

HYDERABAD HEADLINES

RNI NO.APENG/2010/33328 VOL NO.16 ISSUE NO.: 339 HYDERABAD PAGES: 12 RS. 1/-

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2026

WWW.HYDERABADHEADLINES.COM



U.S. fighter jets shot down in Iran



Arya and Shreyas star as PBKS breach CSK's fortress again

'Couldn't Have Cast Someone Better' Than Sai Pallavi For Sita'



STADIUM 11

BOX -OFFICE 12

BEYOND BORDERS 08

SHORT TAKES



Private schools looting parents with 40% fee hike

Kalvakuntla Kavitha, President of Telangana Jagruti, has raised serious concerns over the steep increase in private school fees, accusing school managements of exploiting parents by imposing sudden hikes of 30% to 40%.

TELANGANA 04



Price, Currency Stress Put RBI on Watch

In December 2025, announcing the monetary policy, Sanjay Malhotra, the Reserve Bank of India Governor said the economy was in a "rare goldilocks period." After all CPI (consumer price index) inflation was benign then, even as growth was strong at around 8%.

MONEY MATTER 09



How can Akhilesh surpass Netaji with the help of PDA?

In the politics of Uttar Pradesh, the name of Mulayam Singh Yadav is always remembered as a great political player, who was not only a teacher but also a skilled wrestler. Emerging from the wrestling arena into the political field, Mulayam had the ability to defeat his opponents with ease.

OPINION 06

EAGLE team briefs Governor on anti-drug initiatives in TG

HYDERABAD, APRIL 3

Sandeep Kumar Shandilya, Director of Narcotics and EAGLE team, along with Vijay Kumar Additional Director General of Police (intelligence) called on the Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla at Lok Bhanu on Friday.

During the meeting, the officials made a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the EAGLE Force and its initiatives aimed at combating the growing menace of drugs. The presentation highlighted various enforcement strategies, awareness

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Stitching the Future

Telangana's Three Trillion Dollar Ambition at ATEXCON 2026 CM Invites Global Investors to Telangana's Eco-Friendly Textile Hubs

"Telangana to be transformed into Textile Capital of South Asia"

CM highlights vision to create green textile hubs in state

Welcomes global textile industry delegates to be part of Telangana success story

Hyderabad, 3 April: Chief Minister Sri A Revanth Reddy, along with Hon'ble Ministers D. Sridhar Babu and Tummala Nageswara Rao, inaugurated the 13th Asian Textile Conference (ATEXCON 2026), a premier global summit for the textile and apparel industry jointly organized by Telangana government and Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI). The Chief Minister highlighted Telangana's vision to become the textile capital of South Asia by 2047. He said



the government can offer industrialists and investors the best of infrastructure, land, power, water, incentives, and quick execution.

As part of Telangana Rising vision and the goal to become one trillion dollar economy by 2034 and three trillion dollars economy by 2047, we have policies that can match the best globally and most importantly, we have the best human resources, the Chief Minister said.

Mentioning Telangana's

famous Pochampally Ikats, Gadwal sarees, Warangal durries and the weaves of Narayanpet, the Chief Minister stated that textile is not just an industry but a lifeline for the state's weaving communities.

"There are historic reasons why Telangana is a leader in textiles. We are one of the largest producers of cotton in India. Our cotton is known globally for quality and richness."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

NDDB, Mother Dairy chairmen call on Revanth to discuss dairy growth

HYDERABAD, APRIL 3

National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) Chairman Dr. Minesh Shah and Mother Dairy (Delhi) Chairman Jayatheertha Chary met Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy at his Jubilee Hills residence on Friday. The meeting focused on the development and expansion of the dairy sector in the state, with discussions centered on strengthening infrastructure, improving milk production, and supporting dairy farmers.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

"Congress govt prioritising public welfare, development"



HYDERABAD, APRIL 3

Minister for Labour and Mines G. Vivek Venkatswamy stated that the Congress government in Telangana is implementing wide-ranging programmes with a clear focus on public welfare and development. He noted that under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, several welfare schemes are being successfully implemented across the state.

The Minister said the party leadership is actively visiting every district to understand people's is-

suess, and TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud is touring across the state to strengthen party activities. Vivek alleged that during the previous government, DMFT funds meant for Mancherial district were diverted to other regions, but clarified that the present Congress government has ensured that these funds are fully allocated to the district.

He criticised the previous regime, stating that large buildings were constructed primarily for commissions rather than public benefit.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

SEVEN DRUG CONSUMERS APPREHENDED IN RAID AT KONDAPUR

HYDERABAD, APRIL 3

In a late-night operation on April 2-3, 2026, the EAGLE team of the Telangana State Task Force, along with Cyberabad Narcotics Police and Gachibowli Police, conducted a raid at "Quake Arena Pub" in Kondapur and apprehended seven individuals for drug consumption. Acting on credible intelligence about drug use at a special party featuring an international DJ, the authorities formed six teams to carry out a surprise operation without disrupting the event. Out of 64 suspected individuals, selected persons were subjected to testing using ABONN urine drug test kits. Seven individuals tested positive for substances including ganja (THC), benzodiazepines, and methamphetamine.

The individuals reportedly admitted to drug use, and their details have been documented. Authorities stated that parents

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

CLEAN MUSI FIRST

FGG OPPOSES RELIGIOUS CONSTRUCTIONS IN POLLUTED RIVER

HYDERABAD, APRIL 3

M. Padmanabha Reddy, President of the Forum for Good Governance (FGG), urged Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to prioritise cleaning of the Musi River before undertaking construction of religious structures.

In a letter written to the CM, the FGG president while appreciating the government's initiative to rejuvenate the river, expressed concern over plans to construct temples, mosques, gurudwaras, and churches without first addressing the severe pollution in the river.

The Chief Minister recently laid the foundation stone for a temple at Manchirevula on March 29, 2026. There are also plans to install a 108-foot stat-

ue of Lord Shiva in the middle of the river and complete the proposed Omkareshwara temple within two years.

The FGG highlighted that multiple attempts to clean the river have failed over the years despite significant expenditure. In 2001, a Rs.405 crore pollution abatement project yielded limited results. A rubber dam constructed by GHMC at a cost of Rs.50 crore was later dismantled due to ineffectiveness. Subsequent proposals, including the Musi Phase II project (Rs.750 crore) and a comprehensive Rs.17,130 crore plan in 2012, were either not approved or found defective.

The Musi River Front Development Corporation (MRDCL), established in 2017 to imple-

ment a comprehensive plan, has reportedly made little progress in cleaning the river.

The FGG noted that due to encroachments, the river has narrowed significantly and resembles a drain in many stretches. Untreated sewage, industrial discharge, and pharmaceutical waste have severely polluted the river, making it toxic and unfit for aquatic life, agriculture or human use. The National Green Tribunal has classified it as a priority polluted stretch.

Given the gravity of the situation, the FGG stressed that constructing places of worship in a polluted river is inappropriate. It strongly urged the government to prioritise cleaning efforts before undertaking any construction activities.

