, qualification criteria, bidding document, tender submission etc. can be viewed / downloaded from website portal <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> .	
E-Tender Notice No, Date and Name of Work	Details
1) SA-E17-2025-26-W1 dated: 31 / 03 / 2026. Salem Division: Construction of New Terminal building at Erode Railway Station-Electrical arrangements.	Approx. cost- ₹1,35,35, 111.00/- EMD - ₹2,70,700/- Completion Period-6 Months.
2) SA-E17-2025-26-W2 dated: 31 / 03 / 2026. Augmentation of Goods Shed lines (Rd.6 & 7) to full length with CC Unloading pavement between Rd.6&7 for about 300m at Peelamedu (PLMD) Railway Station- Electrical Arrangements.	Approx. cost- ₹48,14,106/- EMD - ₹96,300/- Completion Period-6 Months.
<b>For all the works Closing Time &amp; Date</b>	<b>15.00 hrs. on 23.04.2026</b>
<b>For all the works Bids Opening Time &amp; Date</b>	<b>15.30 hrs. on 23.04.2026</b>
All Addendum / Corrigendum, Time extension, Clarifications, etc. will be uploaded in the website portal <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> only and will not be published separately in Newspapers. Bidders should regularly visit website to keep themselves updated.	
<b>Divisional Railway Manager (Electrical) / Salem Southern Railway, Salem - 636 005</b>	

SOUTHERN RAILWAY					
For and on behalf of President of India, Principal Chief Electrical Engineer, Southern Railway, Chennai-03, invites e-tender for the following work. The tender shall be submitted online upto 15.00 hrs on 04.05.2026 through website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>					
Bidders will be able to submit their original/ revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored and summarily rejected. Bidders are requested to go through the details such as pre-bid conference, submission of original documents, Bid security etc. in the attached tender documents.					
EMD and Tender forms cost (TFC) are to be paid online through IREPS portal ( <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> ) and no manual payment will be accepted for this tender.					
S No.	Tender No.	Name of the work	App. Cash value (₹)	Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	Period of Completion
1	E28III-Solar-Land-RESCO-2	Setting up of Land based Solar Power Plant over Southern Railway under Developer (RESCO) mode	₹ 521,48,54,656.00/-	₹ 4,27,20,000.00/-	240 days
Detailed Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) and the tender documents are available in the website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> and the tenderers are advised to refer the same. Tenderers are also advised to quote their rates inclusive of GST.					
<b>Chief Electrical General Engineer, O/o Principal Chief Electrical Engineer, Chennai-600003</b>					

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## SHORT TAKES

### Raja Narasimha unveils awareness poster on HPV vaccine

**HYDERABAD:** Minister for Medical and Health Damodar Raja Narasimha unveiled a wall poster on HPV vaccine at his residence in Hyderabad on Wednesday. The poster has been designed under the aegis of the Allu Arjun Fans Association (AFA) to conduct awareness programmes regarding the HPV vaccine through social media and various other publicity channels. On the occasion, the Minister appreciated the social activities being undertaken by the fans association of film actor Allu Arjun. He said the State government is providing the HPV vaccine free of cost to offer safe, highly effective, and long-lasting protection against the strains of the Human Papillomavirus that cause cervical cancer. The Minister urged boys and girls to get the vaccine without fail. He stated that the HPV vaccine has been made available in all government hospitals across the Telangana state. Damodar Raja Narasimha expressed his hope that parents would encourage their children, aged 9 to 14, to get this vaccine mandatorily.

# Kavitha slams govt over job scam in lecturer posts

HYDERABAD,

Telangana Jagruthi president K. Kavitha alleged that there is a conspiracy similar to the Group-1 recruitment process in filling degree college lecturer posts.

Speaking to the media at the Telangana Jagruthi office in Banjara Hills on Wednesday, she said the government is creating obstacles for unemployed youth by issuing Government Orders (GOs), preventing them from getting jobs.

She accused the government of bringing GO No. 4 to ensure that degree lecturer jobs go only to their favoured candidates. Kavitha also criticised the decision to give 25 marks weightage to PhD holders, calling it part of the conspiracy.

The Jagruthi president alleged that just like in Group-1 recruitment, where special examination centers were allegedly arranged to benefit certain individuals, similar tactics are now being used in lecturer recruitment. She questioned how 25 marks weightage can be given to PhD candidates when PhD admissions themselves are limited. She demanded the immediate cancellation of GO No. 4. Kavitha further demanded the cancellation of GO No. 104 related to DSC recruitment, GO No. 29 related



to Group examinations, GO No. 46 related to police recruitment, GO No. 81 related to Gurukul institutions, GO No. 4 affecting reservations for women stating they are creating barriers for job aspirants.

Kavitha criticised both the previous and current governments for failing to review these GOs. She said that nearly 40 lakh families have students preparing for competitive exams, but the government is neglecting their concerns.

She also questioned why the government has time to allocate ₹7,000

crore for projects like the Musi River but not to review policies affecting unemployed youth.

Kavitha accused the Congress party of using Telangana youth for political gains and demanded clarity on job calendar & filling of 2 lakh government jobs. She warned that if the government does not act, they will mobilise unemployed youth across the state for protests.

The Jagruthi president said that while the government claims to have issued 5 lakh ration cards, it is planning to cancel 15 lakh cards

under a verification drive. She alleged that ration cards are being removed on grounds such as filing IT returns or having private jobs, calling it unjust. Kavitha urged the government to stop what she termed "cruel actions" against the poor. She expressed concern over an incident at the Kondagattu Anjaneya Swamy Temple, where temporary sheds collapsed, injuring 15 people. Kavitha also demanded better medical treatment for the injured, a proper investigation, strict action against those responsible.



## BRS MLAs slam Cong govt over 'mining, HAM road scams'

HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Kalvakuntla Sanjay on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on the Congress government, accusing it of inaction despite alleged corruption involving Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy.

Speaking at Telangana Bhavan, Sanjay demanded the formation of a House Committee to probe into alleged irregularities in mining activities. He criticized the ruling party for "defending the defectors" and failing to address public issues in the Assembly.

Further, the BRS MLA alleged that Assembly discussions were reduced to political attacks instead of focusing on people's concerns, questioning why key issues like the hardships of the goldsmith community were ignored. He also raised questions over the political affilia-

tion of Kadiyam Srihari, accusing Congress MLAs of shielding him.

### Rs.8,000 cr HAM roads 'scam': Prashant Reddy

In a separate attack, former minister Vemula Prashant Reddy alleged a massive Rs.8,000 crore scam in the implementation of Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) road projects. He claimed the government floated tenders worth Rs.13,000 crore for 6,000 km of roads and planned to release Rs.1,300 crore as mobilisation advance, while allegedly encouraging inflated bids. He further alleged that contracts were being steered towards select firms without proven experience. Prashant Reddy said a complaint would be filed with vigilance authorities and urged the BJP MPs to intervene, warning that silence would imply complicity.

## MGU Adjunct Professors hail Chaya Someshwara Swamy Temple an architectural marvel



Dr Srinivas Vooradi

NALGONDA

A group of Adjunct Professors from Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU) visited the historic Chaya Someshwara Swamy Temple in Panagal on Wednesday, where they participated in Abhishekam rituals. Explaining the historical importance of the temple, Priest Abhimalla Janakiram said, "Constructed in the mid-11th century by the Cholas, this temple features three Garbhshalas, forming a Trikotalayam complex dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu, and Surya. Devotees through the temple during Maha Sivaratri." He also mentioned the temple would be open for Abhishekams and Archanas from 6 am to 12:30 pm, and other pujas between 5 pm and 7



pm. The temple is renowned for the continuous shadow that falls on its main Shivalingam, a testament to the exceptional architecture made possible by the thoughtful arrangement of stone pillars, showcasing the exquisite craftsmanship of the Chola era. This architectural marvel draws visitors from various States and even other countries, the priest Abhimalla Janakiram

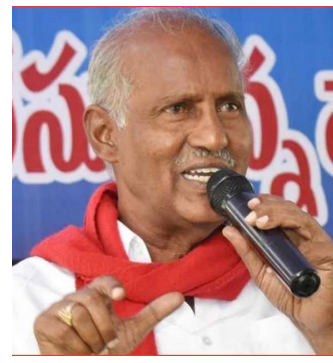
added. "The Chaya Someshwara Swamy Temple stands as a noteworthy example of ancient Indian architecture's scientific approach. Its precision and engineering continue to captivate scholars even today," commented Prof. Srinivas Vooradi from the MGU Department of English. The team Prof. K. Vijaya Babu from the Department of History and Tourism, Prof. K. Mohan Reddy from the Department of Economics, Prof. Sambhasiva Rao from EEE Department accompanied by former member of the Editorial Board of the TTD-run spiritual magazine in English 'Saptagiri' Prof Madabhushi Rajagopala Chary, MGU IQAC Director Prof. Miriyala Ramesh and Director of Hostels Domala Ramesh expressed that the site is a treasured emblem of Telangana's rich cultural heritage.

## CPI launches fund drive, urges public support for people's movements

HYDERABAD

Communist Party of India (CPI) Telangana state secretary and MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao called on the citizens to 'donate generously' to strengthen the party's fight for the poor.

Speaking at a fundraising meeting in Himayat Nagar here on Wednesday, Rao said the CPI is actively leading struggles against "anti-people policies" and working towards a socialist society free from exploitation. Through CPI's affiliated organizations, it has been conducting movements aimed at resolving various public issues. "While many people today harbor a strong desire to participate in movements against the anti-people policies adopted by the ruling classes, they may be



unable to allocate the necessary time due to professional obligations or personal commitments", he observed and appealed to the public to extend their financial support to the monumental political struggle being waged by the Communist Party thereby further strengthening this people's

movement.

The party has launched a door-to-door campaign from April 1 to 10 to mobilize support. CPI leaders highlighted historic contributions - from the freedom struggle to land reforms and labor rights - and emphasized continued public backing.

CPI state assistant secretary E.T. Narasimha noted strong response to the drive, with Rs.71,252 collected in a single day, reaffirming public trust in the party's mission. "From the nation's freedom struggle to the monumental Telangana Armed Struggle, it united the masses and broke the stranglehold of the ruling classes. It waged numerous struggles—and achieved victories—regarding the Land Reforms Act, ESI, PF, the Right to Information Act, the National Rural Employment Guar-

antee Act, and the right to vote for adults", he noted. CPI State Secretary member Pashya Padma, State Executive Committee members S. Chaya Devi and Anjaiah Naik, senior leader and member Prem

Pavani, District Secretary Stalin; Assistant Secretary Kamatham Yadagiri, AIYF State Secretary Dharmendra; District Executive Committee members M. Narasimha, Chandra Mohan Goud, Neralakanti Srikanth and Kampilali Srinivas and Council members Arutla Raj Kumar, Sakri Bai, Balakrishna, Sriman, Narasimha, Saif, Rajamouli, Chaitanya, Gyara Nares, P. Venkataiah, Boddupalli Kishan, Satya Prasad, Kalyan, Jyothi, Anil, Sunitha, Anjum, Vamsi, Sushanth, Uday, Fahim, Bhanu, Manoj and others were present on this occasion.

## Naredco Telangana unveils new leadership at 30th AGM

**HYDERABAD:** The National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) Telangana chapter announced its new Executive Committee for the 2026 - 2028 term during its 30th annual general body meeting (AGM) at APR Isle, Hyderabad. They will serve a two-year term, officially overseeing the association's activities.

The newly appointed Lead Team, comprising industry veterans, is set to lead the association's mission of fostering sustainable growth and professional excellence within Telangana's real estate sector. Sreedhar Reddy Koppula takes over as President, alongside Kali Prasad Damera and Gopala Krishna Koripalli as Executive Vice Presidents.

## Hanuman Jayanti yatra: massive traffic curbs on Thursday

HYDERABAD

In view of the grand Sri Veera Hanuman Vijay Yatra on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti, extensive traffic arrangements have been put in place across the city to ensure smooth conduct and public safety.

The main procession will commence from Gowliguda Ram Mandir at 11:30 AM and culminate at Sri Hanuman Temple, Tadbund by 8 PM, covering nearly 12 km. Out of this, approximately two KMs fall under the limits of Malkajgiri Police Commissionerate, and the procession is expected to reach CTO Junction at around 05:30 PM enroute to Sri Hanuman Temple, Tadbund. Around 14 tributary processions will merge en route, while nearly 92 local processions will take place across various areas. According to the police officials, heavy traffic congestion is expected at: CTO - Tadbund Hanuman Temple stretch; Malkajgiri Anandbagh Road; Safilguda - Neredmet Main Road; ECIL Cross Roads - AS Rao Nagar;



Sainikpuri - Yaprall Road; Hasmatpet - Tadbund Temple route; Tarnaka - Habsiguda corridors; Karmanghat Temple surroundings; Alkapuri - Karmanghat stretch and NGO's Colony to LB Nagar. As for the traffic restrictions, vehicular movement will be regulated or restricted along procession routes, and diversions at key junctions. Heavy vehicles, RTC buses, and goods carriers restricted in affected areas. No parking zones along the

Yatra route and illegally parked vehicles will be towed away. Authorities urged the commuters to: Avoid main procession routes during peak hours; Use alternate routes and plan travel in advance and Follow police instructions strictly. In emergencies, dial 112 or contact traffic helplines: 8712662999 / 8712662850. Traffic will be monitored via CCTV surveillance, with real-time updates through social media and FM radio.

## Warangal NRI Forum London President Sridhar Neela Receives Asian Royalty Award 2026

WARANGAL

In a proud and inspiring moment, Sridhar Neela, President of the Warangal NRI Forum in London, UK, has been honoured with the prestigious Asian Royalty Award 2026.

This remarkable achievement marks a significant milestone in his personal and professional journey. Speaking on the occasion, Sridhar Neela expressed heartfelt gratitude, stating that the award is not just a personal accomplishment but a moment of pride for the entire South Indian community. Notably, he is the only representative from his community to receive this distinguished recognition, further enhancing its importance. Adding a spiritual dimension to the achievement, he shared that the award announcement came soon after his participation in the sacred Sita Rama Kalyanam Pooja, which



he believes brought divine blessings. Sridhar Neela dedicated this honour to his family, friends, well-wishers, and members of the Warangal NRI community, acknowledging their continuous support and encouragement.

He also paid tribute to his motherland for shaping his journey and values. The Asian Royalty Award is a globally respected platform that recognises excellence, leadership, and outstanding contributions across various fields, bringing international acclaim to achievers from diverse backgrounds. The news has been widely celebrated by the community, with many praising the achievement as a source of inspiration for aspiring individuals in Warangal and beyond.

## We are focused on resolving transgender community issues: CP VC Sajjanar

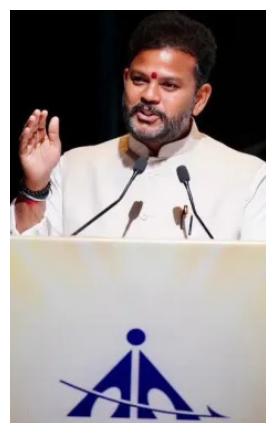
HYDERABAD

City Police Commissioner V.C. Sajjanar today stated that the Telangana Police had focused special attention on resolving the issues faced by the transgender community. On the occasion of International Transgender Visibility Day-2026, the Commissioner participated in a public event organized at Little Flower High School in Abids. This event was jointly organized by the Queer Bandhu Parents Association, the Montfort Social Institute,

the Vasavi Kinnar Welfare Society and Prajwala. Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Sajjanar expressed his pride in participating in the event and noted that the transgender community was a segment of society actively fighting for its self-respect. He extended his congratulations to all those, who are joining the struggle to support the transgender community and specifically commended their efforts to unite all the transgender individuals in society under a common platform. He remarked that organizing

such celebrations to bring about a positive change in the lives of the transgender individuals was a commendable initiative.

He affirmed that both the Telangana Government and the Hyderabad Police remain committed to ensure the safety and protection of the transgender community. Noting that the transgender community possesses immense talent and artistic skills, he urged parents to be the first to accept their transgender children and to stand by them in support.



## Our airports are India's identity card to the world: Ram Mohan Naidu

NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu on Wednesday said our airports are India's identity card to the world, with global standards of innovation and architecture deeply rooted in local heritage, signifying 'Vikas Bhi Virasat Bhi'. South Cinema news Speaking at the 31st Annual Day of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) here, he said AAI stands as the backbone of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's UDAN vision by making air travel accessible across the vast and varied terrains of the country. "AAI is also redefining the flying experience in the country with passenger-centric initiatives like UDAN Yatri Cafe, Flybrary, Free Wi-Fi and Kids Zones. Heartiest congratulations to AAI staff and families behind them for truly living up to the vision of becoming a world-class airport developer and operator," said the minister. Naidu also chaired the Civil Aviation Consultative Committee meeting on the important subject of manufacturing and maintenance of aircraft and aircraft components in the country. "The Government's vision, under the reform-driven leadership of PM Modi, is to build an Atmanirbhar aviation ecosystem by strengthening domestic capabilities and positioning India in global aviation supply chain. I thank the participating MPs for their valuable inputs and for appreciating the progress being made towards building civil aircraft manufacturing capabilities in the country," Naidu noted. Earlier in the day, the government said that domestic airfares are unlikely to see a sharp rise as it has cushioned the impact of a steep surge in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices by allowing only a partial increase for domestic airlines. Naidu said the calibrated approach would help protect passengers and the aviation sector. "This calibrated approach will help shield passengers from sharp fare increases, ease the burden on domestic airlines, and support the continued stability of the aviation sector at this crucial juncture," he said.