CLOCK IS TICKING AND BJP IS STILL DECIDING: TN NOMINATION DRAMA ENTERS FINAL LAP

A COMPRESSED ELECTION CALENDAR, POLITICAL HESITATION, AND LAST-MINUTE CALCULATIONS PUSH THE BJP INTO A HIGHSTAKES SCRAMBLE AS THE FILING DEADLINE LOOMS LARGE.



BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

A severely restricted nomination window in Tamil Nadu has exposed the BJP to a high-pressure situation, with candidate selection still unresolved just days before the deadline. The party's delay, despite central oversight, raises questions about prepared-

ness, alliance management, and electoral strategy in a politically sensitive state.

The schedule notified by the Election Commission of India looked routine on paper. March 30 to April 6 for nominations. Clean, procedural, predictable. But reality intervened. Four holidays cut straight through the middle of that window,

reducing what should have been a weeklong exercise into a four-day operational sprint. Add to that the rigid daily filing slot of 11 AM to 3 PM, and what remains is not a schedule, it is a bottleneck.

This is not a minor inconvenience. This is structural pressure.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

NAGARJUNA ULTRA EPOXY TMT BAR

STRONG EPOXY FOR ANY SEASON • ANY REASON



TOLL-FREE NUMBER: 040 45474612

ENQUIRE NOW



Grand Eid Milap celebrations-2026@ Barkas



HYDERABAD: It was a wonderfully lively Thursday (April 2) evening that marked Eid Milap celebrations-2026. Jointly organised by Sports Village and Deccan Democratic Club, the main feature of the select gathering at Habeeb Mohsin Residence in Barkas, was the presence of His Excellency Orhan Yalman Okan, Consul General Turkiye, Hyderabad, Telangana, in whose honour the event was organised. The presence of His Excellency's family and H.E. Dr Nawab Mir Nasir Ali Khan, Hon Consul of the Republic of Kazakhstan, was the icing on the cake. The guests of honour included Mr M Purushotham Reddy, RTO Hyderabad, and veteran journalist Mr M. A. Majid. Winners of the 26th Hyderabad Kesari Wrestling Championship 2026, under the auspices of Bamas Akhada Professional Wrestling Club, were felicitated on the occasion. The event was coordinated by Deccan Democratic Club President Janab Habeeb Mohsin, Sports Village CEO Mr Mohd Shamsuddin and Ms Ramya Reddy.

Army aspirants get 10 more days to apply

HYDERABAD: The Indian Army has extended the registration deadline for Recruitment Year 2027 from April 1 to April 10, 2026. The move aims to give more eligible youth (aspiring candidates) a chance to apply via the official portal. All candidates are advised to utilise this additional window and complete their application process well before the revised deadline ends through www.joinindianarmy.nic.in. Candidates are urged to verify age, education and physical eligibility before applying. Officials warned aspirants to avoid middlemen, stressing that selection is purely merit-based and transparent.

Harish accuses Revanth of misleading people on key promises

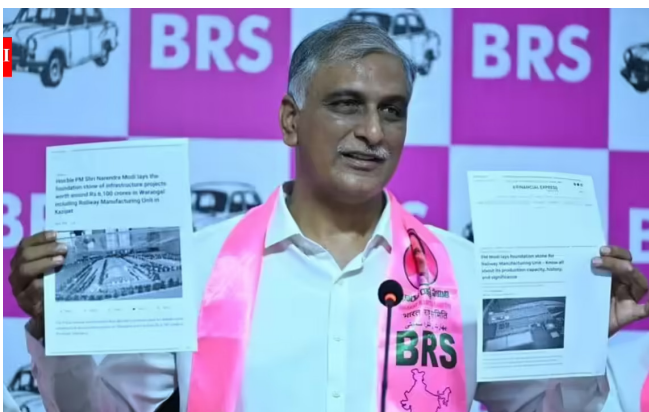
HYDERABAD

Former Minister and BRS Deputy Floor Leader Harish Rao launched a sharp attack on Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy for misleading the people regarding numerous commitments.

He charged the Chief Minister with betraying tribal communities, disregarding the needs of farmers, providing misleading information regarding job opportunities, and neglecting the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Speaking to the media in Kodangal on Friday, Harish Rao said it was deeply ironic that Revanth Reddy was travelling to other states and speaking about governance and welfare, while in his own constituency of Kodangal, ST communities continue to face injustice, land-related harassment, and official neglect.

Referring to the region's tribal identity and sentiment, the BRS MLA said the Lokamasand Maharaj Bavoji temple, which is considered sacred by tribal communities in the area, had once remained difficult to access due to the absence of proper connectivity. He said it was during the BRS government that, with the efforts of former MLA Narendra Reddy, then Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao sanctioned ₹8 crore for a bridge across the stream, making access possible.



He further said that ₹80 lakh was sanctioned by KCR for the temple and ₹50 lakh for a Banjara Bhavan, demonstrating the BRS government's commitment to the dignity and welfare of tribal communities.

Harish Rao said that despite decades of struggle by tribal organisations such as the Lambada Porata Samithi, earlier governments had failed to respond meaningfully. He said it was only under KCR's leadership that 3,100 tribal hamlets were converted into gram panchayats, a major step in protecting tribal self-respect and decentralised governance.

He also recalled that the BRS government had officially celebrated Sevalal Maharaj Jayanti, increased ST reservations from 6% to 10%, distributed pattas for six lakh acres of podu land, and

provided reservations for SCs and STs in market committees and wine shop allotments.

Harish Rao said it was the BRS government that ensured Mission Bhagiratha drinking water connections to tribal tandas in Kodangal and also brought degree colleges for girls, helping improve access to education in backward areas.

In contrast, he said the Congress government has not done justice even in representation, stating that not a single Lambada leader has been made a minister in the present government so far.

He accused the Congress government of completely failing to honour the promises it made to SC and ST communities. Harish Rao said the government had shown ₹2,730 crore in the budget for the ST Corporation, but had spent only ₹52 crore, exposing

what he called the hollowness of the government's commitment.

The BRS MLA said that in the last two and a half years, not a single meaningful rupee of support has reached ST beneficiaries, and added that ST students are not receiving fee reimbursement.

Harish Rao accused Revanth Reddy of bending before SC and ST communities during elections for votes, only to turn against them after coming to power. He alleged that tribal lands are being taken away in Kodangal, and that members of the ST community are being subjected to harassment and police excesses.

Harish Rao also questioned Revanth Reddy's public claims in other states, especially in Kerala, where the Chief Minister has reportedly been speaking about the implementation of welfare guarantees in Telangana. Throwing an open challenge to the Chief Minister, Harish Rao said he was speaking from Kodangal itself, and asked Revanth Reddy to identify even a single village in Kodangal where 100% farm loan waiver has been completed.

He also took a swipe at Revanth Reddy's campaign politics outside Telangana, saying that people in other states, including Kerala, are capable of seeing through exaggerated claims, especially when the ground reality in Telangana.