# Votes in 6 seconds, 4% cast after midnight: Major allegations over Andhra polls

Several 'unusual' voting patterns in the 2024 Andhra Pradesh assembly elections were flagged at a press conference in Delhi. Economist Parakala Prabhakar claimed that around 4.16% of the total votes were cast between 11.45 pm and 2 am in Andhra, which was won by the NDA.



Nearly 17 lakh votes after midnight. Votes cast within six seconds. These were some of the "unusual" voting patterns flagged at a press conference in Delhi over the 2024 Andhra Pradesh assembly elections. In the elections, the NDA, led by Chandrababu Naidu's TDP, got a decisive mandate, winning 164 of the 175 seats. Leading the charge, economist Parakala Prabhakar claimed that polling continued till 2 am across 3,500 booths. Prabhakar claimed data painted a troubling picture - around 4.16%

of the total votes were cast between 11.45 pm and 2 am. He said nearly 52 lakh votes were recorded between 8 pm and 2 am. More than 17 lakh votes were cast after midnight alone. He said the most striking fact was that post-midnight, one vote was cast every 20 seconds. "If EVMS take 14 seconds to reset, how were votes being cast in as little as 6 seconds? Can a voter realistically enter, vote and exit in that time?" Prabhakar said. He concluded by underlining that "something unusual" happened after 8 pm. The elec-

tions saw Chandrababu Naidu returning as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh for a fourth time. While the TDP secured 135 seats, the BJP won eight, and Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena bagged 21. The Bharat Jodo Abhiyan conference was attended by economist Parakala Prabhakar, Yogendra Yadav and others. Even before today, the opposition and other experts had raised red flags over the voter turnout data.

After polling ended on May 13, 2024, at 5 pm, Andhra's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) announced to the media that

68.04% votes were polled. The ECI, in a release at 8 pm, said the voter turnout was 68.12%. At 11.45 pm, the ECI revised the turnout to 76.50%. The final voter turnout, which was released four days later, put the figure at 81.79%.

### 'LACK OF TRANSPARENCY'

Speaking at the press conference, senior advocate Prashant Bhusan zeroed in on the lack of transparency in the election process. Bhusan questioned why Form 17C - which includes data on the number of votes polled in each booth - had not been made public. He also pointed out that voter lists were not released in machine-readable formats, making independent verification difficult. The same concern was raised by Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi during his vote chori (theft) allegations last year against the BJP. "Resistance to transparency signals a deeper institutional problem. Democ-

racy can't run in the dark," Bhusan said. To ensure credibility, he demanded mandatory counting of VVPAT slips. He also pointed out the absence of a public record of voters in the queue after polling hours, and real-time access to booth-level data. Without these, he warned, large-scale manipulation could occur unnoticed.

### CALL FOR AUDIT

Seconding the concerns, former Chief Election Commissioner SY Quraishi sought an audit of election records, including Form 17C and Form 20. Form 20 is the final result sheet prepared by the returning officer after the counting of votes in an election.

"If Form 17C is signed and sealed at the booth level, why do discrepancies appear later in aggregated data?" he said.

Quraishi, a vocal critic of the election process, suggested same-day disclosure of polling percentages and immediate release of booth-level summaries.

## Change of Boarding Point Made Passenger-Friendly

Boarding Point Can be changed upto the preparation of Second Reservation Chart w.e.f 1st April 2026

Chennai, April 1: For the convenience of passengers, Indian Railways has streamlined the procedure for Change of boarding point, making it simpler and more accessible through both PRS counters and IRCTC. With effect from 1st April 2026 (today), passengers can modify their boarding station with ease, upto the preparation of the Second/Final Reservation Chart ensuring a hassle-free travel experience.

### Passenger-centric Initiative

The facility of change of boarding point is provided to passengers who have purchased tickets and reserved the accommodation thereon from a particular station but desire to entrain and occupy the accommodation from another station enroute.

The existing rule for change of boarding point involved a request 24 hours prior to the train journey which will get reflected in the first charts. Now, with this latest change in the rules, the boarding point change can be done upto 30 minutes before departure of the train, which will get reflected in the second charts.

Now, with recent passenger-friendly measures, the first reservation chart is usually prepared 8 to 10 hours

before train departure or the previous night. (revised from old 4 hrs). Hence, it is proposed to extend this flexibility up to the second/final chart preparation which is usually 30 minutes prior to the departure of the train.

### The change of boarding point can be done subject to the following conditions as detailed below:

The status of the ticket must be either Confirmed or RAC. Boarding point change is not permitted for Waitlisted tickets.

Boarding point change can be done only once. After successful validation, the new boarding station is updated in the system.

Once the boarding point is changed, the passenger is required to board the train from the revised station only and not from the original station.

Failure to board the train from the revised boarding point may result in the berth being treated as "Not Turned Up (NTA)" and allotted to other waitlisted passengers.

The request for Boarding point change can be done at Passenger Reservation System (PRS) counters or online through IRCTC e-ticketing system/RailOne application.

# Amaravati will remain as one and only capital: CM

NELLORE:

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu reiterated that Amaravati will remain as one and only capital of Andhra Pradesh state, asserting that no one can shift it "even an inch." He expressed happiness over the passage of the Capital Bill in Parliament granting legal status to Amaravati.

Addressing a public meeting during the Pedala Sevalo programme at Vinjamuru in Nellore district today, the Chief Minister said Amaravati symbolizes the self-respect of the people of Andhra Pradesh. He termed the approval of the bill in the Lok Sabha as a matter of pride for the state and said it removes all uncertainties surrounding the capital's future. The Chief Minister thanked Prime Minister Nar-



endra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, along with leaders of various parties who supported the bill. He criticized previous regimes for creating confusion with a three-capital proposal and alleged that they neglected legislative responsibility on the capital issue. The Chief Minister highlighted that the government is implementing large-scale welfare measures

through the Pedala Sevalo initiative on the first of every month. He noted that Andhra Pradesh spends Rs 2,750 crore monthly on pensions, significantly higher than neighboring Tamil Nadu. He said schemes like Thalliki Vandanam and Deepam 2.0 are being implemented effectively, with free LPG cylinders and plans to provide piped gas to households. An annual sub-

sidy of Rs 2,400 will be credited to beneficiaries' accounts.

On irrigation, he stated that the Centre has released Rs 1,300 crore for the Polavaram Project, which the government aims to dedicate to the nation before Godavari pushkaram. The Chief Minister announced Rs 34 crore for bringing water from the Somasila canal to Vinjamuru's Patachervu and assured that the tank will be filled by October. He praised local efforts in water conservation. Highlighting industrial growth in Nellore district, he said projects like Ramayapatnam Port, Dugarajapatnam Shipbuilding Centre and solar manufacturing units would generate around 80,000 jobs.

He accused certain groups for spreading misinforma-

tion about the Juvvaladinne Fishing Harbour and termed it "hit-and-run politics." He clarified that the proposal dates back to 2018 and is being executed at a cost of Rs 285 crore. Fulfilling election promise, the Chief Minister announced free electricity for weavers starting from today.

The scheme will cost ₹153 crore annually and significantly reduce financial burden on weaver families.

He also announced Rs 5 crore thrift fund for weavers, establishment of five handloom clusters under the National Rural Livelihood Mission

The Chief Minister stated that 5.5 lakh houses have already been completed in 21 months and another 4.5 lakh to be ready by December.

# World Homeopathic Awareness Week begins grandly

TADEPALLIGUDEM, APRIL 01:

ASR Homeopathic Medical College and A.S.R.A massive homeopathy awareness rally was organized today at Tadepalligudem under the joint auspices of Hospital (ASR HMC) and Umar Alisha Rural Development Trust (UDART). Indian Homeopathy: The theme of this program, from traditional knowledge to clear knowledge, was organized with the aim of making people aware of the science and importance of homeopathic medicine. Sadhguru Dr. Umar Alisha, the 9th president of Sri Vishwa Vigyan Vidya Adhyathmika Peetham and Chairman of Umar Alisha Rural Develop-



ment Trust, who was the chief guest of the program, started the rally by waving the flag. Andhra Pradesh Government Whip and Tadepalligudem MLA Bolishetti Srinivas were the guests of honour. Dr. Akula Vijay Vardhan, Chairman of ASR Educational Institutions presided over the programme.

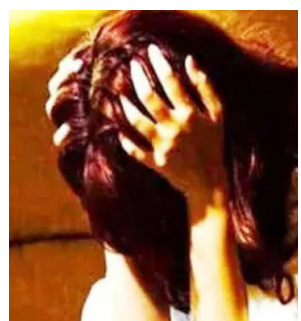
The rally started from the RTC complex and proceeded through the main road. Hundreds of students, faculty and medical professionals participated in it. Prof. G. Ravikiran Shastri, and ASR Homeopathic Medical College Principal Dr. Pingali Ananda Kumar and others participated in this pro-

gram. On this occasion, Sadhguru Dr. Umar Alisha said that health is not just a lack of disease, it is a physical and spiritual balance, and through Umar Alisha Rural Development Trust, they are always working for perfect health. He said that the main purpose of this rally is to inform the rural people that homeopathy is safe, scientific and inexpensive. Government Whip and Tadepalligudem MLA Bolishetti Srinivas said that Tadepalligudem is emerging as a scientific education and health center. He said that homeopathy plays a vital role in the comprehensive health system and he wants all the people to use the free medical camps organized as part of these weekly

celebrations. Dr. Akula Vijay Vardhan said that their aim is to provide better treatment to patients by adding traditional knowledge with scientific research. He said it is a matter of pride that their students are at the forefront of clinical research and public service. Dr. Ananda Kumar said that the National Commission for Homeopathy (CH) has given clear guidelines to transform homeopathy into an investigative medical system. Project Health Tadepalligudem informed that their aim is to provide medical services to about 2,000 people in scientific methods. Prof. G. Ravikiran Shastri said that Professor Shastri emphasized the need for technology and research in homeopathy.

# Andhra girl escapes stepfather's rape bid, gangraped after reaching Odisha

After her stepfather allegedly tried to rape her, the 17-year-old girl fled to Odisha and worked at a tea stall. A 15-year-old boy befriended her and took her home, then lured her out with two others, who allegedly drugged and gang-raped her on March 29.



remarried, her stepfather allegedly made repeated sexual advances towards her. One day, when she was sleeping, the stepfather attempted to rape her. Frightened, the girl fled her home and boarded the Prashanti Express train, eventually reaching Berhampur. Upon arrival, the minor girl started working at a tea

stall near the railway station to support herself. It was here that she met a 15-year-old boy from Lanjipalli, who befriended her with sweet talk. He took her to his house where his family lived. While staying there, the boy called two of his friends on the pretext of going out. On March 29, the trio took the girl to a secluded location, mixed an intoxicating substance in her food, and then allegedly gang-raped her. They repeatedly assaulted her at multiple isolated spots.

Acting on specific information, the Gosain Nuagaon police in Ganjam conducted raids at different locations and rescued the minor girl.

The Gosain Nuagaon police have registered a case against

the accused. The girl's statement has been recorded and she has been medically examined. The three have been arrested, and further investigation is underway.

Berhampur Superintendent of Police Saravana Vivek M said three persons were taken into custody. Of them, two, aged 23 and 19, were arrested, while the 15-year-old boy was sent to a juvenile home.

Apart from a gang rape case under various sections, including provisions of the POCSO Act, the police have also registered another case against the survivor's stepfather in Andhra Pradesh for alleged sexual abuse that prompted her to run away from home, police said.

# 7 women killed after speeding truck hits labourers' mini-truck in Maharashtra

A devastating road accident in Maharashtra left seven women dead and four others seriously injured after a speeding truck rammed into a mini-truck carrying labourers on the Samruddhi Expressway in Jalna district. The incident, which occurred near Kadwanchi village, triggered grief and outrage across the region, once again highlighting concerns over reckless driving and road safety on high-speed corridors.

According to initial reports, the victims were labourers engaged in work related to the expressway and were travelling in a mini-truck pickup vehicle at the time of the accident.

A truck, allegedly moving at high speed, approached from behind and crashed into the



vehicle with tremendous force. The impact was so severe that seven women died on the spot, while four others sustained critical injuries, including head trauma and fractures. "A total of 11 persons, including the driver, were sitting in the tempo. As the vehicle was about to start, a speeding truck headed towards Mumbai rammed into it from behind at Kadwanchi village," a

police official said.

Eyewitnesses described the scene as chaotic and deeply distressing, with victims flung off the vehicle due to the collision. Local residents were among the first to respond, quickly alerting authorities and assisting in rescue efforts. Police teams and ambulances soon arrived at the spot, and an immediate rescue operation was launched. The injured were initially taken to the district general hospital in Jalna before being shifted to a private facility for advanced treatment, where they remain under medical care.

Preliminary findings suggest that negligence and overspeeding by the truck driver may have led to the accident.

The police have taken the driver into custody and regis-

tered a case of culpable homicide. Officials confirmed that further investigation is underway to determine the exact sequence of events and any additional lapses that may have contributed to the tragedy. The deceased have been identified as Alkabai Dadarao Admane (45), Laxmibai Santosh Madan (35), Meenabai Parmeshwar Admane (45), Kanchanbai Prakash Admane (50), Tarabai Gahenaji Chaudhary (60), Kadubai Ramdas Madan (55), and Sumanbai Kachru Admane (70). All were residents of nearby villages and were working as labourers. Among the injured are Prayagbai Babasaheb Wagh (30), Kavita Vitthal Chaudhary (35), Dinesh Ranganath Gaikwad (42), and an unidentified woman aged around 50.

EDITORIAL

BEYOND THE BLOCKADE:  
STANDING UP TO THE NEW MONROE  
DOCTRINE

Ever since U.S. President Donald Trump began his second term in office, his administration's conduct of foreign policy has been that of a schoolyard bully. This is particularly true in 2026, when the U.S. launched attacks on two oil-rich countries, Venezuela and Iran. The first was on the blatantly false pretext of terming President Nicolás Maduro the head of a drug cartel, and the second was at the instance of Israel. As with schoolyard bullies everywhere, the Trump administration recognises no rules and mistakes the absence of violent resistance for proof of its strength. The strangling of Cuba is a case in point. After seizing Venezuela's energy assets, abducting its President, and cutting off Venezuelan oil supply to Havana, the U.S. threatened countries such as Mexico that sought to step into the breach, and imposed a de facto naval blockade on Cuba, leading to a severe fuel crunch and acute distress for ordinary Cubans. This behaviour, justified by Mr. Trump as an attempt to take over Cuba and remove its decades-long communist government, is part of a strategy so nakedly imperial that it has been termed the "Donroe Doctrine", a crude play on the original instrument of U.S. hemispheric dominance for over two centuries. Yet, the bully's power is often brittle and holds only until someone calls the bluff. When Russia, Cuba's ally since the Soviet era, dispatched a tanker, Anatoly Kolodkin, as humanitarian aid to fuel-starved Cuba, it also tested the will of the Trump administration to interdict a ship owned by another nuclear power. The tanker reached without incident.

The U.S., it turns out, did not push back and the bluff now stands exposed, even if by a country that has itself displayed similar behaviour in neighbouring Ukraine. Cuba's fuel crisis has not ended and the threat of American attacks still hangs over the socialist government led by President Miguel Díaz-Canel. But Russia's timely help reveals that the rest of the world need not simply endure the Trump era as this administration goes about breaking every accepted tenet of the international order. For all its flaws as a one-party state, Cuba has been an avowed member of the Non-Aligned Movement, has shown solidarity with the Global South by deploying well-trained doctors for medical programmes across poor countries, and has contributed materially to anti-colonial struggles for decades. It is time other countries repaid the Cubans by showing the will to break the American blockade and continue sovereign trade and commerce with Cuba, asserting their right to do so. After all, the international order holds only when its constituents accept that might does not always make right.

IS IT A PAIR OF HEARTS?

Is it merely a pairing of hearts—  
or a confluence of two infinities  
conceived in the clandestine  
womb of time?  
This youthful twain—  
no whim of chance, no casual  
crossing—  
but a consecrated convergence,  
a yoking of yugas,  
a sacramental sum of  
seeking souls;  
where love, beyond the brink  
of language,  
blossoms into its own  
breathing hymn.  
When gaze greets gaze—  
it is not sight, but  
sanctified seeing;  
not a flicker of feeling,  
but a flood of awareness,  
a cadence of consciousness,  
a sentient symphony.  
Silence reigns there—  
regal, prior to pronouncement;  
and minds, no longer  
mysteries,  
but mantras—  
melt, merge, and magnify  
into a mystic measure.  
Night descends—  
that hour when stillness  
listens to itself  
there, in the hush between  
heartbeats,  
moonlight unfurls like a  
remembering smile,  
and breath by breath,  
eternity gathers into being.  
Life—  
not a train tethered to tracks,  
but a tide that trembles, turns,  
transcends;  
beings—  
not mere passersby,  
but waves that wander  
upon the shores of shifting  
time.  
Yet—  
there are glances that linger—  
liquid lyrics loosening time  
itself,  
living sculptures sealing  
memory  
into the sanctum of the  
timeless.  
Steps through the city's  
sinews—  
not upon stone, but between  
souls;  
echoes engraved not in earth,  
but in the inner alcoves of  
two hearts.  
Dreams distilled in cups of  
coffee—  
not warmth alone,  
but a quiet glow  
that melts the metal of  
moments.  
In the trembling timbre of

telephones—  
not sound, but summons;  
not words, but worlds—  
where letters become  
luminous lodgings  
for longing souls.  
Love—  
like a flower folded  
between forgotten pages—  
a fragrance unbound  
by phrases,  
a dwelling untouched by  
duration;  
it does not diminish—  
it deepens, it distills, it  
becomes.  
Yet—  
when storms arise,  
they are not thunder, but  
tender tremors;  
not noise, but the nuance of  
wounded whispers.  
Misunderstanding—  
not darkness,  
but light that has lost its  
language.  
Even the sky of affection  
is sometimes veiled with  
veering unrest—  
for love is not stillness,  
but sacred—  
a ceaseless, conscious  
churning.  
Still  
true love is not merely  
seeing yourself in another,  
but sheltering the other  
within yourself.  
Even when days fracture  
love finds the force to flower  
again;  
it is no ending—  
but an inward, infinite  
exploration.  
Life  
not a journey alone,  
but a yajña;  
love—  
not merely its flame,  
but its unflinching,  
unflickering fire.  
When the mind learns to  
listen to its own silence,  
humanity ripens into  
honeyed harmony.  
To stand before truth—  
is not courage, but  
consecration;  
and stillness there  
is not emptiness  
but awareness awakening  
into endless, echoing verse.  
Then—  
life does not merely  
shimmer like moonlight  
it sings, it summons, it  
sanctifies.  
No longer two hearts—  
but one infinite  
experiencing itself  
in twin, timeless forms.

...: Dr. Peruka Raju ...  
7810032847

REWIND

INDO-ARAB RELATIONS:  
A NEW CHAPTER?

President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed's swift and symbolic visit to Riyadh to attend King Faisal's funeral marked a significant diplomatic gesture that strengthened India's ties with Saudi Arabia and the Arab world, earning widespread appreciation from regional leaders. While the visit opened new avenues for cooperation and offered key diplomatic engagements, it also exposed serious shortcomings in India's diplomatic presence in the region, underscoring the need for a more strategic and proactive approach.

President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed's quiet initiative in attending King Faisal's funeral, could well help open a new chapter in friendship and mutual cooperation with Saudi Arabia and the Arab world. From all accounts, the President's unprecedented gesture in proceeding to Riyadh, notwithstanding the physical strain involved in the rush, was greatly appreciated not only by King Khalid and Prince Fahd, the new Crown Prince, but also by the heads of other Arab states present there in full strength. The visit also yielded two unexpected side dividends. First, a brief but interesting meeting between Gen Idi Amin and President Ahmed at Jeddah airport; Uganda's President delayed his homeward departure to greet Mr Ahmed. Secondly, a first-hand knowledge of the poor, then scandalous, functioning of India's diplomatic mission in a vital area.

Some in New Delhi feared that the President might not be able to reach Riyadh in time. But Air India handled the operation with remarkable pluck and enterprise and got Mr Ahmed into Riyadh by the special plane in record time — an hour before the namaz-i-janaza, the last prayer for the departed. From the airport, Mr Ahmed rushed off to the main mosque for the final rites instead of joining the other heads of state in the open park. This enabled him to join King Khalid and the bereaved Princes in offering, first, the afternoon prayer (asraki-namaz) and thereafter the namaz-i-janaza. Later, he joined King Khalid and the rest of the family in the exclusive burial ceremony and was invited by King Khalid to participate in the final rite of putting matti on the simple grave. Interestingly, Gen Amin was the only other head of state present alongside.

Two hours later, President Ahmed formally called on the new King at his palace where Crown Prince Fahd was also present. King Khalid was friendly and conveyed to the President through the interpreter the late King Faisal's pleasure on Mr Ahmed's election as President of India and added; "My brother was looking forward to meeting you". (A move was initiated in December last for an exchange of visits.) Significantly, President Ahmed was housed in the same palace as President Sadaat, President Boumiedienne and U.S. Vice President Rockefeller, who arrived shortly before Mr Ahmed left for Jeddah the following morning. Mr Bhutto was also at Riyadh and was spotted by some members of the Indian delegation



at the city's leading hotel. The Pak Premier brought a 60-man top-level team with him, lending substance to a popular quip that Mr Bhutto prefers to carry all his top Generals with him leaving nothing to chance back home!

King Khalid and his court also graciously and efficiently arranged for President Ahmed to fly to Jeddah and from there to undertake his first-ever pilgrimage to the holy Qabah at Mecca, some 80 miles away, where he offered his maghrebrayers on jumeeraat. The following day, Mr. Ahmed and his pilgrimage party of about ten persons flew by a special Saudi Boeing to Medina where he went around the holy spots and said his Friday prayers at Masjid-un-Nabi, the Prophet's mosque, before returning to Jeddah for the night. (Interestingly, the jet was piloted by a Pakistani since non-Muslims are not allowed in the holy city.) President Ahmed's visit to Medina (as to Mecca) aroused wide popular interest. Thousands of Arabs present at the Mosque greeted him enthusiastically as "Sadar, Jamhuriat-i-Hind".

A surprise awaited President Ahmed as he arrived at Jeddah airport the following morning to fly back to New Delhi. He was warmly greeted by Gen Amin who said he could not possibly leave without conveying to Mr Ahmed personally his joy over the latter's election as President of India -- and putting across to him developments in Uganda in proper perspective. Gen Amin said the World Press had presented a distorted picture of the events and vilified him. He only wanted the foreigners to either take Ugandan citizenship or leave -- and asked: "Would you, Mr President, tolerate foreigners owning property and factories in your country". The General then asserted that those who had accepted Ugandan citizenship were "happy and well-off".

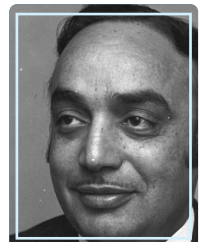
Indeed, he invited Mr Ahmed to visit

Uganda and see things for himself. He also assured Mr Ahmed that I would pay "every single penny of compensation to those who had decided to leave Uganda". That was not all. Gen Amin next told Mr Ahmed that he was calling a conference of the heads of African states, especially Muslims, in June and added; "Mr President, you must come as my Chief Guest". Mr Ahmed listened to Gen Amin with interest and tactfully chose not to enter into a discussion. Uganda has today less than 500 persons of Indian origin as against 80,000 in 1962! Almost 50 per cent of the latter were eligible for citizenship and thousands accepted it. But, before long, most of them found it impossible to stay on and quit, notwithstanding the loss of their life's earnings. Incidentally, available information shows that Uganda is currently facing an economic crisis and most business enterprises left behind by Indians are not working.

Incredibly enough, India's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Mr Zahir Ahmed, a retired civil servant from Hyderabad, was not at the airport to receive President Ahmed when he arrived at Riyadh. In fact, the President saw the Ambassador for the first time some four hours later when he was due to make a formal call on King Khalid at 7 p.m. Much valuable time was wasted and opportunity lost of making other important calls because of the astonishing non-availability of the Ambassador and his manifestly poor contacts in the court at Riyadh. (President Ahmed was, for instance, keen to meet President Sadaat and, in the absence of the Ambassador, his energetic Minister-in-Waiting, Mr Shafi Qureshi, vainly tried to contact top Egyptians accompanying their President for a meeting.) The Ambassador even showed an amazing lack of initiative in arranging for some leading Indians residing in Jeddah to call on the President.

Unfortunately, Indian missions in the area, which has assumed great economic significance, continue to be treated by the Foreign Office essentially as glorified Haj offices. Little, if any, thought has been given to revamping them and making them a much-needed spearhead for a timely economic and commercial thrust. While the rest of the world, including the US, is bending over backwards to woo the Arabs and leading countries assign some of their top diplomats to the area, our Foreign Office still prefers to send its senior officers to cosy and sophisticated European or other Western postings. Junior officers of the rank of no more than Deputy Secretaries are currently manning some of our new missions in the Gulf area. These postings may have come as a windfall to the young officers. But these have not proved of much good to the country.

At the same time, New Delhi has been looking at these Arab countries for far too long through what may well be described as the distorting Pakistani prism. Pakistan is no doubt "in" with the oil rich Arabs in a big way and is getting a sizable chunk of their aid to the developing countries. (It is also earning foreign exchange by supplying the area with both skilled and unskilled labour.) India has to take note of the religious susceptibilities of the Arabs and no amount of effort can help us to out-Islam Pakistan. What is needed is a new strategy to forge economic and commercial ties independently of what Pakistan does and, for instance, not react immaturely if these countries ask New Delhi only for Muslim doctors. (They alone can be posted to Mecca and Medina during the Haj season.) Simultaneously, personal equations will need to be built even more among a people who are not easily inclined to shed suspicion of the foreigner. President Ahmed's initiative now requires to be followed up with more purposeful exchanges and a pragmatic approach.



INDERJIT  
(Released on  
8 April 1975)

Remover of Obstacles, Bestower of Happiness :  
Lord Hanuman, the Deity of Kaliyuga

In Sanatan Dharma, each day of the week is dedicated to a particular deity, and Tuesday is considered sacred to Lord Hanuman, the ardent devotee of Lord Shri Ram. Hanuman Jayanti, also known as Hanuman Jannotsav, is celebrated every year on the full moon day (Purnima) of the Shukla Paksha in the month of Chaitra with great devotion and enthusiasm. This year, the auspicious festival falls on April 2.

It is called Hanuman Jannotsav rather than merely a birth anniversary because of the belief that Lord Hanuman is still present on Earth and continues to assist his devotees. According to scriptures, when Hanuman exemplified unparalleled devotion, service, and surrender towards Lord Ram, Goddess Sita blessed him with immortality. Hence, he is regarded as Chiranjivi (immortal), and his birth is celebrated with deep reverence. This festival is not just a religious observance but a symbol of cultural consciousness and faith. It reminds us of the triumph of righteousness and justice, inspiring people to follow the path of truth, service, and dedication.

It is believed that Lord Shri Ram was born around 5114 BCE in Ayodhya, and Hanuman was born prior to him so that he could serve him devotedly. Lord Hanuman is one of the most revered and widely worshipped deities in Hinduism. His worship is not limited to India but

extends to Hindu communities across the world. He is considered the deity of Kaliyuga, who is easily pleased. It is believed that sincere worship of Hanuman removes obstacles, grants good health, and fills life with positive energy. Worship on Tuesdays and Saturdays is considered especially fruitful, and recitation of the Hanuman Chalisa holds special significance.

The Hanuman Chalisa was composed in the 16th century by the great saint-poet Goswami Tulsidas and remains a cornerstone of devotion for millions. It beautifully describes Hanuman's virtues, strength, devotion, and miraculous deeds. It is believed that reciting it helps dispel fear and sorrow while bringing peace of mind. According to mythological accounts, Lord Hanuman was born in the Treta Yuga, when Lord Vishnu incarnated as Shri Ram. Lord Shiva took the form of Hanuman as a Rudra avatar to serve Lord Ram. Texts like the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and various Puranas describe his valor, devotion, and service in detail. Born to Mother Anjana and Vanara king Kesari, Hanuman possessed extraordinary powers from birth. He had the privilege of learning from the Sun God and was blessed by various deities with immense strength and divine abilities. He is said to possess the Ashta Siddhis and Nav Nidhis, making him invincible and supremely powerful.

The greatest testimony of Hanuman's

devotion and strength is found in the Ramayana—when he crossed the ocean in search of Goddess Sita, set Lanka ablaze, and brought the Sanjeevani herb to save Lakshman's life. His dedication, courage, and sacrifice are unparalleled. He is not only a mighty warrior but also an embodiment of wisdom and humility. Known as Sankatmochan (remover of troubles), Hanuman rescues his devotees from all forms of distress, fear, and suffering. It is believed that those who worship him with true devotion overcome all obstacles and achieve success in life.

There is also an interesting story behind his name. In Sanskrit, Hanu means jaw. As a child, when Hanuman felt hungry, he mistook the rising sun for a ripe fruit and leaped to swallow it. At that moment, Rahu was approaching the sun for an eclipse, but Hanuman drove him away and swallowed the sun, plunging the world into darkness. Rahu complained to the gods, and Indra, angered by Hanuman's act, struck him with his thunderbolt, injuring his jaw and rendering him unconscious. When the wind god Vayu learned of this, he withdrew air from the universe, causing chaos. The gods, led by Brahma, then pacified Vayu and revived Hanuman, granting him immense powers. This event is commemorated as Hanuman Jannotsav.

Hanuman's character is a timeless source of inspiration. He represents the perfect blend of strength, service, devo-

tion, and humility. His life teaches that power must always be used for righteousness and service. He symbolizes fearlessness and selfless dedication. Devotees believe that worshipping Hanuman leads to success in all spheres of life. In today's world, which faces numerous challenges, the message of Hanuman Jannotsav inspires us to move forward with strength, courage, and determination. His devotion and sense of duty should guide every individual to fulfill their responsibilities with sincerity and contribute to society and the nation. Hanuman Jannotsav is not just a religious festival—it is a celebration of cultural awareness, social unity, and spiritual energy.



YOGESH KUMAR GOVAL

(Author is a senior journalist with 36 years of experience & author of book "Sagar Se Antariksh Tak: Bharat Ki Raksha Kranti")

## Haryana Government committed to procuring every grain of farmers' produce- Dr. Amit Agrawal

**Re-registration window for 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora' portal to reopen soon Farmers, Arthiyas express satisfaction over procurement arrangements**

CHANDIGARH, APRIL 1

Reaffirming the state government's strong commitment towards farmers, Commissioner and Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department, Haryana, Dr. Amit Agrawal said that the government will ensure procurement of every single grain of farmers' produce. Dr. Amit Agrawal, along with Faridabad Deputy Commissioner, Sh. Ayush Sinha visited the Mohana grain market on Wednesday to review procurement arrangements and on-ground facilities. During the visit, he interacted with farmers, Arthiyas and other stakeholders to gather feedback on mandi-related issues and issued on-the-spot directions for their immediate resolution. He said, Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini has given clear instructions to ensure seamless procurement, with payments for wheat being directly transferred to farmers' bank accounts. He reiterated that the government is committed to ensuring that not even a single grain of produce remains unprocured. Highlighting transparency measures, he added that the 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora' portal enables farmers to register and track their produce. Farmers who could not register earlier due to any reason will soon be given another opportunity as the portal is set to reopen. Focus on farmer welfare

continues Dr. Amit Agrawal said the Haryana government has consistently played a proactive role in safeguarding farmers' interests over the past decade. He said that the state's policies have significantly contributed to transforming 'annadata' into 'entrepreneurs'. He added that farmers in Haryana are receiving greater benefits compared to those in neighbouring states, and emphasized that public welfare remains the government's sole objective. He further said that the government is fully focused on addressing the concerns and suggestions of farmers and other stakeholders associated with agriculture. Assuring them, he said that issues faced during the previous procurement season will not be repeated this time. Officers have been directed to ensure smooth procurement, lifting and storage operations, along with adequate basic facilities in mandis. To strengthen mandi infrastructure, facilities such as electronic weighing systems, farmer service centres and Atal Kisan Canteens have been introduced. These canteens are providing meals at a nominal cost of Rs. 10, offering significant relief to farmers and labourers. Notably, farmers and Arthiyas expressed satisfaction with the procurement process and appreciated the government's efforts.

## Bihar men grope woman in public rape attempt, bystanders record video; 2 arrested

**A disturbing incident in Bihar has triggered outrage after an assault attempt on a woman was filmed and circulated. Police have made arrests, but questions remain over safety and the actions of the accused.**



A disturbing incident from Bihar has sparked outrage after a young woman alleged that three men attempted to rape her in public, filmed the act and circulated the video online, prompting police to step up action. The incident took place in Nalanda district under the Noorsarai police station limits on March 26 between 6 pm and 7 pm. The 20-year-old woman said she was returning home from the market when three men from her village intercepted her. According to her complaint, the accused dragged her on the road, groped her and attempted to rape her. Despite her resistance, they tore her clothes and left her partially unclothed. She screamed for help, but locals present at the spot did not intervene. Her cries eventually drew attention, forcing the accused to flee.