From Sacrifice to Solidarity: Sanathnagar's Good Friday Journey



By Samudrala Kiran Correspondent

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI

In Sanathnagar, Good Friday was observed with deep reflection as the Christian community gathered for a solemn Cross Rally led by the Sanathnagar Christian Youth, under Gershom Prakash. The procession began at Emmanuel M.B. Church, where prayers of blessing and contemplation set a reverent tone for the day ahead, inviting attendees to ponder sacrifice, forgiveness, and compassion.

The rally moved through the streets in quiet, prayerful silence, drawing the attention of onlookers who paused to reflect on the suffering and message of Christ. Evocative reenactments of Jesus carrying the cross provided a tangible reminder of the biblical narrative, resonating with people across ages and denominations

and underscoring themes of endurance and humility. A notable display of interdenominational unity brought together churches from Marlin Memorial Methodist, Baptist, CSI, Independent United, Zion, and Bethel Prayer House. The gathering stood as a powerful testament to shared faith and harmony, transcending differences in a collective observance of this holy day.

Led by a dedicated team of supervisors including Rev. K.J. Clement and M. Gershom Prakash, the organizers ensured a smooth, respectful procession. Rev. A. Srinivas spoke of Christ's sacrifice as a universal call to love and mercy, reminding the community that the true tribute lies in living the path of compassion every day. The event left a lasting impression of peace, prompting ongoing reflection and a renewed commitment to kindness in Sanathnagar.

"Undeclared censorship": IJU slams govt over content takedowns

VIJAYAWADA / CHANDIGARH

The Indian Journalists Union (IJU) has strongly objected to the recent takedown orders and blocking of content posted by journalists, independent digital media platforms, satirists, and fact-checkers critical of the government, terming it an "undeclared

censorship" on freedom of speech and expression.

In a statement, IJU President Balwinder Singh Jammu and Secretary-General D. Soma Sundar alleged that the blocking of content and accounts associated with Mohammed Zubair, Molitics, National Dastak, 4PM News, and stand-up comedian Rajeev

Nigam, among others, reflects a blatant misuse of executive power to silence critical voices and stifle independent journalism. They said such opaque and selective actions amount to digital censorship and constitute a direct assault on the freedom of speech guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. "The Centre cannot hide behind

secretive procedures and vague legal provisions to target dissenting voices. The country cannot remain silent while critical journalism is throttled through backdoor censorship. This is a dangerous and unacceptable attack on democracy, media freedom, and the people's right to know," the statement said.

The IJU demanded immediate with-

drawal of all arbitrary takedown orders, full disclosure of the grounds for such actions, and an end to the intimidation of journalists and independent media platforms. The Union reaffirmed its commitment to stand with journalists and media organisations facing censorship and to resist any attempt to muzzle the press.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

TN NOMINATION DRAMA ENTERS FINAL LAP

FROM PAGE 1

And it is now testing the organisational discipline of every party, particularly the Bharatiya Janata Party.

BJP'S DELAY: STRATEGY OR STUMBLE

As of now i.e. Hrs. 1.00 AM on Friday, 3rd April 2026, the BJP has still not placed its cards on the table. No final candidate list. No clarity for ground workers. No time buffer. Union Minister Piyush Goyal is stationed in Chennai, engaged in what insiders describe as "final-stage consultations." That phrase, repeated often in political circles, usually signals unresolved disagreements. State unit chief Nainar Nagendran has attempted to project confidence, indicating that nominations will begin on April 4. But parallel signals suggest a fallback to April 6, the last permissible day. That is not strategy. That is compulsion. Because when a national party with central leadership involvement is still undecided at this stage, it reflects internal friction, not tactical brilliance.

THE MUHURAT FACTOR VS POLITICAL REALITY

In Tamil Nadu's political culture, timing is not just administrative. It carries symbolic weight. Candidates often prefer auspicious windows, carefully avoiding Rahu Kalam and other inauspicious periods. April 4 offers a relatively favourable daytime slot. April 6, however, presents a narrower, less convenient window. But here lies the contradiction. A party that delays its decisions cannot afford the luxury of astrological precision. The clock does not align itself with the panchang. It obeys the Election Commission. So the BJP now faces a bina-

ry choice: follow the muhurat or meet the mandate.

GROUND REALITY: CANDIDATES LEFT IN LIMBO

Every hour of delay has consequences on the ground. Candidates need time to: Mobilise local cadres; Finalise campaign logistics; Submit legally compliant paperwork; Signal seriousness to voters. A last-minute announcement compresses all of this into a frantic rush. It creates uncertainty. It weakens early momentum. And in a state like Tamil Nadu, where political narratives are deeply entrenched, late entry is rarely rewarded.

ALLIANCE MANAGEMENT UNDER STRAIN

The BJP is not operating in isolation. It is part of a broader NDA arrangement. Seat-sharing agreements are not merely arithmetic. They involve negotiation, ego management, and local equations. Delays at the top ripple downward, affecting allies who are equally bound by the same unforgiving calendar. When coordination slips, perception follows. And perception, in electoral politics, often becomes reality.

DEADLINES DO NOT NEGOTIATE

This election cycle in Tamil Nadu has exposed a simple truth. Time is the only actor that does not bend. The Election Commission's clock is running with mechanical precision. Political calculations, however complex, must eventually submit to that discipline. For the BJP, the next 48 hours are not just about announcing candidates. They are about demonstrating control, coherence, and credibility. Because in elections, hesitation is not neutral. It is visible. It is measurable. And more often than not, it is costly.

Seven drug consumers apprehended in raid at Kondapur

FROM PAGE 1

or guardians would be informed, and efforts would be made to ensure the individuals undergo de-addiction programmes. A case has been registered at Gachibowli Police Station under various sections of the NDPS Act, 1985. Further investigation is underway. Police confirmed that the foreign artist Alexander (Spain) and DJ Kayvee tested negative. The EAGLE (Elite Action Group for Drug Law Enforcement) Force appealed to youth and students to avoid drugs, warning of serious consequences, including crime and family distress. Parents were urged to remain vigilant about the activities of their children and to share information with the EAGLE team. Citizens can share information with authorities via phone: 8712671111 or toll-free helpline: 1908.

EAGLE team briefs Governor on anti-drug initiatives in TG

FROM PAGE 1

programmes, and inter-agency coordination efforts to address substance abuse. The Governor was apprised of ongoing measures to curb drug trafficking and prevent its spread, particularly among the youth. M. Dana Kishore, Special Chief Secretary to the Governor, was also present on the occasion.



NDDB, Mother Dairy chairmen call on Revanth to discuss dairy growth

FROM PAGE 1

Several key leaders and officials were present, including Bhubanagiri MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, Alair MLA and Government Whip Beerla Ailaiah, Telangana Dairy Development Cooperative Federation Chairman Gutha Amit Reddy, Principal Secretary Ilambarthi, and Mother Dairy Chairman Madhusudan Reddy.



STITCHING THE FUTURE

FROM PAGE 1

the globe: "If you have a vision, we are your perfect partners for global success. Together, we can create an end-to-end textile ecosystem which can be a game-changer for the world." The Chief Minister explained that Telangana can be a major partner across the global value chain. From the cotton fields of Telangana to fashion shows in London, New York, Paris, Milan, Tokyo or Dubai, we will be your partners across the value chain, he added.