**VIDEO FILMED, SHARED ONLINE**  
In a shocking detail, the accused allegedly recorded a video of the incident. A clip of around 40 seconds later surfaced on social media, bringing the case into the public domain. Eyewitness accounts also suggest that some bystanders chose to film the incident instead of helping the woman, deepening outrage over the episode.

**COMPLAINT FILED, POLICE ACT**  
The survivor filed a complaint on March 27, following which police registered a case and launched an investigation. Two of the named accused, Ashok Yadav and Matru Mahato alias Navneet Kumar, have been arrested and sent to judicial custody. Efforts are

underway to trace the third accused, Ravikant Kumar. Deputy Superintendent of Police Sanjay Agrawal said, "Two named accused have been arrested and sent to judicial custody. Raids are being conducted for the remaining accused."

**POLICE RELEASE DETAILS OF CASE**  
In a press statement, Nalanda Police said, "On March 26, under Noorsarai police station in Ajaypur village, a case was registered based on the victim's written complaint on March 27 under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023."

It added, "During the investigation, two named accused have been arrested and sent to judicial custody. Raids are being conducted for the arrest of the remaining accused. Further investigation is underway."

**SPECIAL TEAM FORMED, QUESTIONS RAISED**  
Given the seriousness of the case, police have formed a Special Investigation Team to probe the incident. Authorities said strict action would follow as the investigation progresses. The incident has raised serious concerns over women's safety, particularly in rural areas, and the role of bystanders who chose to record the act instead of intervening.

Coming from the home district of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the case has also triggered questions over law and order and governance claims in the state.

## Narendra Modi Chairs CCS Meet to Review Impact of West Asia Conflict

NEW DELHI, APRIL 1:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday chaired a high-level of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) at 7 Lok Kalyan Marg to review the country's preparedness and response to the ongoing West Asia conflict. This was the second such meeting convened to assess emerging challenges and coordinate response measures across key sectors. The focused on ensuring stability in essential supplies, including fuel, fertilizers, and power, while also reviewing interventions in agriculture, aviation, shipping, logistics, and MSMEs to mitigate potential disruptions. Officials informed the CCS that India is diversifying supply sources for LPG and LNG, with imports being arranged from multiple countries to ensure uninterrupted availability. Domestic LPG prices have been kept stable, while strict enforcement measures are



underway to curb hoarding and black-marketing. To strengthen energy security, the has also taken steps such as exempting gas-based power plants from the gas pooling mechanism and increasing coal supplies to thermal power stations. Authorities confirmed that adequate coal stocks are available to meet power demand during the upcoming summer months. On the fertilizer front, the Prime Minister reviewed preparedness for the upcoming Kharif and Rabi seasons, stressing the

importance of uninterrupted supply. Measures include maintaining urea production and coordinating with global suppliers for DAP and NPK fertilizers. States have been directed to intensify monitoring and take strict action against hoarding and diversion. The government also noted that prices of essential commodities have remained stable over the past month. Dedicated control rooms have been set up to monitor price trends and ensure enforcement of the Essential Commodities Act in coordi-

nation with States and Union Territories. The CCS further discussed global efforts to secure supply chains, including ensuring safe maritime movement through critical routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, alongside ongoing diplomatic engagements. Prime Minister Modi emphasized that protecting citizens from the impact of the conflict remains the top priority. He directed all departments to take proactive steps to address emerging challenges and ensure the smooth availability of essential goods. He also underlined the importance of timely dissemination of accurate information to prevent misinformation and rumours during the evolving global situation. The government reiterated its commitment to maintaining economic stability and ensuring that disruptions arising from international developments have minimal impact on citizens and key sectors of the economy

## South Western Railway Delivers Stellar Performance in FY 2025-26

HUBBALLI, APRIL 1:

South Western Railway (SWR) has recorded an outstanding performance in the financial year 2025-26, achieving major milestones in freight loading, revenue generation, and infrastructure expansion, while setting new operational benchmarks.

The zone reported originating freight loading of 52.46 million tonnes (MT), marking a significant increase from 45.65 MT in the previous year. This growth of 14.9% highlights SWR's strong contribution to freight movement, accounting for nearly 13% of the incremental loading of Indian Railways. In financial performance, SWR achieved a record gross revenue of ₹9,488 crore, up from ₹8,489 crore in 2024-25. Freight revenue alone reached ₹5,347.40 crore, surpassing last year's ₹4,672 crore and reflecting robust demand across key sectors. Passenger operations



also showed steady growth. The zone earned ₹3,468 crore in passenger revenue, compared to ₹3,172.5 crore in the previous year, while carrying 176.93 million passengers, up from 165.53 million. Bengaluru Division played a pivotal role, operating 4,812 Train-on-Demand (TOD) trips, speeding up 99 trains, and contributing nearly 70% of passenger revenue. Among divisions, Hubballi Division led freight performance with 39.5 MT, followed by Mysuru Division with

10.59 MT, underlining their dominant share in the zone's overall loading. Freight growth was driven by key commodities. Iron ore remained the top contributor with 20.98 MT, while pig iron and finished steel registered a sharp rise of 29.4%. Coal loading grew by 15.6%, and raw materials for steel plants recorded the highest surge of 88.1%. Other segments such as containers, fertilisers, and food grains also posted notable increases. In a significant operational

achievement, SWR set a new record by loading 31 rakes of finished steel in a single day on March 31, 2026, surpassing the previous best of 29 rakes.

Infrastructure development remained a key focus area during the year. SWR completed 53 route kilometres of electrification, taking the total electrified network to 3,339 km out of 3,712 km. Additionally, 78.1 km of doubling and 24 km of new railway lines were commissioned, enhancing capacity and connectivity across the region.

The zone also recorded ₹155.2 crore in scrap sale earnings, further boosting its overall revenue.

With strong growth across freight, passenger services, and infrastructure, South Western Railway has reinforced its position as a high-performing zone, contributing significantly to the efficiency and expansion of Indian Railways' network.

## Delhi High Court Issues Notice to Arvind Kejriwal in Excise Policy Case

NEW DELHI, APRIL 1:

The Delhi High Court has issued a notice to Arvind Kejriwal, National Convener of the Aam Aadmi Party, on a petition filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) challenging the relief granted to him in the Delhi excise policy case.

The ED approached the High Court contesting a lower court order that had acquitted Kejriwal in a case related to alleged non-compliance with summons issued by the agency. During the hearing, no one appeared on behalf of Kejriwal.

## Indian Railways Sets New Records in Passenger Traffic and Freight in 2025-26

NEW DELHI, APRIL 1:

Indian Railways has registered a strong performance in the financial year 2025-26, achieving record growth in both passenger traffic and freight operations, according to official data released on Tuesday. The national transporter carried 741 crore passengers during the year, marking a 3.54% increase compared to 716 crore passengers in 2024-25. Passenger revenue also witnessed a healthy rise of 5.96%, reaching approximately ₹80,000 crore, up from ₹75,500 crore in the previous fiscal. On the freight front, Indian Railways transported a record 1,670

million tonnes (MT) of cargo, reflecting a 3.25% growth year-on-year. The number of wagons handled also increased by 4.56%, indicating higher logistics demand across sectors. Key commodities such as fertilisers and pig iron & steel led the growth, each recording over 13% increase in loading. Among core infrastructure materials, iron ore transport rose by 6.74% to 190.12 MT, while cement loading grew by 4.74% to 157.17 MT, highlighting continued infrastructure and construction activity nationwide. Zone-wise performance showed broad-based growth. South Western Railway led with a 14.89% increase, fol-

lowed by North Central Railway (12.62%), East Coast Railway (10.42%), and West Central Railway (10.06%), all posting double-digit gains.

Freight earnings stood at approximately ₹1,77,754 crore, a 1.44% increase over the previous year. Iron ore emerged as the top revenue contributor, followed by cement, steel, fertilisers, food grains, and mineral oil. The sustained growth in both passenger and freight segments underscores Indian Railways' critical role in strengthening the country's transport infrastructure, supporting economic activity, and providing affordable mobility across regions.

## You're beautiful, your daughter must be too, cop tells accused woman; suspended

**A Maharashtra police officer allegedly asked a woman accused to send her daughter to his home in exchange for money.**



An Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) in Maharashtra's Akola allegedly asked a woman in custody to send her daughter to him in exchange for money, seeking sexual favours. The officer has since been suspended and is currently absconding, officials said. The accused officer, Rajesh Jadhav, allegedly made the demand while on duty, asking the woman to send her daughter to his residence in exchange for money. The woman had been de-

with a female police officer present at the station.

Acting swiftly on the complaint, authorities removed Jadhav from duty. Akola Superintendent of Police Archit Chandak suspended him with immediate effect. Jadhav is currently absconding, and three police teams have been deployed to trace and arrest him. Senior Police Inspector Anil Jumle, who is leading the investigation, confirmed that a formal complaint was registered and prompt action was taken. He added that efforts to arrest the accused are ongoing given the gravity of the allegations. Former Maharashtra State Women's Commission

member Dr Asha Mirge said complaints against Jadhav had surfaced in the past. Nearly a decade ago, there were reports related to family disputes and alleged inappropriate behaviour towards women, including an incident involving a female police officer. "It is deeply concerning when those entrusted to protect become predators. Timely action is essential to prevent such behaviour from continuing. The swift response by the Akola police is commendable," she said. Authorities have assured that strict action will be taken and accountability ensured within the police force as the investigation progresses.

## NER has decided to operate Narangi-Gorakhpur summer Weekly Spl. Train

ORAKHPUR, APRIL 1, 2026:

To provide additional convenience to passengers during the summer season, the Railway Administration has decided to operate the 05633/05634 Narangi-Gorakhpur-Narangi Summer Weekly Special Train. This train will run from Narangi every Thursday from April 2 to May 28, 2026, and from Gorakhpur every Friday from April 3 to May 29, 2026, for a total of 9 trips as detailed below:

**Train No. 05633 Narangi-Gorakhpur Summer Weekly Special:**

From April 2 to May 28, 2026, every Thursday, the train will depart from Narangi at 13:20 hrs, reaching Guwahati at 14:00 hrs, Kamakhya at 14:20 hrs, Rangiya at 15:10 hrs, New Bongaigaon at 17:13 hrs, Kokrajhar at 17:52 hrs, New Cooch Behar at 19:00 hrs, New Jalpaiguri at 21:45 hrs, Aluabari Road at 22:29 hrs, Kishanganj at 22:55 hrs, Barsoi at 23:57 hrs. On the next day, it will reach Katihar at 01:30 hrs, Naugachia at 02:20 hrs, Mansi at 03:08 hrs, Khagaria at 03:20 hrs, Begusarai at 03:56 hrs, Barauni at 04:45 hrs, Shahpur Patori at 05:36 hrs, Hajipur at 07:20 hrs, Sonpur at 07:30 hrs, Chhapra at 09:25

hrs, Siwan at 10:25 hrs, and Deoria Sadar at 11:30 hrs, finally arriving at Gorakhpur at 13:00 hrs.

**Return Journey - Train No. 05634 Gorakhpur-Narangi Summer Weekly Special:**

From April 3 to May 29, 2026, every Friday, the train will depart from Gorakhpur at 16:55 hrs, reaching Deoria Sadar at 18:00 hrs, Siwan at 19:10 hrs, Chhapra at 20:20 hrs, Sonpur at 21:20 hrs, Hajipur at 21:35 hrs, Shahpur Patori at 22:22 hrs. On the next day, it will reach Barauni at 00:15 hrs, Begusarai at 00:35 hrs, Khagaria at 01:22 hrs, Mansi at 01:34 hrs, Naugachia at 02:32 hrs, Katihar at 06:30 hrs, Barsoi at 07:10 hrs, Kishanganj at 08:02 hrs, Aluabari Road at 08:40 hrs, New Jalpaiguri at 10:20 hrs, New Cooch Behar at 12:30 hrs, Kokrajhar at 14:02 hrs, New Bongaigaon at 15:03 hrs, Rangiya at 18:30 hrs, Kamakhya at 20:10 hrs, Guwahati at 20:40 hrs, and will arrive at Narangi at 21:40 hrs.

**Train Composition:**

The train will consist of a total of 18 coaches, including:

- 1 AC Second Class coach
- 5 AC Third Class coaches
- 6 Sleeper Class coaches
- 4 General Second Class coaches
- 2 SLRD coaches



## A step forward in advanced railway healthcare

NFR hosts Annual National Medical Conference successfully MALIGAON, 01 APRIL, 2026:

The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) successfully hosted and concluded the 31st Annual National Conference of the Railway Association of India (RAISA), along with the NFR Zonal Medical Conference, on 28th March 2026 at Luitgarh Railway Officers Club, Nambari. The two-day event brought together eminent medical professionals from across Indian Railways, centred on the theme "Evidence Based Practice." The conference was inaugurated by Director General of Railway Health Services, Dr. Jagdish Chandra, who emphasized the importance of standardized, data-driven medical protocols in improving healthcare delivery for railway employees and passengers. The event was also graced by the General Manager of N. F. Railway, Shri Chetan Kumar Shrivastava and the Principal Chief Medical Director of N. F. Railway, Dr. Swapna Boro Daimari, underscoring NFR's commitment to advancing medical excellence. Approximately 150 doctors from various railway zones and leading medical

institutions participated actively in the conference. The sessions, coordinated by Scientific Secretary Dr. Somnath Saha, focused on translating clinical research into practical healthcare applications. The event also featured notable contributions from the Railway Society of Anaesthesiologists, setting new benchmarks in perioperative care and pain management. The event was efficiently organized under the leadership of the Medical Director of Central Hospital, Maligaon, Dr. B.P. Deka, along with a dedicated team from the hospital. Their efforts provided a seamless platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration among medical professionals. Concluding the conference, Dr. Pijush Sarkar, of Central Hospital, Maligaon expressed gratitude to all participants and emphasized that the insights and knowledge shared during the event will significantly contribute to improving healthcare services across Indian Railways. The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks, marking the successful completion of this significant national medical conference.

## SIR in Bengal: EC faces hurdles in setting up tribunals for deleted voters

KOLKATA: (APR 1)

With less than six days left for deleted voters to get eligibility to cast votes in the first phase of West Bengal polls, the EC faces fresh hurdles in setting up specially constituted tribunals, the final recourse for such electors to dispose of their cases, a well-placed source in the poll body said.

The official said infrastructure constraints may prevent the tribunals from starting operations on Thursday, the day the Elec-



tion Commission (EC) had previously scheduled for initiating the process, potentially delaying resolution of cases that run into several lakh names.

A few retired judges appointed to the tribunals have also sought exemptions from duty, further postponing the start of hearings, he added.

## Iran strikes tanker off Qatar coast as Tehran's attacks on Gulf states persist

**Qatar said it had intercepted two Iranian cruise missiles, while a third struck a fuel tanker off its coast. All 21 crew members were safely evacuated, with no injuries or environmental damage reported.**



A cruise missile struck an oil tanker off the coast of Qatar early Wednesday after Iran launched three missiles toward the country, according to the Qatari Ministry of Defence. Air defences intercepted two of the incoming missiles, while the third hit the vessel in Qatar's northern territorial waters. The tanker, identified as the Aqua 1, was operating under contract to QatarEnergy. Despite the strike, authorities said the situation was quickly brought under control. All 21 crew members onboard were evacuated safely, and no casualties were reported. Officials also confirmed there was no environmental damage following the incident. In a statement, QatarEnergy

said the attack happened in the early hours of 1 April and stressed that operations were not affected. Defence officials added that coordination with relevant agencies ensured a swift response. The attack comes less than two weeks after Iranian missiles caused "extensive damage" to Ras Laffan Industrial City, Qatar's main energy hub. Qatar shares the world's largest natural gas reserve with Iran, making the region critical to global supply. Ras Laffan is the world's largest liquefied natural gas export facility, and disruptions there are already being felt. QatarEnergy has said the earlier strikes put pressure on an already volatile global market.

## Indian LPG tanker chief officer recalls how his ship escaped Hormuz in middle of war

NEW DELHI: APR 1, 2026

**However, it would be nearly three weeks before the vessel safely transited the Strait of Hormuz, after Iran began selectively allowing ships through the narrow waterway.**



A day before Israel and the US attacked Iran on February 28, the Indian-flagged LPG tanker Pine Gas loaded cargo at the United Arab Emirates' Ruwais port, hoping to reach home within a week. However, it would be nearly three weeks before the vessel safely transited the Strait of Hormuz, after Iran began selectively allowing ships through the narrow waterway. Pine Gas Chief Officer Sohan Lal said the ship's 27 Indian crew had seen missiles and drones flying overhead every day as they waited. In a video seen by Reuters, at least five projectiles can be seen streaking through the night sky above the ves-

sel. Lal said Indian officials had asked the crew to be on standby to set sail around March 11, but with the war escalating, it took until March 23 before the ship was cleared to move, but not through the normal Hormuz shipping lanes. Instead, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps instructed the tanker to navigate a narrow channel north of Larak Island off Iran's coast. Lal said Indian authorities and the ship's owner, Mumbai-based Seven Islands Shipping, agreed to proceed only if every crew member consented to the voyage. "They

needed a yes or a no from all crew," he said. "Everyone onboard agreed." Lal added that the Larak route, not generally used by shipping, was recommended by the ICGC as the regular passage through Hormuz was mined. He said the Indian Navy guided the ship during the transit before four Indian warships escorted it for nearly 20 hours from the Gulf of Oman to the Arabian Sea. Lal said they did not pay a fee for the transit and the IRGC did not board the vessel at any time. The Indian Navy confirmed it was escorting Indian-flagged ships

after they crossed the strait. The Foreign Ministry said this month that the Indian Navy has been present in the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea for years to secure sea lanes for Indian and other ships.