"Hyderabad is a film production destination for not only India but the world. Recently, Netflix opened Eyeline studios here." We have Tollywood and Bollywood using Hyderabad as a base - and now, Hollywood has made its debut. We will encourage film industry to source their fashion also from us. The CM expressed the government's vision to create green textile hubs, giving top priority to environmental sustainability. We will be skilling our youth, especially women's work force, so they can combine traditional knowledge with the latest tools in

designing, cutting and stitching, he explained. He laid out the success story of Telangana in producing vaccines and medicines for the entire world. The CM also highlighted that Telangana now is a manufacturing hub for Apple Ear-pods, stating that the state now aims at manufacturing fashion wear for the world.

The ATEXCON conference, structured around the theme "Reimagining the Future of Global Textiles", includes thematic panel discussions. The sessions will be focused on three areas - Fibres & Fabrics, Manufacturing & Supply Chains (AI/Automation), and Markets & Trade. Some of the prominent business leaders who attended ATEXCON 2026 were Mr Kihak Sung, Chairman, YoungOne Corporation, CITI Chairman Shri Ashwin Chandran, CITI Deputy Chairman Shri Dinesh Nolkha, Dr S N Modani, Sangam India Vice Chairman & Chairman, Rajasthan Textile Mills Association, and Mr RCM Reddy, CEO & MD, School Net India.

"Congress govt prioritising public welfare, development"

FROM PAGE 1

The Minister highlighted that schemes such as Indiramma housing and 200 units of free electricity are directly benefiting the poor. He added that Indiramma houses have been sanctioned not only in Chennai but also in Siddipet. Vivek Venkatswamy stated that several welfare programmes are being implemented keeping in mind the needs of the people, and adequate funds have been allocated in the recent state budget.

He also announced that the Rajiv Yuva Vikasam scheme will be launched soon. The Minister called upon party workers to take the government's schemes and programmes to the grassroots level and explain



them to the people. He assured that the party will support and recognize those who work towards strengthening it.

Vivek further stated that despite the financial strain caused by heavy borrowings during the previous government, the current administration is continuing governance with a focus on public welfare. Responding on the Kaleshwaram Project, he said that despite spending lakhs of crores, the results have not met expectations. It is a failed project, he said. The programme was held at MNR Gardens in Kyathanpalli Municipality, with the presence of TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud, Minister Juppally Krishna Rao, Mancheril MLA Prem Sagar Rao, and other senior leaders.

SCR Strengthening Rail Connectivity and Advancing Railway Infrastructure

- Will help in reducing the congestion and travel time!

HYDERABAD

The Railway Network on the South Central Railway stands as Gate way for the South India connecting the Southern and Northern parts of India. The Rail line from Gudur to Balharshah acts as a Grand Trunk route with continuous flow of both freight and coaching trains. The Rail line from Kazipet to Wadi Via Secunderabad is also treated as high density network. The Major Rail network over the Zone is highly saturated. In order to reduce the congestion and to ease the traffic, the Zone has laid special focus on strengthening the infrastructure during the Financial Year 2025-26.

Accordingly, the Zone has achieved track addition of 194.57Kms, which includes, New Lines, Doubling and Tripling. The details are:

New Lines: 35.93 Kms between Mallavaram - Kanigiri

Doubling - 78,768 Kms: Panyam - Nandyal (13.488 Kms), Basar - Navipet (17 Kms), Bypass line at Kazipet (21.46 Kms), Bypass line at Wadi (22.70 Kms), 'Y' Connectivity at Tandur (1.95 Kms) and Bypass line at Peddapalli (2.17 Kms).

Tripling - 79.872 Kms: Balharshah - Manikgarh (6.91 Kms), Rechni Road - Bellampalli (9.636 Kms), Bellampalli



- Mandamarri (7.52 Kms), Motumari - Madhira (5.80 Kms), Mahabubabad - Nekkonda (30.416 Kms) and Khammam - Dornakal (19.59 Kms).

Electrification : 325 Track Kms of Electrification has been completed during 2025-26.

Due to the consistent efforts of the Zone, the Third line works on the important Grand Trunk Route from Gudur via Vijayawada, Kazipet to Balharshah is almost completed for a distance of around 700 Kms except small stretches between Peddavaddlapudi - Krishna Canal for a distance of 7 Kms, Dornakal - Mahabubabad for a distance of 20 Kms, SirpurKhagaznagar - Asifabad for a distance of 11 Kms.

This will help in smooth flow of both passenger and freight traffic from

South to North. Further, construction of Bypass lines at Kazipet, Wadi and Peddapalli the crucial and the important junctions across the Zone will also immensely help in regulating the traffic without any delay. The 'Y' connectivity constructed at Tandur will improve the freight traffic originated around Tandur segment and also a coaching movement on the important Mumbai Line. Addition of New Line between Mallavaram and Kanigiri section will give boost to the remote villages across the Rail Line by bringing them into Rail Network.

In Order to continue the same tempo towards infrastructure growth the Budget allocations in the current fiscal (2026-27) is also higher side as compared with last FY. A Capex of Rs. 13,026 Crores has been allotted as

against Rs. 11,012 Crores in the Last FY with an increase of 18.3%. Towards New Lines Rs. 1315 Crs allotted, for doubling Rs. 5083 Crores for Track Renewals Rs. 1908 crores, and for Traffic Facility Rs. 403 crores, for Road Safety works Rs 683 crores has been allotted.

Shri Sanjay Kumar Srivastava, General Manager, SCR appreciated the collective efforts of the Officers and Staff of the Zone in enhancing the infrastructure, especially Construction, Engineering, Electrical, Signal & Telecom and Operating Departments. He opined that the enhanced budgetary allocation in the current financial year will help the Zone in further strengthening the Rail Infrastructure over the Zone. He advised the team SCR to continue the same momentum.



A Protest demonstration was held at McDonald's Outlet in Kalasiguda

HYDERABAD

A protest demonstration was held at the McDonald's outlet in Kalasiguda, Hyderabad by Indian People in Solidarity with Palestine (IPSP) as part of the nationwide Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) campaign in solidarity with Palestine. Along with IPSP, several other organisations such as Disha Students' Organization and Naujawan Bharat Sabha also participated in the demonstration. Similar demonstrations were carried out across cities including Mumbai, Delhi, Rohtak, Chandigarh, Vishakhapatnam, Vijayawada, and Patna, marking a coordinated nationwide call for boycott.

The protest included striking posters and artwork, slogan-raising, pamphlet distribution, and a creative satirical act that drew significant public attention. In the act, members of IPSP, Yashwant and Mahipal, personified products of McDonald's and Coca-Cola, boasting about the gains they had made through their complicity in genocide and their eagerness to profit further. Through this performance, they conveyed the ways in which these companies are complicit in the ongoing assault on Gaza. McDonald's franchises in Israel have pro-

vided thousands of free and discounted meals to Israeli military personnel, while Coca-Cola operates factories and distribution centers in illegal Israeli settlements, and has maintained consistent support for Israel since 1966 and was honored in 1997 by Israeli state institutions for defying the Arab League boycott. The act emphasized how such corporations sustain the occupation economy and its war crimes, driven by profit despite widespread human rights violations.

Sreeja from IPSP elaborated on the ongoing situation in Palestine. Over 72,000 Palestinians, including women and children, have been killed. Hundreds of thousands have been injured, displaced, or are missing. There has been large-scale destruction of homes, hospitals, and essential infrastructure in Gaza, along with the detention of over 9,300 Palestinians under brutal conditions. Sreeja also pointed to a recent draconian law passed by the Israeli Knesset that mandates the execution of convicted Palestinians within 90 days of sentencing. Due to forced confessions obtained under duress and torture, the conviction rate for Palestinians stands at 96%. She highlighted that, in such an escalating ca-

tastrophe, the participation of the people of India in the BDS movement becomes crucial, noting that India itself endured nearly 200 years of colonial rule and fought for its liberation. She noted that Modi government's bonhomie with the terrorist state of Israel and USA even during their criminal acts of aggression in Palestine, Iran and West Asia at large is a shameful move that does not represent the Indian people at large.

The protest received a positive response from passersby, many of whom stopped to listen, engaged in discussions, and expressed solidarity. Pamphlets outlining real history of the Israeli occupation and the destruction of Palestine, exposing the false narrative propagated by the fascist Indian media which sympathises with the Zionist apartheid state, explaining the objectives of the BDS movement, and appealing to people with a conscience to join the movement, were distributed.

The demonstration concluded with a call to intensify the boycott of all companies complicit in the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people. Indian People in Solidarity with Palestine will organise more such protests and continue to reach out to more and more people.

GITAM Scholar Earns Ph.D. in Chemistry

HYDERABAD

GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, proudly congratulates Dr. Durga Vara Prasadu Botla on earning his Ph.D. in Chemistry under the guidance of Dr. Shiva Kumar Koppula, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, School of Science.

Dr. Botla's research, titled "Design, Synthesis and Biological Evaluation of Triazole/Oxadiazole-Linked Hybrid Heterocyclic Scaffolds," focused on developing novel heterocyclic compounds with potential anticancer

and antibacterial applications. His work involved the synthesis and biological evaluation of several hybrid heterocyclic molecules incorporating pharmacologically significant structures such as pyrimidines, thiazoles, triazoles, and oxadiazoles.

The study led to the development of new compounds that demonstrated promising in-vitro anticancer ac-



tivity against breast (MCF-7) and lung (A-549) cancer cell lines, with some showing superior cytotoxicity compared to standard drugs. The research also identified compounds with strong antibacterial and biofilm-inhibiting properties against human pathogenic bacteria, along with notable activity against Salmonella typhimurium and

Escherichia coli. These findings highlight the potential of the newly synthesized hybrid heterocyclic scaffolds for further development as therapeutic agents in anticancer and antibacterial drug discovery.

The GITAM leadership, including Prof. D. S. Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor; D.V.V.S.R. Varma, Resident Director; Dr. M. Reza, Principal, School of Science; and Dr. Gousia Begum, Head, Department of Chemistry, congratulated Dr. Botla and appreciated his contribution to impactful scientific research.

Modi must speak on global conflicts, says CPI leader Narayana



HANAMKONDA

K. Narayana, Chairman of the CPI National Control Commission, on Friday demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi break his silence on global conflicts, particularly U.S. military actions, which are harming India's interests.

Addressing a press conference at CPI district office in Hanamkonda, Narayana criticized the policies of U.S. President Donald Trump, alleging they have disrupted fuel supplies and adversely affected India's agricultural exports, including fruits, vegetables and rice. He said the fallout has triggered price rise, worsening the burden on common people.

He also took aim at the Centre's diplomatic approach, accusing Modi of not engaging directly with nations involved in conflicts, while holding talks with countries like Iran, which is inappropriate. He pointed out that millions of people across all 50 states in the United States are protesting against Trump, yet Modi remains passive and ineffective.

Besides, Narayana criticized Union Home Minister Amit Shah for alleged remarks against communists and Maoists, assert-

ing that the Communist Party played a key role in India's freedom struggle. Referring to revolutionary balladeer Gaddar, he questioned the Centre's stance, highlighting contradictions in statements by top leaders.

He alleged that the surrendered Maoists are being denied dignity and freedom, and demanded they be allowed to live peacefully and integrate into democratic society. Narayana reiterated that it was the CPI that first advocated for Maoists to join the democratic mainstream and had called for a ceasefire and suspension of operations like "Operation Kagar." He appealed to former Maoists not to join 'bourgeois parties', but instead become part of the Left movement, noting that they have sacrificed nearly 40 years of their lives. On social issues, Narayana opposed the denial of Scheduled Caste status to Dalit Christians, stating caste identity does not change with religion. He also criticized the Centre's SIR initiative, alleging it undermines the federal structure.

CPI state assistant secretary Takkallapalli Srinivasa Rao, district secretary Karre Bikshapathi, state executive member Nedururi Jyothi and others were present at the press conference.



Beware the shine: CP Sajjanar warns against toxic mangoes

HYDERABAD

City Police Commissioner V.C. Sajjanar has urged the residents to stay alert against chemically ripened Mangoes this summer.

In an advisory, he cautioned the consumers not to be misled by bright-looking fruits or labels like "organic" without verification. He warned that some traders use harmful substances like calcium carbide to artificially ripen the mangoes, posing serious health risks. Sajjanar noted that naturally ripened mangoes lack uniform colour, unlike chemically treated ones that appear shiny outside but remain raw inside. Health experts link such fruits to nausea, vomiting, throat irritation and long-term neurological and respiratory issues. H-FAST was maintaining a strict vigil on the sale of adulterated mangoes and legal action was being initiated against those who violated the rules, he noted. The Hyderabad City Police, along with H-FAST teams, are monitoring markets and taking action against the offenders. Citizens are advised to report suspicious sales via Dial 100 or the helpline - 8712661212.

17,957 Building and Layout Permissions Issued by GHMC in FY 2025-26: GHMC

HYDERABAD

GHMC stated that building permissions, occupancy certificates, and layout approvals are being processed through the BuildNow portal. In a statement released on Friday, it mentioned that the BuildNow portal was officially launched by the Chief Minis-

ter in March 2025. Applications are being examined under instant registration, instant approval, and single-window systems, and permissions are being granted accordingly.

A total of 15,536 building permissions were issued, of which 12,014 were under instant approval, 2,515 under

the single-window system, and 972 under instant registration. Additionally, 29 layout permissions were granted. During the last financial year, 2,427 occupancy certificates were issued.

Revenue of ₹1,172.08 crore was generated through building permissions and occupancy certificates, showing an in-

crease compared to ₹1,138.44 crore in the previous year.

Corporation-wise collections include ₹538.09 crore by CMC, ₹436.47 crore by GHMC, and ₹198.24 crore by MMC. GHMC stated that the BuildNow portal has improved the speed and transparency of the approval process.