### LPG CRUNCH IN INDIA

India relies heavily on seaborne imports of liquefied petroleum gas with hundreds of millions of households using it for cooking.

The Pine Gas, carrying 45,000 metric tonnes of LPG, was originally scheduled to unload at the west coast port of Mangalore but Indian authorities directed it to discharge equal volumes at the eastern ports of Visakhapatnam and Haldia.

Iran has said it has permitted "friendly nations" including China, Russia, India, Iraq and Pakistan passage through the Strait of Hormuz. While six Indian ships have exited the Strait, 18 Indian-flagged vessels carrying around 485 Indian seafarers remain in the Persian Gulf.

## UK PM Starmer firm on not joining Iran war, to host Hormuz summit

NEW DELHI: APR 1, 2026

**UK PM Keir Starmer, addressing the nation, said the UK won't be dragged into the Iran war but would push for de-escalation in the Middle East and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.**



UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer on Wednesday made it clear that Britain won't be drawn into the Iran war, but said it would host a global summit on ways to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the vital shipping chokepoint that has been blocked by Tehran. Starmer's pointed remarks come a day after US President Donald Trump launched a tirade against European NATO allies for refusing to join his war against Iran. "Whatever the pressure on me and others, whatever the noise, I am going to act in the British national interest in all decisions that I make. That's why I have been absolutely clear that this is not our war, or we are not going to get dragged into it," Starmer said in a national address.

### WHAT UK PM SAID ON TRUMP'S THREATS?

Starmer's address comes hours after Trump indicated he was considering pulling out of NATO over the bloc's refusal to help the US in the war. The outburst came after two NATO allies - Italy and Spain - refused the use of military bases for US jets involved in the conflict. Trump has also singled out the UK and Starmer numerous times. The latest came on Tuesday, when Trump categorically told the UK that the US "won't be there to help you anymore" and asked it to "go get your own oil" by

force from Hormuz, through which 20% of the global oil and gas passes. However, Starmer made it clear that he was not choosing Europe over the US. He also stressed that the UK remained "fully committed to NATO". "It's in our interest to have a strong relationship with the US and with Europe... But when it comes to defence and security, energy and the economy, we need a stronger relationship with Europe," Starmer said, underlining the UK's current priorities.

### A HORMUZ SUMMIT

While Starmer refused to be directly involved in the Iran war, he announced an international conference in the UK to brainstorm ways to reopen Hormuz. Iran's chokehold on the strait has hit the flow of oil tankers, leading to a 40% jump in crude prices. He said 35 countries have committed to working together on restoring security in the key oil transport route. The UK PM also said that military officials were working on plans for security once the conflict ends. In his address, Starmer also warned that the conflict, now in its second month, would significantly impact the UK's future, suggesting a rise in the cost of living due to disruption to energy flows. Starmer, however, assured that the UK was well-prepared to weather the storm.

## China, Bhutan discuss boundary alignment

BY K J M VARMA

BEIJING: (Apr 1) China and Bhutan on Wednesday discussed boundary alignment in areas "where there are no disputes" as the two sides held the 15th Expert Group Meeting on their boundary issues. At the expert group meeting held here, the two sides affirmed the progress made in the China-Bhutan boundary negotiations in recent years, a joint press release issued by both sides after the talks said. They had frank and constructive discussions in a friendly atmosphere on the way forward to make further progress on the implementation of the Three-Step Roadmap, it said.

## Child among 4 killed in roof collapse in Pakistan

PESHAWAR: (APR 1)

At least four people, including a child, were killed after the roof of a house collapsed in northwest Pakistan, officials said on Wednesday. The incident took place on Tuesday in the Bajaur district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The roof of a house in the Rasool Khan area caved in suddenly, trapping several people under the debris.

## Tough months ahead: PM urges public transport

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese warned the economic shocks of the war in the Middle East would be felt for months and encouraged citizens to take public transport in a rare address to the nation on Wednesday. The address was broadcast simultaneously across major television and radio networks at 7 pm. Similar addresses were made by previous prime ministers during the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2008 global financial crisis. Australia, which imports about 90 per cent of its fuel, has seen pet-

rol prices surge and experienced localised shortages as a result of the US-Israeli war on Iran and the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. "I understand that right now it's hard to be positive," Albanese said. "The war in the Middle East has caused the biggest spike in petrol and diesel prices in history. Australia is not an active participant in this war. But all Australians are paying higher prices because of it." The economic shocks caused by this war will be with us for months," Albanese encouraged citizens to "do their bit" to ease



pressure on fuel supplies, such as not stockpiling fuel ahead of the Easter holidays, which begin this week, and taking public transport. "If you're hitting the road, don't

take more fuel than you need - just fill up like you normally would. Think of others in your community, in the bush and in critical industries," he said. "And over coming weeks, if you can switch to catching the train or bus or tram to work, do so."

### FUEL STOCKS BELOW RECOMMENDED LEVEL

The month-long conflict has spread across the Middle East, killing thousands, disrupting energy supplies and threatening to send the global economy into a tailspin. Albanese said the com-

ing months "may not be easy" but said the government would do everything it could to help Australians. Earlier this week, the government announced it would halve the excise on petrol and diesel and remove the heavy-road-user charge for three months to help households cope with a surge in costs driven by the war, at a cost to the government of around A\$2.55 billion (\$1.75 billion). Australia has its highest fuel stocks in 15 years, but they are still far below the International Energy Agency recommendation of 90 days.

## Iran seeks truce; Trump vows strikes till Hormuz opens

NEW DELHI: APR 1, 2026

**Donald Trump said Washington would only consider a ceasefire if the Strait of Hormuz is reopened and remains "open, free, and clear", linking any pause in hostilities to maritime access along the crucial oil route.**



US President Donald Trump said Iran's new leadership has reached out seeking a ceasefire, but warned the United States would not consider it unless the strategic Strait of Hormuz is reopened to global shipping. In a statement on Truth Social, Trump does not mention the top official by name, but describes the individual as "much less radicalised and far more intelligent than his

predecessors". However, the US President made clear any pause in hostilities would come with conditions tied to maritime security. "We will consider when Hormuz Strait is open, free, and clear," he added, referring to the vital oil transit route at the centre of the escalating crisis. As the Iran conflict drags into its fifth week, Trump repeated that military operations would continue. "Until then, we are blasting Iran into oblivion or, as they

say, back to the Stone Ages!!!" he said. The Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway through which a significant share of the world's oil supply passes, has become a flashpoint after Iran moved to restrict traffic following US and Israeli strikes. The US President's latest remarks are the exact opposite of what he said a day before. Earlier on Tuesday, Donald Trump signalled he may not wait for diplomacy to catch up with the battlefield. "We'll leave whether we have a deal or not. It's irrelevant," Trump told reporters late Tuesday, adding that the US could wrap up its involvement within "two or three weeks". The remarks mark one of Trump's strongest indications yet that he is losing patience with the war despite back-channel efforts and speculation around a possible deal.

## WFH, drive and fly less: European Union's suggestions to cut down on energy use

**Dan Jørgensen, the energy chief of the EU, in one of his speeches, mentioned that Europe was going through a "very serious situation", with no clear end in sight.**



The European Union (EU) has urged its member countries to cut down on the use of oil and gas amid the global hike in prices and fears of a supply shortage due to a month-long crisis in the Middle East. The European Commission, one of the core institutions of the EU, urged citizens to work from home and drive and fly less to save energy.

Dan Jørgensen, the energy chief of the EU, in one of his speeches, mentioned that Europe was going through a "very serious sit-

uation", with no clear end visible as the crisis is deepening in the Middle East and the transportation in the Strait of Hormuz is far from being normalised.

"Even if ... peace is here tomorrow, still we will not go back to normal in the foreseeable future," Jørgensen said after a meeting attended by 27 energy ministers associated with the EU.

Earlier, the Commis-

ures to cut down on fuel consumption across the world in the midst of a full-scale escalation in the Persian Gulf.

The measures, which covered travel, homes and work habits, included promoting the use of public transport, giving private cars access to city centres on alternate days, encouraging car sharing and efficient driving habits, avoiding air travel where possible, especially business flights, and switching to electric cooking, among others.

In an interview with the BBC, IEA executive director Fatih Birol said that the world was facing "the greatest global energy security threat in history" and it was time for governments to become "more vocal" around how energy was being used.

## Two tankers with 94,000 tonnes of LPG reach India from UAE via Strait of Hormuz

MUMBAI: APR 1, 2026

**BW TYR reached Mumbai on March 31 with LPG for BPCL after a six-day voyage from Ras Al Khaimah, UAE. BW ELM arrived near New Mangalore on April 1, carrying gas for HPCL after crossing the Strait of Hormuz.**



Two Indian-flagged gas tankers carrying liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) have safely reached India from the UAE after crossing the Strait of Hormuz, a critical maritime energy chokepoint that has been restricted by Iran to most countries, with limited passage allowed to a few, including India, amid its conflict with Israel and the US.

The LPG carrier BW TYR arrived at Mumbai anchorage late on March 31, having departed from Ras Al Khaimah port in the UAE. The vessel

completed the journey in six days and is carrying gas for Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL). Another tanker, BW ELM, also crossed the Strait of Hormuz and reached near New Mangalore on April 1 at noon. This vessel is transporting gas for Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL). BW TYR has 27 Indian seafarers on board and is carrying 23,653 metric tonnes of propane and 22,926 metric tonnes of butane. BW ELM has 28 Indian seafarers on board and is loaded

with 23,860 metric tonnes of propane and 23,139 metric tonnes of butane.

So far, eight Indian-flagged vessels have safely transited the strait. This was confirmed by Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, during a media briefing on recent developments in West Asia on March 30. Of the eight vessels, two tankers, carrying a combined LPG cargo of approximately 94,000 tonnes, have reached Indian shores.

At the press briefing, Sinha added that the government continues to monitor the situation closely, focusing on the safety of Indian seafarers, vessel movements and port operations amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

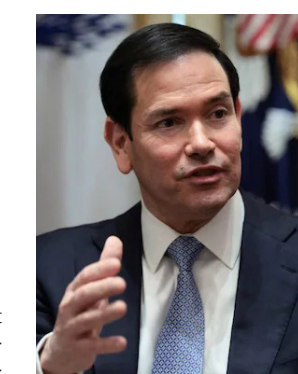
Currently, at least 10 foreign-flagged ships carrying energy supplies to India are stranded in the Persian Gulf. Additionally, 18 Indian-flagged vessels carrying LPG, crude oil, and LNG remain anchored west of the Strait of Hormuz, which has been significantly affected by the regional conflict.

The first crude shipment to reach India via the affected Strait of Hormuz arrived on March 12, after New Delhi's Middle East diplomacy secured safe passage for its oil tankers following talks between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi.

## US SEES IRAN WAR END IN SIGHT: RUBIO BEFORE TRUMP ADDRESS

NEW DELHI: APR 1, 2026

**US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Washington can "see the finish line" in the Iran war, now in its fifth week, ahead of an address to the nation by President Donald Trump.**



Ahead of US President Donald Trump's address to the nation, Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Tuesday said Washington can "see the finish line" in the Iran war, now in its fifth week. He also said that messages are being exchanged between the US and Iran with the possibility of a direct meeting between the two sides soon. "We can see the finish line. It's not today, it's not tomorrow, but it is coming," Rubio said in an interview with Fox News

ability of a direct meeting between the two sides. "There are messages being exchanged, there are talks going on. There is the potential for a direct meeting at some point," he said.

US President Donald Trump, who has outlined shifting goals for the conflict - from regime change in Iran to weakening its military and regional influence - said the US could halt its military operations within two to three weeks. He is set to address the nation on Tuesday at 9 pm (local time) [7:30 IST Wednesday] amid the Iran war. Rubio also asserted that no country is currently taking steps that are hindering Washington's mission in Iran. He said that the US may need to reassess its ties with Nato after the

war, suggesting the alliance risks becoming a "one-way street" if allies refuse to support US operations, including denying access to bases and overflight permissions. Rubio's remarks came as European nations have declined to directly participate in military strikes against Iran. Trump has repeatedly lashed out at Nato allies over their refusal to support the US war against Iran, accusing them of doing "absolutely nothing" and even calling the alliance a "paper tiger", while suggesting that Washington may reconsider its membership. He also warned that the US does not "have to be there" for Nato and criticised European nations for denying military support such as bases and airspace.

**Godrej Enterprises Group and Tata Capital join hands to accelerate intralogistics growth**



NEW DELHI

Godrej Enterprises Group and Tata Capital have entered into a strategic partnership to accelerate India's intralogistics transformation by introducing structured finance lease solutions.

These solutions are an emerging and differentiated model in the Indian forklift and material handling equipment market.

The collaboration enables businesses to scale operations without large upfront capital expenditure and aims to finance lease assets worth Rs 100 crore over the next three years, a joint statement said on Wednesday.

## Bulls Take Charge on Day One of FY27

Stock markets kicked off FY27 on a strong note, with benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closing nearly 2% higher on Wednesday (April 1, 2026). The rally aligned with a sharp uptrend in global markets, driven by optimism around a possible de-escalation of the ongoing West Asia conflict.

Marking a positive start to the new financial year, the 30-share BSE Sensex surged 1,186.77 points, or 1.65%, to settle at 73,134.32. During intraday trading, it had climbed as much as 2,017.03 points, or 2.80%, reaching 73,964.58.

Similarly, the 50-share NSE Nifty advanced 348 points, or 1.56%, to close at 22,679.40.

Investor sentiment was further supported by a decline in crude oil prices. Among the Sensex constituents, major gainers included Trent, InterGlobe Aviation, Adani Ports, Bharat Electronics, State Bank of India, and Eternal.



On the other hand, NTPC, Sun Pharma, Power Grid, UltraTech Cement, and Bharti Airtel ended the session as laggards. Across Asian markets, strong gains were recorded, with South Korea's KOSPI jumping 8.44% and Japan's Nikkei 225 rising 5.24%. China's Shanghai SSE Composite and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index also closed significantly higher. European markets were likewise trading in positive territory.

According to Ponmudi R., CEO of Enrich Money, Indian

equities began the financial year on an upbeat note, fueled by renewed optimism over a possible easing of tensions in the Middle East and improved energy supply conditions. He added that remarks by U.S. President Donald Trump—suggesting the possibility of a U.S. withdrawal from Iran within two to three weeks, regardless of a deal—acted as a key trigger, boosting global risk appetite.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited, also noted that im-

proved investor confidence, following signals of a potential resolution to the West Asia conflict, contributed to the market rally.

Meanwhile, Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, edged down by 0.22% to \$103.7 per barrel.

Stock markets had remained closed on Tuesday (March 31) in observance of Shri Mahavir Jayanti.

In terms of institutional activity, Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) sold equities worth ₹11,163.06 crore on Monday (March 30), as per exchange data. In contrast, Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) made purchases amounting to ₹14,894.72 crore.

Earlier, on Monday (March 30), markets had witnessed a sharp decline, with the Sensex plunging 1,635.67 points, or 2.22%, to close at 71,947.55, while the Nifty dropped 488.20 points, or 2.14%, to settle at 22,331.40.

## Fuel Surge Meets Govt Shield

New Delhi: The government on Wednesday shielded domestic airlines from a sharp increase in jet fuel prices amid global energy supply constraints due to the ongoing war in the Middle East. On Wednesday morning the state-owned Indian Oil Corporation doubled aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices in Delhi to Rs 2.07 lakh a kilolitre for April. Hours later, it dropped to Rs 1.04 lakh/kl.

The government said it would only allow a partial increase after it emerged that prices for the domestic market are expected to increase by over 100 per cent from April 1, 2026. This, the government said, is to shield domestic airfares from step hikes.

Therefore, public sector OMCs, or oil marketing companies, in consultation with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, have now implemented only a partial and staggered increase in ticket prices. Domestic airlines will face a limited hike - around 25 per cent or approximately Rs 15 per kl - instead of the full pass-through of global price increases, the government said.

However, airlines operat-



ing international routes will bear the full increase, in line with global market-linked pricing.

Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said this approach will help protect passengers and the aviation sector.

"This calibrated approach will help shield passengers from sharp fare increases, ease the burden on domestic airlines, and support the continued stability of the aviation sector at this crucial juncture," he said. He also said this will benefit the larger economic picture by ensuring smooth cargo movement and maintaining critical air connectivity for trade and logistics.

The US-Israel war on Iran, which began Feb 28 and swiftly escalated to strikes

on energy infrastructure and a blockade on tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, has thrown the global energy market into turmoil. The near-total closure of the key waterway - which ships a fifth of the world's oil and gas supply - choked exports and prices surged on widening disruption.

The jump in jet fuel - had it been implemented in full - would have been a heavy burden for local airlines, which are already grappling with thin margins.

Other airlines in the region have been similarly hit.

Carriers from Vietnam to New Zealand have had to cancel flights as costs soared, while China - the world's largest oil importer - has curbed fuel exports to secure domestic supply.

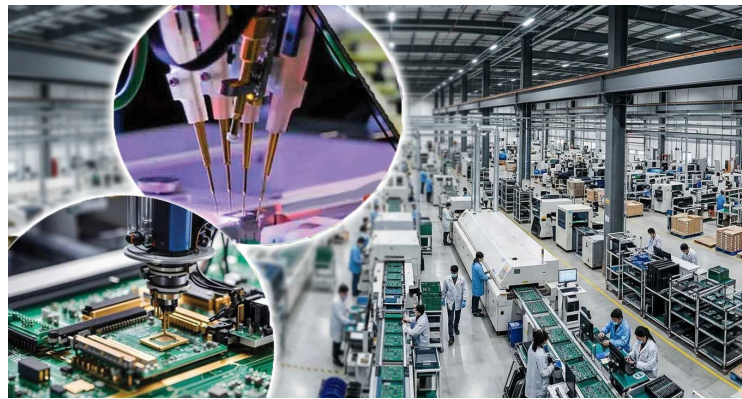
## Electronics Production in India Jumps 6 Times to Rs.12 Lakh Crore

NEW DELHI, APR 1

India's electronics manufacturing sector has recorded a dramatic expansion over the past decade, with production rising more than six-fold to nearly ₹12 lakh crore in FY25 from about ₹1.9 lakh crore in FY15, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Jitin Prasada said on Wednesday.

In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, the minister highlighted that exports of electronic goods have surged eight times to around ₹3.3 lakh crore during the same period. Mobile phone production registered a steep rise, jumping 28-fold to ₹5.45 lakh crore.

The minister attributed the growth to targeted policy interventions under the Centre's Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative, which aims to establish a comprehensive electronics manufacturing ecosystem encompassing



finished goods, components, sub-assemblies and capital equipment.

Mobile phone exports witnessed the sharpest growth, increasing 127 times to ₹2 lakh crore. This surge has transformed India from a net importer of mobile phones in 2014 into a net exporter, supported by

more than 300 manufacturing units currently in operation.

A major driver of this transformation has been the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, launched in 2020 to boost large-scale electronics manufacturing. Against a targeted investment of ₹7,000 crore, actual

investments reached ₹17,519 crore—approximately 2.5 times the initial goal. Production and exports under the scheme also exceeded expectations, reaching ₹11 lakh crore and ₹6.2 lakh crore respectively, surpassing targets by 36 per cent and 27 per cent as of February.

In terms of employment, the PLI scheme has generated around 1.85 lakh direct jobs, achieving nearly 92 per cent of its target of 2 lakh.

"As a result, India has emerged as the world's second-largest mobile phone manufacturer, with the sector supporting around 12 lakh jobs, both direct and indirect," the minister said.

Smartphones have now become India's leading export item in 2025, overtaking traditional exports such as refined petroleum products and cut diamonds.

The government has also expanded its focus to IT hardware manufacturing through the PLI 2.0 scheme. Under this initiative, production worth ₹18,863 crore and investments of ₹872 crore have been recorded so far.

Further, the Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS) has drawn investment commitments of ₹1.15 lakh crore, significantly exceeding its target of ₹59,350 crore, with an estimated employment potential of 1.4 lakh jobs. A total of 75 applications across 12 states have been approved under the scheme, the minister added.

Prasada noted that these initiatives are helping deepen domestic value addition, currently estimated at 18-20 per cent, while positioning India as a key global hub for electronics manufacturing.

## Strong GST Collections Reach Rs. 2 Lakh Crore in March

NEW DELHI, APR 2

India's gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections rose to a 10-month high of ₹2 lakh crore in March, marking an 8.8% increase compared to the same period last year, according to official data.

This rise follows a dip in February, when collections stood at ₹1.84 lakh crore, indicating a steady recovery in monthly revenues during the second half of FY26.

The highest GST collection on record remains ₹2.37 lakh crore, achieved in April 2025.

On a month-on-month basis, GST revenues climbed from ₹1.84 lakh crore in February to ₹2 lakh crore in March.

Between June 2025 and January 2026, monthly GST collections largely stayed within the range of ₹1.70 lakh crore to ₹1.96 lakh crore. The lowest point during this period was recorded

in November, at ₹1.70 lakh crore, following the government's GST rate rationalisation announced in September.

A detailed breakdown of March figures shows that gross domestic revenue reached ₹1.46 lakh crore, reflecting a 5.9% year-on-year increase. Meanwhile, GST revenue from imports grew significantly by 17.8%, reaching ₹53,861 crore.

For the full financial year FY26, gross GST collections stood at ₹22.27 lakh crore, up 8.3% from ₹20.55 lakh crore in the previous year.

Refunds issued in March increased by 13.8% year-on-year to ₹22,074 crore. After accounting for refunds, net GST revenue rose 8.2% to ₹1.78 lakh crore.

Overall, the data suggests that stronger growth in GST collections from imports, compared to domestic sources, played a key role in driving the increase in total collections for March.

## NMDC Scripts history with its highest ever 53 MT production output

Hyderabad, April 1:

NMDC Limited has scripted history by achieving its highest-ever annual iron ore production of over 53 million tonnes in FY26, becoming the first mining company in India to cross the 50 MT milestone and reinforcing its pivotal role in powering the nation's steel backbone.

The record performance, driven by strong output from key mines in Chhattisgarh and Karnataka, reflects robust growth in both production and sales, marking the company's best-ever volumes since inception. The milestone also underscores the accelerating momentum of India's mineral sector amid rising steel demand and infrastructure expansion.

Chairman and Managing Director Amitava Mukherjee termed the achievement a defining moment not just for NMDC but for the entire mining industry, highlighting the company's strengthened capacity and forward-looking growth strategy.

FY26 also marked a phase of transformation, with NMDC expanding globally, operationalising a coal mine in Jharkhand, and enhancing its production capabilities through new projects.

With strong momentum entering FY27, NMDC is now focused on scaling up to over 100 MT production capacity by 2030, aligning its growth with India's long-term economic ambitions and infrastructure needs.

## CBIC Eases Domestic Sales Rules

NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) on Wednesday introduced a one-time relief measure allowing eligible manufacturing units in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to sell their products in the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) at concessional customs duty rates, addressing concerns arising from ongoing global trade disruptions.

The relief, announced in the Budget 2026-27, has been implemented through an exemption notification issued under Section 25 of the Customs Act, 1962. The measure will remain in force from April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2027, according to a Finance Ministry



statement here.

The CBIC has prescribed a revised concessional duty structure across multiple slabs. Goods currently attracting 7.5 per cent duty will now be taxed at 6.5 per cent, while the 10 per cent slab has been reduced to 9 per cent.

Items in the 12.5 per cent

and 15 per cent categories will be subject to a 10 per cent duty under the scheme. Similarly, goods attracting 20 per cent duty will face a reduced rate of 12.5 per cent, while those in the 20-30 per cent bracket will be taxed at 15 per cent.

Products currently attracting duties between 30-40 per cent will be charged at a concessional rate of 20 per cent. To ensure that the benefit reaches genuine manufacturers, CBIC has specified that only SEZ units that commenced production on or before March 31, 2025, will be eligible. Further, goods cleared under this relief window must have undergone a minimum value addition of 20 per cent over input costs.

Maintaining the export-ori-

ented character of SEZs, the Board has capped DTA sales at concessional rates at 30 per cent of the highest annual Free on Board (FOB) value of exports achieved by the unit in any of the three immediately preceding financial years.

The relief measure will be implemented through CBIC's automated system, with assessment of Bills of Entry for DTA clearances being carried out under the faceless assessment mechanism to enhance efficiency and transparency.

At the same time, the CBIC has excluded certain sensitive sectors from the scope of the scheme in order to safeguard the domestic industry and maintain a level playing field for units operating in the DTA.

## Oracle Cuts 12,000 Jobs in India

NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

Oracle Corporation has reportedly laid off around 12,000 employees in India, according to statements from affected workers on Tuesday (March 31, 2026). Additionally, another round of layoffs is expected to take place within the next month.

On a global scale, the company is believed to have reduced its workforce by approximately 30,000 employees.

Two individuals impacted by the layoffs, including one from the human resources department, stated, "In India, around 12,000 employees have been laid off. The company is planning another mass layoff within a month."

Oracle employs roughly 30,000

people in India, including those who have been affected by the recent job cuts. The company has not issued an official comment regarding these developments.

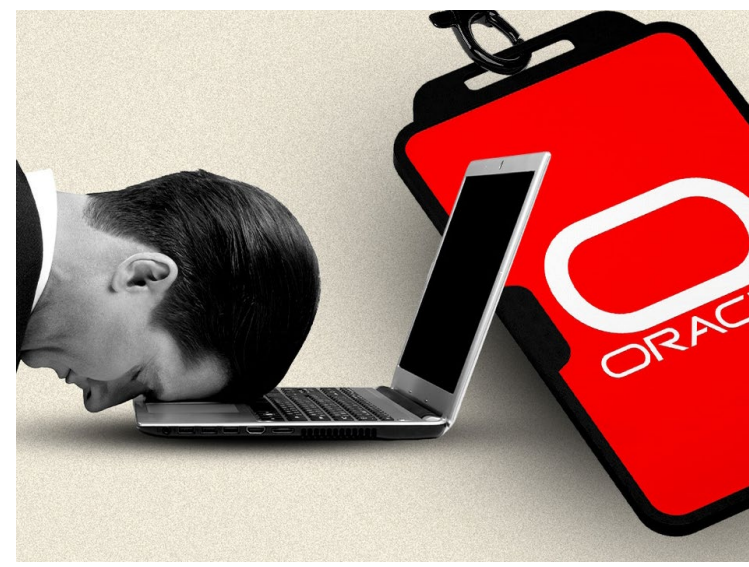
In an internal email to employees, Oracle explained that organizational changes were being implemented. As part of this restructuring, certain roles were deemed redundant. The communication stated: "Because of these changes, a decision has been taken to streamline operations, and as a result, unfortunately, the position you currently hold will become redundant."

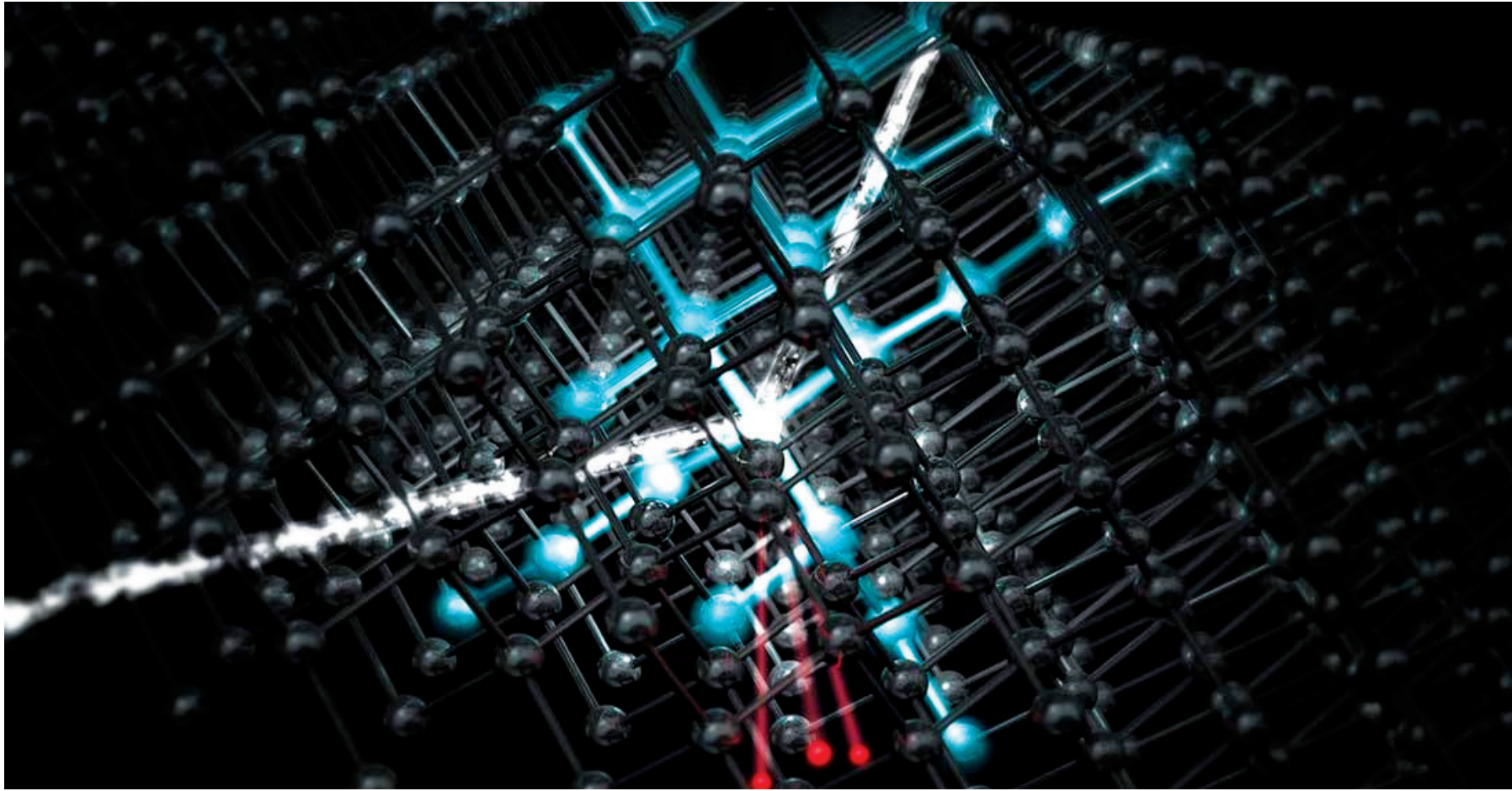
For employees in India, Oracle has offered a severance package that includes 15 days' salary for each completed year of service. In addition, affected employees will receive one

month of unpaid wages up to the termination date, leave encashment, gratuity based on eligibility, and payment for a one-month notice period.

The company has also provided a two-month salary top-up. However, this severance package is only available to employees who choose to resign voluntarily and amicably. Merugu Sridhar, a former Oracle employee, stated that he was laid off in September after protesting against what he described as a 16-hour work shift policy in India.

"I contacted my friends and colleagues in human resources. They told me that many Indians working for the company in the US have also been affected, as local laws there are very strict regarding the retrenchment of citizens," Sridhar said.





# Hundreds of Times Colder Than Outer Space: Scientists Reach Near-Absolute Zero in Dark Matter Hunt

Deep beneath the Earth's surface, a major physics experiment has reached a critical milestone, enabling detectors to operate at temperatures near absolute zero.

Far below the surface of a Canadian mine, scientists have brought one of the coldest experiments ever built to life. The Super Cryogenic Dark Matter Search (SuperCDMS) has now reached its operating temperature, allowing its detectors to finally switch on and begin probing one of physics' biggest mysteries.

At just a few thousandths of a degree above absolute zero, the system is colder than deep space by a wide margin. At these temperatures, heat-driven motion inside materials nearly disappears, creating an environment quiet enough to detect incredibly faint signals that would otherwise be lost.

This milestone marks the shift from years of construction to the start of scientific operations. With the detectors now active, researchers are preparing to explore a part of the universe that has never been directly observed.

The experiment is designed to detect mysterious dark matter particles.

Dark matter makes up about 85 percent of all matter in the universe, yet it has never been directly detected. Scientists know it exists from its gravitational effects on galaxies, but its true nature remains unknown. If dark matter particles pass through Earth, as current models suggest, experiments like SuperCDMS are designed to catch the rare moments when one interacts with ordinary matter.

"Getting to base temperature is a major milestone in a years-long campaign to build a low-background facility capable of housing our sensitive cryogenic solid state detectors," said Priscilla Cushman, a professor in the University of Minnesota School of Physics and Astronomy and the Spokesperson of SuperCDMS. "At these extremely low temperatures, our installed detectors can now scan a whole new region of parameter space where the lightest dark matter particles may be lurking."

## Engineering a Low-Background Environment

The University of Minnesota team designed, sourced, and assembled a shielding system that protects the detectors from trace radiation and neutrons created by cosmic rays interacting with the cavern walls. The structure is a cylindrical enclosure measuring four meters tall (13.1 feet) and four meters in diameter (13.1 feet). It is built with layers of ultra-pure lead to block gamma radiation and high-density polyethylene to reduce neutron activity.