RAJAPUSHPA
PROPERTIES PVT. LTD
Shaping Innovations

WHEREVER THERE IS A DREAM,
THERE IS RAJAPUSHPA

18 YEARS OF XCELLENCE	48.67+ MILLION SQ.FT. PORTFOLIO	11.2 MILLION SQ.FT COMPLETED PROJECTS	37.47 MILLION SQ.FT UNDER CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS	18000+ HAPPY RESIDENTS	20+ PROJECTS
-----------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------------------	---	------------------------	--------------

ONGOING PROJECTS

RAJAPUSHPA PROVINCIA NARSINGI	RAJAPUSHPA IMPERIA TELLAPUR	RAJAPUSHPA PRASANTHIA KOKKAPET	RAJAPUSHPA AURELIA TELLAPUR	RAJAPUSHPA CASA LUXURA NEOPOLIS	RAJAPUSHPA INFINA MANCHIREVULA	RAJAPUSHPA SKYRA NEOPOLIS
-------------------------------	-----------------------------	--------------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------------

766 000 55 00 | www.rajapushpa.in

SHORT TAKES

Hyd to witness rare 'Maha Shatavadhan' event on April 5

HYDERABAD: Young Jain monks will showcase extraordinary memory skills at a 'Maha Shatavadhan' event on April 5 at TSRTC Kalyana Mandapam. Organized by the Jain International Vidyapeeth, the event will feature monks answering 200 questions in sequence and randomly - a rare intellectual feat. Open to the public, the event aims to inspire youth and highlight India's ancient traditions of mental discipline and concentration.

Kavitha hints at re-viving TRS' name for her new party

HYDERABAD: Former MP and Telangana Jagruti president K. Kavitha has sparked political buzz by hinting that she may name her new political party after the original 'Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS)'. She said the "TRS" title is now "free to use" implying that anyone is now at liberty to adopt it, and revealed she would soon launch a party with an "old name and a new agenda". Talking to newsmen, Kavitha asserted that her party would follow the ideology of late Professor K. Jayashankar and took a swipe at BRS, calling it "dormant". She believes adopting the same name for her political party would work in her favor - tapping into the public sentiment and garnering widespread support.

Mini truck donated to TTD



TIRUMALA: Ashok Leyland donated a Dost Plus XL mini truck worth Rs 8.75 lakhs to TTD on Friday morning. On this occasion, the company's Area Manager, Mohammed Nazeeruddin performed special prayers for the vehicle in front of the Srivari Temple and handed over the vehicle keys to TTD Additional Executive Officer Ch. Venkaiah Chowdary.

Revanth inspects ongoing restoration works at Tummidu Kunta lake

HYDERABAD: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy inspected the restoration works of the Tummidu Kunta lake in Madhapur, Hyderabad on Friday. The Chief Minister's visit to Tummidu Kunta occurred while he was returning from a textile summit held at HITEC, where he had previously participated. During his visit, he assessed the development of the ongoing restoration works by touring the lake's perimeter. The Tummidu Kunta Lake had previously diminished to a mere 14 acres due to encroachments. As part of the efforts aimed at restoring the lake, encroachments have been removed, allowing the lake to be expanded to a total area of 28.05 acres.

"BRS has lost relevance in Telangana": TPCC chief Mahesh Goud

HYDERABAD
TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud on Friday launched a scathing attack on opposition parties, declaring that the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has "lost its relevance" in Telangana and the BJP has no foothold in the state. Addressing mediapersons here at Gandhi Bhavan, he claimed internal rifts have weakened the opposition BRS, pointing to tensions within K. Chandrashekar Rao's family. He alleged a power struggle between K.T. Rama Rao and T. Harish Rao, while KCR has "withdrawn from active politics". With former MP Kavitha charting her own independent course, the BRS party finds itself in a precarious and desperate situation, he re-



marked. Goud also dismissed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), saying it lacks a foothold in the state. No matter what conspiracies the opposition parties hatch, the public retains immense faith in the ruling Congress party and that the results of the recent elections stand as proof of this fact, he claimed. He exuded confidence that the ruling Indian National Congress would secure a clean sweep of 100 seats if elections were held now.

Private schools looting parents with 40% fee hike, Kavitha slams Govt inaction

***No Control, only exploitation - Kavitha targets Govt over school fees**

***Regulate fees now or face agitation - Kavitha's stern warning**

HYDERABAD

Kalvakuntla Kavitha, President of Telangana Jagruti, has raised serious concerns over the steep increase in private school fees, accusing school managements of exploiting parents by imposing sudden hikes of 30% to 40%.

Addressing the media at the Telangana Jagruti office on Friday, she demanded that the government immediately introduce a fee regulation law and convene a special session of the Assembly to pass the legislation.

Kavitha noted that nearly 38 lakh students are enrolled in around 12,000 private schools across the state. She criticized these institutions for placing an excessive and unfair financial burden on parents.

Recalling past political positions, she pointed out that Revanth Reddy had earlier criticized the previous government for failing to regulate school fees. Now, as Chief Minister, she questioned why no such law has been implemented.

She further stated that despite over two and a half years of Congress governance, there has been no meaningful progress toward fee regulation. Criticizing the state Education Commission's report, she described it as inadequate, adding that its only worthwhile recommendation was the need for a legal framework to regulate fees in private schools and junior colleges.

Kavitha warned that if the current government continues to tolerate fee exploitation, it may face consequences similar to the previous administration. She questioned how poor and middle-class families could cope with



sudden fee hikes of up to 40%, especially when incomes are not rising proportionately. She suggested that annual fee increases should be limited to 7% to 8%.

Injustice to Telangana Youth in Corporate schools

Kavitha also expressed concern over the lack of employment opportunities for local youth in corporate and non-local private schools. She alleged that these institutions are failing to provide jobs to people from Telangana.

Despite collecting substantial fees, she said, many schools do not offer fair salary increments or adequate benefits to teachers and staff. Referring to major institutions like Narayana and Chaitanya, she claimed they educate lakhs of students and generate revenues running into hundreds of

crores annually, while allegedly evading taxes under different names.

She also highlighted several issues within these institutions:

- Lack of proper employee benefits such as Provident Fund (PF) and matching grants
 - Poor quality of food provided to students
 - Centralized cooking for thousands of students, raising concerns about hygiene and standards
- Kavitha demanded strict action, including raids on schools that fail to respect parents or maintain basic standards. She also called for denying permissions to institutions that do not provide employment opportunities to local people, questioning their role and relevance in the state.

Additionally, she alleged that some corporate schools operate their own printing presses and sell books worth around ₹2,000 at inflated prices of up to ₹15,000.

Certificates must be issued to students

Raising another critical issue, Kavitha stated that private professional colleges are withholding students' certificates due to pending fee reimbursement dues from the government. This, she said, is severely impacting students' prospects for employment and higher education.

Despite clear directives from the High Court against such practices, she alleged that institutions continue to harass students. She assured that Telangana Jagruti would support efforts to ensure that the government clears all pending dues.