In addition to helping install and cool the experiment,



researchers from the university have developed advanced reconstruction algorithms and analysis methods to quickly identify possible dark matter signals once data collection begins in the coming months. The group plays a leading role in the scientific effort, supported by School of Physics and Astronomy Assistant Professor Yan Liu, who serves as the Analysis Working Group Chair.

## Deep Underground for Precision Measurements

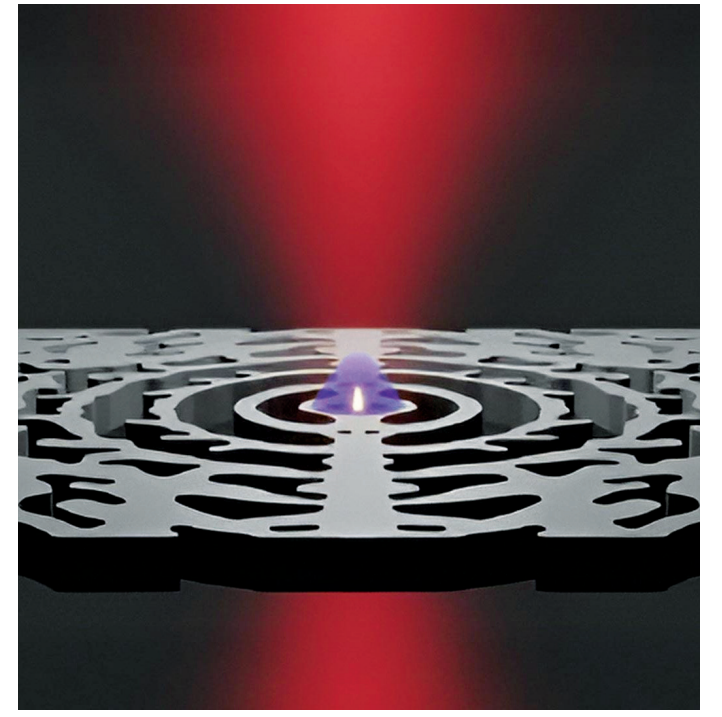
SuperCDMS is located at SNOLAB, a research facility about 6,800 feet underground in an active nickel mine near Sudbury, Ontario. This depth shields the experiment from cosmic rays and other background particles that could interfere with the extremely faint signals scientists are trying to detect.

Now that the base temperature has been reached, the

team will begin detector commissioning. This phase will take several months and involves activating, calibrating, and fine-tuning each detector channel. In addition to searching for dark matter, the experiment will allow scientists to study rare isotopes, explore previously unmeasured energy ranges, and potentially reveal new types of particle interactions.

SuperCDMS is a collaborative effort supported by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science, the U.S. National Science Foundation, the Canada Foundation for Innovation, and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

The University of Minnesota team also includes postdoctoral researchers Shubham Pandey and Himangshu Neog, research scientist Scott Fallows, and graduate students Zachary Williams, Elliott Tanner, and Chi Cap, all from the School of Physics and Astronomy.



# Scientists Create Tiny "Nanolaser" That Could Revolutionize Future Computers

Researchers have created an ultra-compact nanolaser that could transform how data moves within microchips, replacing electrical signals with light.

The idea of computers communicating with light instead of electricity is moving closer to reality, thanks to a breakthrough nanolaser developed at the Technical University of Denmark (DTU).

Described in Science Advances, the device is small enough to be embedded by the thousands onto a single microchip. Instead of relying on electrical currents, which generate heat and slow performance, these nanolasers could transmit information using photons. This shift could dramatically increase processing speeds while reducing energy demands across everything from smartphones to massive data centers.

"The nanolaser opens up the possibility of creating a new generation of components that combine high performance with minimal size. This could be in information technology, for example, where ultra-small and energy-efficient lasers can reduce energy consumption in computers, or in the development of sensors for the healthcare sector, where the nanolaser's extreme light concentration can deliver high-resolution images and ultrasensitive biosensors," says DTU professor Jesper Mørk.

Mørk worked on the study with colleagues including Drs. Meng Xiong and Yi Yu from DTU Electro.

## Halving computers' energy use

While the internet already relies on light to move data through fiber optic cables, computers still depend on electrical signals within their internal circuits. This creates heat and limits performance. Introducing nanolasers

directly onto chips could overcome these issues by enabling faster data transfer with minimal energy loss. Mørk estimates that this technology could reduce computer energy consumption by about half.

The DTU nanolaser is designed to fit this role, as future chips are expected to require thousands of compact, energy-efficient light sources to transmit signals internally.

## A technological breakthrough

Built in DTU's cleanroom facility, DTU Nanolab, the device challenges long-standing assumptions about how small lasers can be. It relies on a light-trapping structure, known as a nanocavity, that concentrates light into an extremely small space once thought unattainable.

When activated with a light beam, both light and electrons become confined within this tiny region. This allows the laser to operate at room temperature while using very little energy.

The nanocavity design was originally developed by Professor Ole Sigmond's group at DTU Construct.

## Faster technology, less CO<sub>2</sub>, and better sensors

A key next step is enabling the nanolaser to run on electrical power, which remains a major research challenge. If achieved, the technology could reshape multiple industries. Consumer devices could become more powerful while using less energy, and data centers could cut their electricity demands, lowering their environmental impact. In healthcare, the same technology could support highly sensitive sensors and sharper imaging tools.

Researchers believe the remaining technical hurdles could be addressed within the next 5-10 years.

# For the First Time, ChatGPT Has Solved an Unproven Math Problem in Geometry

New research has found ChatGPT-5.2 can generate original mathematical proofs, introducing "vibe-proving" as a new AI reasoning method. AI accelerates discovery, but human verification remains necessary.

Researchers at VUB's Data Analytics Lab report that commercial language models can produce original mathematical proofs. In their study, the team shows that OpenAI's large language model ChatGPT-5.2 (Thinking) was able to solve a mathematical problem on its own.

The case focused on proving a 2024 conjecture proposed by mathematicians Ran and Teng. A conjecture is a statement believed to be true based on patterns or repeated results, but it has not yet been formally proven. Once a valid proof is established, the conjecture becomes a theorem.

According to the study, the final proof emerged from seven chat sessions with ChatGPT and four evolving versions of the argument. The model played a key role in exploring possible approaches, while human researchers ensured the reasoning was correct and logically complete.

## ChatGPT's Role in Mathematical Discovery

The researchers found that ChatGPT-5.2 (Thinking) developed much of the proof's structure with limited human input. As they note, "With the Data Analytics Lab, we are one of the first to demonstrate that a commercially available LLM can independently develop original mathematical proofs."

"I had long suspected that ChatGPT could help me prove unsolved mathematical problems," says Brecht Verbeke (postdoctoral researcher in the Data Analytics Lab VUB research group). "And yet I was surprised at how efficiently that worked out."

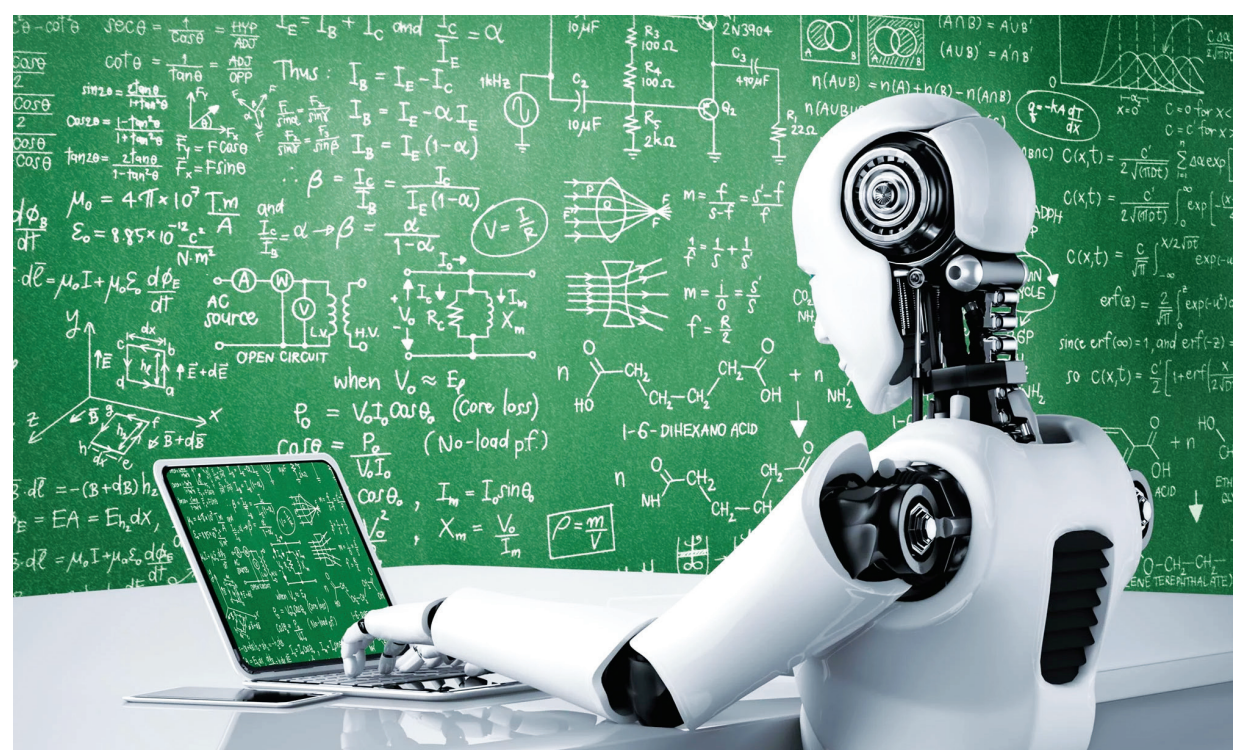
The team places this work within a broader approach they call vibe-proving, where language models help organize and explore complex theoretical ideas. They also raise the question of whether this method could advance as quickly as AI-assisted programming, known as vibe-coding, which has already progressed from simple tools to near-autonomous code generation. "We often hear how people think that the creativity of systems is fun-

damentally limited to reformulations of their training data," says VUB professor Vincent Ginis (Data Analytics Lab). "Glad we can dispel that misconception with our work as well."

## Human Verification and the Future of AI Research

Despite the model's strong contribution, the researchers stress that human involvement remains essential for final verification and resolving any remaining gaps in the proof. The process also highlights where language models are most helpful and where challenges in validation still exist.

This work represents a significant step for AI in theoretical research. Beyond supporting coding or writing tasks, language models may now contribute to original mathematical discoveries when paired with careful human oversight. "Formulating candidate proofs can now be much faster, but the bottleneck then becomes human verification. That takes time. But language models will help us there too," concludes VUB professor Andres Algaba (Data Analytics Lab VUB).





# IPL 2026: Unbeaten Rizvi guides Delhi Capitals to six-wicket win

LUCKNOW

Sameer Rizvi's unbeaten 70 and his 119-run partnership with Tristan Stubbs helped Delhi Capitals kick off their campaign in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 with a thumping six-wicket victory over hosts Lucknow Super Giants at the Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow on Wednesday.

The strategy of LSG revolved around the pace bowling attack from the onset; consequently, the four-pronged seam attack made it easy for them to force the Delhi Capitals to early on in their run chase of 142 runs. The seamers created plenty of opportunity for movement right from the first ball, which proved too much for KL Rahul (0), who sliced a full outswinger delivery of Mohammad Shami to deep backwards point.

Nitish Rana also struggled, managing a few boundaries from loose deliveries but generally failing to find his timing before edging a ball from Mohsin Khan to the keeper after a hesitant stay.

Prince Yadav was instrumental with the ball. After forcing Pathum Nissanka to play a top edge shot -- which Rishabh Pant caught after running in at an angle and diving, thus causing him to collide with the fence -- he then delivered the standout delivery of the Power-play with one that swung late and hit Axar Patel's stumps after he attempted to flick the ball away on a fuller delivery that had previously swung away from him.

As the ball continued to seam and swing late into the innings, LSG kept using pace, even pushing Mohammed Shami to bowl his full quota within the first nine overs for more breakthroughs. Despite the collapse, Sameer Rizvi tried to change the momentum. He initially struggled to find gaps, but then hit a smart ramped six off a short ball. He followed this by scoring three boundaries during a rare off day for Shahbaz Ahmed. That over briefly shifted the momentum, but the match was still balanced.

Earlier, asked to bat first, LSG came up with a new opening batting pair as skipper Rishabh Pant promoted himself to the top order but was removed early in the innings of an unfortunate run out. A strange moment in what might have been a caught-and-bowled chance for Mitchell Marsh turned into a run-out. Mukesh Kumar got a slight touch on the ball, which hit the stumps at the non-striker's end, catching Pant short of his crease at seven runs.

Mukesh Kumar set the tone with an exceptional new-ball spell, conceding less than a run a



ball in the powerplay while extracting swing and seam and keeping Mitchell Marsh quiet outside off. Axar Patel then struck in trademark fashion, deceiving Aiden Markram with a skiddy, angled delivery soon after being hit for six, as DC restricted LSG to 48/2. The collapse continued with Ayush Badoni edging T. Natarajan, before Lungi Ngidi produced a stunning slower ball to outfox Nicholas Pooran.

Delhi tightened their grip as Marsh fell for 35 attempting to take on Kuldeep Yadav, while debutant Mukul Choudhary showed brief promise with a quick 14 before being undone by a googly. Abdul Samad offered resistance with 36 but was eventually dismissed by Natarajan, triggering a late collapse where the rest managed just three runs. Ngidi and Natarajan led the charge with three wickets each, while Kuldeep chipped in

with two, sealing a dominant bowling performance for DC.

Rizvi played an important role under pressure, proving the Delhi Capitals made the right choice by selecting him as the Impact Player over options like Karun Nair and Ashutosh Sharma. After a tough start where he struggled to score, making 0 off 9 and then 5 off 13 against LSG's strong seam bowlers, Rizvi steadied himself to build a partnership of 119 runs off 76 with Tristan Stubbs.

He took full advantage of the little spin available, attacking Shahbaz Ahmed and Aiden Markram aggressively, hitting four fours and a six in their overs. By reaching a well-earned fifty off 37 balls, Rizvi's innings was key in shifting the momentum and putting DC in a strong position in a tough chase.



## 'Happy with the bowling', says Axar Patel after making a winning start

LUCKNOW

Delhi Capitals captain Axar Patel credited his side's awareness and execution with the ball for setting up a six-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants, highlighting how they made the most of helpful new-ball conditions before sealing the chase through a crucial middle-overs partnership.

"Game finished early, got close in the middle. The new ball was doing a bit, our chat was about a big partnership, and we finished well. Happy with bowling. We knew it swung and seamed at the start. We told that to all new bowlers, and they did well," said Axar Patel after the match.

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"During the strategic time-out, we passed on the same message that we were just one good partnership away from getting ourselves into a good position. Both of them finished off well in the end. There's a big boundary, and I felt that since the pitch was assisting pacers, I'd bowl them over me. The plan was to bring in Rizvi early. Ashutosh Sharma was also an option if the innings started well. Last year, Ashu proved himself in the first game, and this time, Rizvi. He's been excellent at practice, glad he pulled it off tonight," he added.

## IPL 2026 opening weekend sets record with 515 million reach across all platforms

NEW DELHI

The Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season has recorded its biggest-ever opening weekend, with a combined reach of more than 515 million viewers across television and digital platforms for the first two high-scoring games of the ten-team tournament.

Tournament broadcaster Jio-Star said a combined watch-time of 32.6 billion minutes was reported for the first two games, which meant growth in this was 26 percent as compared to the last edition's opening two matches.

It further added that CTV reach grew by 30 percent and concurrency went up by 61 percent, while on linear television, the first two matches of the 2026 edition witnessed a TVR growth of 24 percent over the previous seasons.

"The start to the season has been extremely encouraging. The combination of high-quality cricket and enhanced viewing experiences is clearly resonating with fans across the country. The IPL has always been about pushing boundaries, and it is pleasing to see how the league continues to set new benchmarks in both sport and fan engagement.

"Our constant effort is to build on this momentum year after year

and deliver a tournament that continues to raise the bar for cricket globally. The focus remains on innovation, competitiveness, and creating an experience that connects with fans at every level," said IPL Chairman Arun Singh Dhumal in a statement.

A key feature of this season has been differentiated viewing experiences, including a connected TV Hindi feed featuring former players such as Ravichandran Ashwin, Suresh Raina, Harbhajan Singh, Virender Sehwag, and Irfan Pathan.

"The opening weekend numbers are a strong reflection of the deep and enduring connection that fans have with the IPL. What is particularly encouraging is not just the scale, but the quality of engagement we are witnessing across platforms. It reinforces our belief that the IPL continues to evolve with the expectations of a modern, diverse audience while staying true to the essence of the game.

"At the BCCI, our endeavour has always been to ensure that the IPL grows in scale, quality, and reach with every season. We remain committed to making the tournament bigger and better, both on the field and in the way fans experience the game," said BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia.