Criticism of the Government

Kavitha criticized CM Revanth Reddy for holding the education portfolio as well, calling it an unfortunate situation. She alleged that the education system is deteriorating due to lack of proper oversight and review. She accused the government of remaining inactive despite increasing complaints of exploitation by private institutions and emphasized that it is the government's responsibility to protect parents from financial distress.

Warning of Protests

Concluding her remarks, Kavitha warned that the government's inaction is emboldening private school managements. She stated that during her time in the BRS, she had restricted the entry of corporate institutions like Narayana and Chaitanya into Nizamabad. However, after the change in government, these institutions have reportedly entered under different names. She issued a clear warning that if the government fails to respond, Telangana Jagruti will launch statewide protests.

Will join party based on supporters' wish: T Jeevan Reddy

KARIMNAGAR



Former minister T. Jeevan Reddy said he will soon decide which political party to join, guided by his supporters' sentiments. During a media conference held in Jagtial, his first such interaction since parting ways with the ruling Congress party, Jeevan Reddy leveled sharp criticism against Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy.

He alleged growing public dissatisfaction with the present Congress government. He also criticized delays in restoring the Kaleshwaram project, warning that neglect could severely impact irrigation and drinking water.

Replying to a query, he asserted that joining a political

party is an absolute necessity for anyone wishing to engage in public service, and said that his future political decisions would be guided by the opinions of his admirers and followers. He expressed his gratitude to the leaders of both the BJP and the BRS parties for the affection and regard they have shown him. He is expected to announce his political move within the next two weeks.

Kishan Reddy writes open letter to Kerala voters, targets Cong

HYDERABAD



Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy has penned an open letter to the voters in Kerala, urging them to support the BJP-led NDA in upcoming Assembly elections.

He accused Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy of making "misleading claims" during his recent Kerala visit and alleged that the Congress government in Telangana has failed to deliver on its promises.

Reddy stated that the Congress party ascended to power in Telangana on the strength of "6 Guarantees" and "420 Promises" made to women, the youth, and the underprivileged sections of society, but failed to implement them. He listed the unfulfilled assurances, including financial aid to farmers,

loan waivers and MSP hikes, Rs.2,500 monthly assistance under Mahalaxmi scheme, two lakh jobs and job calendar, pension hikes and unemployment allowance etc. He further alleged rising state debt and criticized governance, calling Telangana's situation a "cautionary tale." Appealing to voters, he said only the NDA under Prime Minister Narendra Modi can ensure development and good governance.

AI vs. Jobs: CM Flags Growing Layoff Crisis

CM Revanth Reddy inaugurated AVN Lakefield Global School today.

HYDERABAD

Honourable Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy expressed serious concern over increasing layoffs in the IT sector under the impact of the Artificial Intelligence (AI). The Chief Minister emphasized the creation of more blue collar jobs in the place of white collar jobs to address the unemployment crisis.

Inaugurating AVN Lakefield Global School today, the CM said that the government was developing an ecosystem for skill development and also offered quality technical education to the youth to meet the requirements of the industry. Noted Industrialist Anand Mahindra has already been appointed as the Chairman of the Young India Skills University, with Anand Mahindra. 1.10 lakh engineering students are passing out every year and most of them do not possess skills.

Highlighting the importance of the quality education in the government school,



CM Revanth Reddy said that Young India Integrated Residential educational institutions is his brain child. The Integrated Residential schools are being established in 100 assembly constituencies. Each school with a strength of 2500 students is being constructed in a sprawling 25 acres of land with an area of 5 to 6 lakh square feet. The government was spending Rs 20,000 crores to construct Young India schools and more schools are being established in the second phase.

The Chief Minister noted that 18 lakh students are studying in 26,000 government schools, while 33 lakh

students are studying in 11,000 private schools in the state. To strengthen the education system in the government sector, the CM said that Telangana Public Schools will be established on the line of Arutla Model School and offer quality education to the students. The model schools will provide quality education to students from Nursery through the 12th grade. Transport facilities, breakfast and mid day meals will be provided to the students in government schools.

Stating that the government was spending Rs 1.08 lakh on each student studying in the government schools, CM Revanth Reddy asserted

that everyone should think about the failure of government education and rectify the mistakes. The Chief Minister noted that lack of education is the root cause of poverty and education will only address the serious issue in the society.

Further, the CM said that Telangana Sports University was established with a goal of winning gold medals for Telangana at the 2034 Olympics. The state government will encourage youth to pursue sports as a bright career. World Boxing champion Nikhat Zareen and India cricket player Siraj were given DSP rank posts recognising their talent in sports.

Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha participated in the birth anniversary celebrations of Doddi Komurayya

SANGAREDDY



State Health and Medical Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha paid rich tributes by garlanding the statue of Telangana armed struggle's first martyr, Sri Doddi Komurayya, on the occasion of his 99th birth anniversary. The event was organized under the aegis of the BC Welfare Department in Sangareddy district headquarters. On this occasion, he recalled the inspiration provided by Komurayya and stated that the Telangana State Government is working with the goal of welfare for all sections of society. Those who participated in the program included local MLA Chinta Prabhakar, District Collector P. Praveenya, Sangareddy Municipal Chairperson Mrs. Koonna Vanitha Santosh, District Library Organization Chairman Anjaiah, RC Puram Corporator Pushpa Nagesh, District BC Welfare Officer Jagadeesh, District Golla Kuruma Association President Mallayya Yadav, association members, leaders of public organizations, and district leaders.

Jupally directs officials to fast-track pending projects

HYDERABAD

Vani Prasad, recently appointed as the Special Chief Secretary of the Tourism and Culture department, along with P. Gouthami, who has taken on the role of Managing Director of the Telangana Tourism Development Corporation (TGTDC), paid a visit to Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Secretariat on Friday.

During the meeting, the Minister extended his congratulations to the newly appointed officials and emphasised the importance of enhancing tourism infrastructure, developing various destinations, and accelerating the progress of new projects in the Telangana State.

Minister greets newly appointed Tourism officials



HYDERABAD

Vani Prasad, recently appointed as Special Chief Secretary, Tourism and Culture Department, and P. Gouthami, who assumed charge as Managing Director of the Telangana Tourism Development Corporation (TGTDC), called on Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Secretariat on Friday. The Minister congratulated them and urged a focused push towards strengthening tourism infrastructure, developing destinations, and expediting new projects in the State.

6 students fall ill after breakfast at Asifabad tribal welfare hostel

HYDERABAD

Six students became unwell following breakfast at a hostel affiliated with the Tribal Welfare department in an Ashram school located in Yellur village, within the Panchikalpet mandal of Kumram Bheem Asifabad district on Friday.

According to officials, the affected students—Shashi, Anjanna, Karthik, and John-

son from Class X; Suresh from Class IX; and Sammaiah from Class VII—began experiencing symptoms of vomiting after their meal at approximately 10:30 AM. They were promptly transported to a hospital in Kagaznagar, where their medical condition is reported to be stable, and they are currently under medical observation. Students at the institution

have raised concerns regarding the inadequate quality of food served at the hostel. They have appealed to the authorities to implement measures that ensure adherence to the quality standards outlined in the government-approved menu. Furthermore, they have alleged that the school administration has exhibited negligence in managing the hostel's operations.