## Borussia Dortmund in unrest after Schlotterbeck's announcement

BERLIN (GERMANY)

Tensions are rising at Borussia Dortmund after center-back Nico Schlotterbeck said a contract extension sought by the club remains far from being agreed.

"I must deny reports that we are close," the 26-year-old said. The German international indicated that the latest power struggles within the club's leadership had affected the negotiations.

The announcement by the sought-after defender fueled unrest among fans, as talks had dragged on for more than six months, reports Xinhua. Uncertainty has surrounded the Black and Yellow's attempt to restruc-

ture the squad and relaunch the team, despite improved results in recent weeks.

Schlotterbeck's signature and his promotion to team captain, along with a significant pay rise, were expected to signal better times after the club's title hopes had been dashed this season, not to mention the departures of key players such as Julian Brandt, Niklas Sule, and Salih Ozcan, as well as the likely sale of Karim Ademeyi.

Internal struggles within the leadership board recently led to the dismissal of sporting director Sebastian Kehl last week, while his successor, Ole Beek, was announced.

## Palaash Mapara takes sole lead with five straight wins in All India Chess Masters

MUMBAI

Palaash Mapara (5 points) continued his dominant run, scoring his fifth consecutive victory to emerge as the sole leader after Round 5 of the All India Chess Masters (Season 3), being played at the Mumbai Chess Centre, in Mumbai on Wednesday. Playing with the black pieces on the top board, Palaash displayed sharp tactical understanding to outplay Punit Dodiya (4 points).

A strong chasing pack of five players—Shriram Mhasane, Pratik Yadnik, Yashraj Rathi, AGM Rajveer Nahar, and Shreyansh Somaiya—are close behind in joint second place with 4.5 points each. On the second board, Yashraj Rathi and Pratik Yadnik settled for a draw, sharing the point.

## Delhi, AP, Mizoram, Karnataka win on opening day

RAJGIR (BIHAR)

Teams from Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Goa, Delhi, and Karnataka won their respective matches on the opening day of the 16th Hockey India Sub-Junior Men's National Championship 2026 at the Rajgir Hockey Stadium in Rajgir, Bihar, on Wednesday.

In the first match of the day, Hockey Andhra Pradesh defeated Assam Hockey 3-1 in Pool A of Division C. The match was closely contested, with all the goals coming in the second half. Lanka Chaitanya Yesu (32', 45') netted a brace for Hockey Andhra Pradesh, while the team's captain Maduru Ganga Chaitanya (47') scored one goal. For Assam Hockey, Subhankar Saha (42') netted the lone goal.

The second match of the day in the same division witnessed Hockey Mizoram beat Le Puducherry Hockey 5-3. Lalmuansanga J. (2', 14') gave an early lead to Mizoram, following



which Vanlalhmangaiha (30'), the team's captain Joseph Malsawmtlunga (36'), and Jacob Lalawmpuia (43') scored a goal each. Meanwhile, R. Divakar (30', 41') netted a brace, and Madesh (40') scored a goal for Le Puducherry Hockey. In the third match of the day in Pool B of Division C, Goans Hockey edged past Hockey

Jammu and Kashmir 3-2 in a thrilling contest. Karan Kumar (22', 44') scored a brace, while Saurabh Kumar (55') found the back of the net late in the game for Goans Hockey. However, Hockey Jammu and Kashmir almost made a comeback in the match as they scored two quick goals in the dying minutes courtesy of Harmandeep

Singh (58') and Jasjot Singh (59'). The first match in the Division B saw Delhi Hockey overpower Telangana Hockey 7-2 in Pool A. Aryan (30', 54'), Rihan (36'), Luv (41'), Sushant Sehrawat (42', 45') and Ashish (50') netted goals for Delhi, while for Telangana, Captain Jala Yashith Surya (44') and Athram Sambu (60') scored a goal each.

In Pool B of the same division, Hockey Karnataka prevailed 5-0 against Hockey Himachal. Prateek Rajesh Yarakal (23', 43') scored a brace while Pratham Poovaliah M B (9'), A C Daiwik Ponnanna (27'), and captain Adarsh Govind Mutagar also got on the scoresheet.

Chhattisgarh Hockey and Hockey Bihar played out a 2-2 draw in the final game of the day in Pool B of Division B. Om Kumar Yadav (40', 44') scored for Chhattisgarh Hockey, while captain Abhay Shah (41', 53') bagged a brace for Hockey Bihar to round up the day's action.

## World Cup Shotgun Morocco: Kynan, Aashima miss title-round by a point

NEW DELHI

Indian trap shooters Kynan Chennai and Aashima Ahlawat fought hard but missed reaching the finals of the men's and women's trap competitions by an identical one-point margin, at the year's first International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Shotgun leg, currently underway in the Moroccan port city of Tangier.

Kynan shot 119 (24,24,24,24,23) while Aashima tallied 111 (22,22,21,22,24), as they bowed out in 13th and 14th spots, respectively.

Reigning Olympic champion Nathan Hales of Great Britain topped the 83-man qualification field, firing a 123 over two days and five rounds. London Olympic champion Jessica Rossi of Italy topped the women's trap qualifiers with a 121.

The host nation's Driss Haffari took the eighth and final qualification spot in the men's trap with a score of 120, whereas Turkish shooter Rumeysa Pelin Kaya took that final berth in the women's trap, shooting 112.

Among India's other contenders in the men's trap, Bhowneesh Mendiratta (23,24,25,20,23) shot rounds of 20 and 23 on the day, to give up his overnight (23,24,25)



advantage of sixth spot, eventually finishing 39th in the pecking order. Olympian Prithviraj Tondaiman was further down in 57th with a score of 111 (24,21,20,23,23).

Kirti Gupta was the next best Indian among women, securing 32nd position with a score of 107 (20,22,23,21,21). Rajeshwari Kumari shot 106 (24,21,20,21,20) to garner 37th spot in the 59-strong field. The Indian contingent shooting for ranking points only (RPO) saw Md. Asad Sultan shot 108

(22,22,22,20,22) and Sharan Susheel Gyanchand 104 (21,20,21,21,21) in the men's trap, while Shreshtha Sisodia (19,21,23,20,21) and Preeti Rajak (20,20,22,18,23) shot 104 and 103 respectively, in the women's event.

Indians also did not have very good results in the men's and women's skeet competition. The final day on Thursday has the Trap Mixed team event on schedule, with India still in search of a medal in this World Cup leg. The Indian teams are expected to do well in the mixed team event.

## 'Honoured to be part of your team: Leander Paes meets PM, Modi after joining BJP

KOLKATA

A day after joining the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), tennis legend Leander Paes on Wednesday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. "Humbled by the leadership, energy, and passion of Shri Narendra Modi Ji for our nation. Honoured to be part of your team and to serve India under your guidance. Jai Hind Jai Bharat," Paes wrote in his reply to a post on X, formerly Twitter, by Prime Minister Modi after their meeting. Earlier, PM Modi made a social media post about their meeting and said they discussed a wide range of issues.

"Had a great meeting with Shri Leander Paes Ji. India is very proud of its accomplishments in tennis. We discussed a wide range of issues. His passion towards sports and nation-building is truly admirable." PM Modi wrote in his post.

Earlier on Tuesday, Paes joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) just before the upcoming Bengal elections. On Tuesday, Paes expressed his gratitude towards Home Minister Amit Shah for inducting him into the BJP and said he will strive to live up to his faith with dedication and sincerity. In a



post on X, Paes said, "Deeply honoured and grateful to Shri Amit Shah Ji @AmitShah for inducting me into the Bharatiya Janata Party @BJP4India and reposing his trust in me. I will strive to live up to his faith with dedication and sincerity. Till today, I wore the Tiranga on my chest.

Now I carry it on my shoulders too and will work towards empowering our youth and strengthening sports across the nation. Jai Bharat Jai Hind In another social media post, Paes said he is committed to working with a strong focus on youth development and growth of sport in the country after joining the BJP earlier on Tuesday, just ahead of elections in West Bengal.



## Pushpa Dream Is a Gone Case For Dhurandhar 2?

One of the most anticipated films from Bollywood cinema arrived in the form of Dhurandhar 2. But the problem with this film is the lack of adequate push that was expected from the mass Hindi pockets. The ₹1000 to ₹1100 crore net estimate looks realistic and arguably conservative given the current trajectory. After 12 days, Dhurandhar 2 has already clocked roughly ₹872 crore India net and ₹1,044 crore India gross. So net-wise, the film is already deep into the 870s heading into its third weekend, with the IPL threat and weekday softness now kicking in.

The key data point backing your caution is the weekday comparison. On its second Monday, the film collected ₹25.30 crore net, roughly 23% lower than what Dhurandhar Part 1 had collected at the same stage, suggesting the sequel lacks the same weekday legs driven by word of mouth and repeat viewership. That said, the overseas engine is strong and partially offsets the domestic slowdown. Dhurandhar 2 currently sits fourth among all Indian films at the overseas box office without China, having already crossed ₹342 crore abroad.

Putting it together, if the film earns roughly ₹120 to ₹150 crore net from Day 14 onwards across weeks three and four, it lands somewhere between ₹990 crore and ₹1,020 crore net India total. The ₹1,100 crore net ceiling feels like an optimistic scenario



that would need a surprisingly strong third weekend. The ₹1,240 to ₹1,400 crore figures being floated appear to be gross worldwide numbers rather than India net, which would make more sense given the worldwide total was already at ₹1,394 crore by Day 12. So the confusion may partly be a gross vs net mix-up in the discourse. On a pure India net basis, ₹1,000 to ₹1,050 crore looks like the most probable landing zone. This would essentially mean that the Pushpa 2 zone is virtually impossible to touch for Dhurandhar 2 due to the prevailing market conditions.

## Nagarjuna to Romance Aishwarya Rajesh in Milestone 100th Film

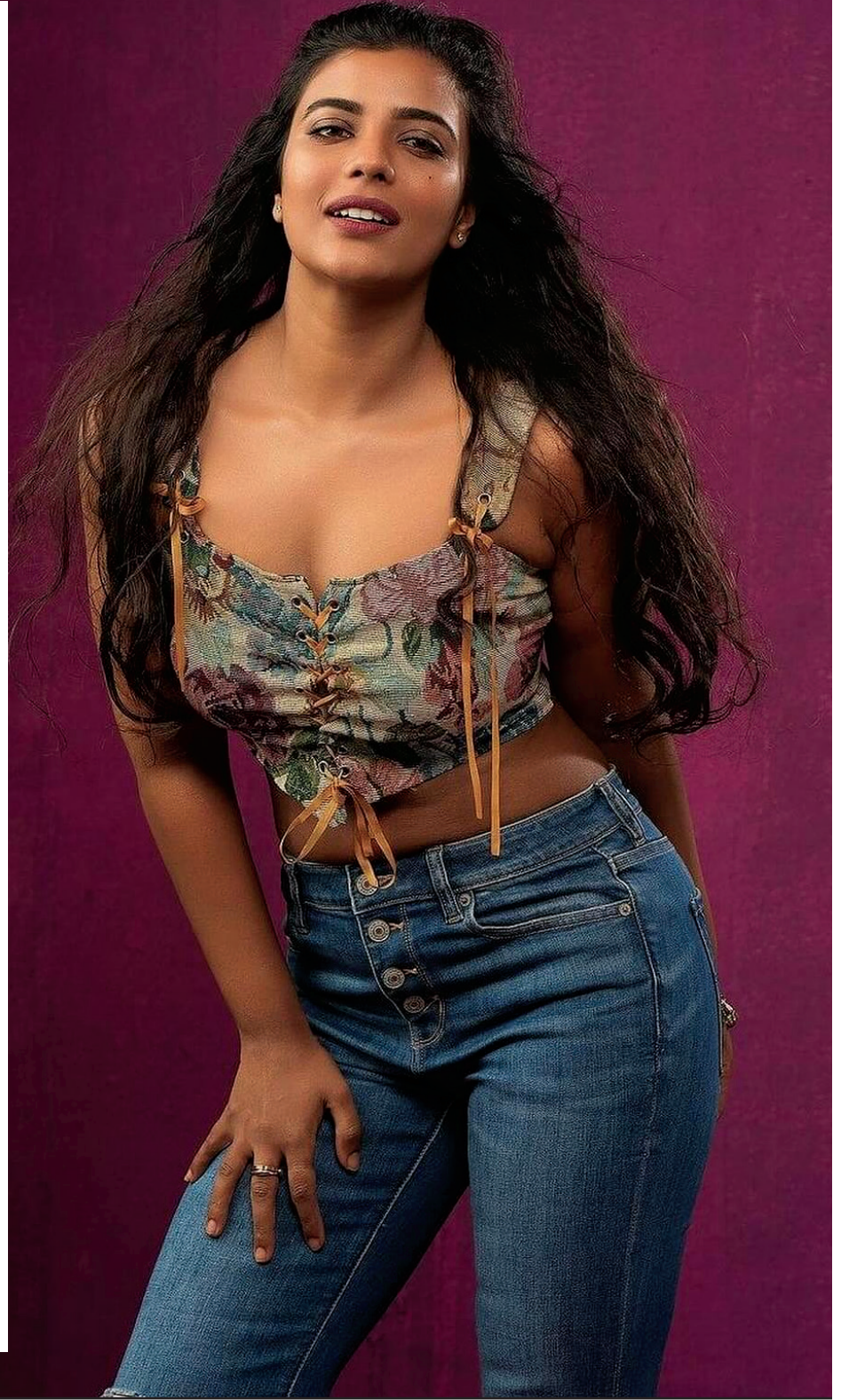


Seasoned star Akkineni Nagarjuna is reportedly set to romance Tamil actress Aishwarya Rajesh in his landmark 100th film. According to sources, Aishwarya has already joined the shoot and will be seen as one of the romantic leads. Adding to the film's appeal, Bollywood actress Tabu is said to be playing a pivotal role in this much-awaited project, which is being directed by Ra Karthick.

Aishwarya Rajesh, who last appeared in the Telugu hit Sankranthiki Vasthunam alongside Venkatesh Daggubati, seems to have landed yet another strong role with this film.

"The shoot is progressing at a brisk pace, with nearly 40-45% of the filming already completed on the outskirts of the city. The film is said to be a commercial entertainer with an emotional core centered on the relationship between a father and daughter," adds the source.

Interestingly, the makers are planning to use de-aging technology to portray Nagarjuna across multiple age phases, ranging from 25 to 60 years. Actors Sushmita Bhatt and Vijayendra are also playing key roles in this big-budget venture backed by Annapurna Studios. On the career front, Nagarjuna's last solo release was Naa Saami Ranga, which performed well at the box office. He also explored darker shades in Coolie alongside Rajinikanth, and played a layered role in Kubera—reflecting his intent to experiment with diverse characters and expand his acting repertoire.



## Prabhas Takes a 10-Day Break Amid a Packed Schedule?

Prabhas, who faced a major setback this year with Raja Saab, is currently juggling multiple high-profile projects including Fauzi directed by Hanu Raghavapudi and Spirit helmed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga. He is also yet to join the sets of the Kalki 2898 AD sequel directed by Nag Ashwin, which recently went on floors. Amid his hectic schedule, Prabhas was spotted departing from Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad, reportedly heading for a short vacation. The actor, who has been working non-stop with tight deadlines, is said to have taken a brief break to unwind.

According to sources, Prabhas is traveling to Italy for a summer holiday and is expected to return in about 10 days. With mounting pressure following the underperformance of Raja Saab and multiple commitments lined up, this break comes at a crucial time. Fauzi is expected to hit the screens later this year, while Spirit is slated for a March 2027 release. There is currently no clarity on the release timeline of the Kalki 2898 AD sequel. "He has been working round the clock and doing one film after another. This break is much needed for him to rejuvenate and return with renewed vigour," a source said.

## SAMANTHA REVEALS A DIFFERENT SIDE OF KEERTHY SURESH

In a recent interaction, Samantha shared a candid and amusing insight, describing Keerthy as the perfect "late-night friend." She revealed that Keerthy becomes incredibly energetic and unpredictable at odd hours—especially around 2 AM. According to Samantha, Keerthy doesn't need any reason to get into that mood; she naturally turns "hyper max," entertaining everyone with her sharp wit and spontaneous humor.

Samantha went on to call Keerthy the funniest person she knows, someone who can instantly lighten the mood and make even the simplest conversations unforgettable. While fans often associate Keerthy with a calm and graceful screen presence, this glimpse into her real-life personality shows her as spontaneous, witty, and full of life. It also reflects the strong bond the two actresses share, with such playful observations rooted in genuine friendship.

On the professional front, Keerthy was last seen in Revolver Rita, which failed to make an impact at the box office. She is now focusing on upcoming projects like Thottam and Raftaar, where she stars alongside Rajkumar Rao. She will also appear in YRF's Akka on Netflix. Meanwhile, Samantha continues to stay busy across formats. After her appearance in Citadel: Honey Bunny, she is gearing up for her Telugu film Maa Inti Bangaram, which she is also producing. She also has the ambitious series Rakt Brahmand in the pipeline, along with potential collaborations in big-budget projects.