Summer special train between Bengaluru Cantt. and Chennai Central

CHENNAI, APRIL 3:

To manage the increased passenger rush during the summer season, South Western Railway has announced a special train service between Bengaluru Cantonment and Dr. MGR Chennai Central. Train No. 06545 will depart from Bengaluru Cantonment at 8:05 AM on Thursday, April 9, 2026, and arrive at Dr. MGR Chennai Central at 3:00 PM the same day. In the return direction, Train No. 06546 will leave Chennai Central at 4:45 PM and reach Bengaluru Cantonment at 11:00 PM on the same day. The service will run for one trip in each direction. The train will consist of 15 sleeper class coaches, four general second class coaches, and two second class coaches designed to be Divyangjan-friendly. En route, the train will halt at Krishna-rajapuram, Bangarapet, Kuppam, Jolarpettai, Katpadi, Sholingur, Arakkonam, Tiruvallur, and Perambur stations. Advance reservations for the special service will open at 8:00 AM on April 5, 2026, through Southern Railway booking channels.



Congress guarantees are fake: Kishan Reddy to Kerala voters

HYDERABAD, APRIL 3

Alleging that the Congress party failed to implement the election promises made in Telangana, Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy has appealed to people of Kerala not to believe the "fake promises" of the party in the Assembly elections. In an open letter to the people of Kerala, Kishan Reddy explained the six guarantees and other promises made by the Congress party in Telangana. "The experience of Telangana offers an important lesson. Promises made during elections may sound attractive, but without proper planning and financial discipline, they remain only promises," wrote Kishan Reddy, the BJP MP from Telangana. Referring to newspaper advertisements in Kerala by the Congress party claiming implementation of promises in Telangana, he urged people not to be misled by such advertisements. He wrote that before believing such assurances, it is important to carefully examine what has happened in states where similar promises were made earlier. "Kerala deserves governance that delivers development, financial stability, and honest administration, not just promises made during elections. Kerala, known as 'God's Own Country,' should not allow these political tourists, who have already deceived citizens elsewhere with unfulfilled promises, to repeat the same here," he said. He requested the people of Kerala to carefully examine the facts and make a wise, informed decision for the state's future. He claimed that the NDA under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership is the only alternative that has stood by the people of Kerala and fulfilled its promises to the state, and appealed to people to give the BJP-led alliance an opportunity to serve them.

Amaravati is unstoppable: CM describe it as a victory of five crore people

AMARAVATI:

Amaravati is unstoppable. With the passing of a bill on Amaravati capital in Parliament, observed Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu by describing it as a victory of five crore people for peoples capital Amaravati.

Celebrating the occasion by distributing sweets at his camp office today and later speaking to media persons, the Chief Minister said all the Fifty parties extended support to Amaravati capital bill aimed at providing legal status to Amaravati capital except YSR Congress party. He expressed surprise over opposing the bill by YCP MPs who got elected from Andhra Pradesh itself and failed to protect and honour the interests and sentiments of people.

No one can stop development of Amaravati capital: CM
CM thanks PM, HM and MPs of all parties for extending support to Amaravati capital bill
CM express surprise over YCP opposing Amaravati bill, while all Fifty parties extend support in unison to Amaravati bill
Prime Minister to inaugurate major projects of Amaravati in 2029:CM
Amaravati capital to serve as a growth engine for AP achieve 2.4 trillion dollars economy by 2047:CM

The Chief Minister thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and MPs of all parties including Loke Sabha Speaker and Rajya Sabha chairman for extending support to Amaravati.

The Chief Minister said while entire country extended support to Amaravati in passing of a bill in Parliament, the YCP started opposing Amaravati from the beginning and hatched conspiracies to prevent development of Amaravati as state capital in the name of three capitals. Still their efforts to create hur-



dles for Amaravati are going on. He made it clear that no one can stop development of Amaravati and major works will be completed by 2028 and Prime Minister Narendra

Modi who laid foundation for Amaravati, again visited AP for second time for restarting works of Amaravati will inaugurate major projects of Amaravati capital in 2029.

The Chief Minister said that the state governments ruled by regional parties should honour the bills passed in Parliament and expressed surprise over the remarks of YCP leaders on changing of capital if they (YCP) comes to power. He said that the previous government failed to raise the issue of state bifurcation issues and pushed the state into huge debt trap by mortgaging gov-

ernment properties during its five years regime.

The Chief Minister said after the coalition government came to power despite of financial constraints focusing more on development and welfare balancing each other with short term, mid term and long term planning.

The Chief Minister asserted that with the improvement of infrastructure, development will be possible and expressed hope that by 2047 the state will achieve 2.4 trillion dollars economy and Amaravati capital will serve as a growth engine towards that direction.

Rajnath Singh lays foundation for advanced naval testing facility in Vizag

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh on April 3, 2026 laid the foundation stone of a state-of-the-art Large Cavitation Tunnel (LCT) facility at the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL) in Visakhapatnam, marking a major step towards strengthening India's naval research and testing capabilities.



The facility, being developed under the aegis of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), is aimed at enhancing indigenous capabilities in hydrodynamic research and reducing dependence on foreign testing infrastructure. Singh said the project would enable India to design, develop and test equipment, systems and sub-systems domestically using its own re-

sources. Addressing scientists and personnel, the Defence Minister said that the initiative would position India as a strong naval power and a leader in defence technology. "Until now, even after successfully developing systems, we often had to look abroad for critical testing. This situation will now change," he said, adding that the facility would act as a backbone for submarine and ship design, propul-

sion systems, noise reduction and stealth capabilities.

Singh described the project as a symbol of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, linking self-reliance directly with national security. He credited domestic industry, academia, MSMEs, youth and researchers for driving India's progress towards technological independence. During the visit, Singh was briefed on ongoing

projects by DRDO Chairman and Secretary, Department of Defence R&D, Samir V Kamat. He also visited the Seakeeping and Manoeuvring Basin, where advanced underwater systems such as torpedoes, naval mines, decoys and autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs) were showcased.

A live demonstration of a swarm of man-portable AUVs highlighted India's growing capabilities in autonomous maritime operations and next-generation underwater warfare technologies. Singh also reviewed spin-off technologies developed by naval systems materials cluster labs following Operation Sindoor.

Commending NSTL's work in areas including torpedo systems, underwater mines, decoys and AUVs, the Defence Minister noted that advancements in swarm technology and lithium-ion battery devel-

opment would be crucial for future warfare preparedness. He emphasised that reliable and robust technological systems enhance the confidence and operational effectiveness of sailors deployed at sea.

Chief of Defence Staff Anil Chauhan, Chief of the Naval Staff Dinesh K Tripathi, Flag Officer Commander-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command Sanjay Bhalla and other senior officials were present at the event. Conceived as a strategic national asset, the Large Cavitation Tunnel project is being executed in turnkey mode with international technical collaboration, combining global expertise with indigenous innovation. The facility will support both closed-loop simulations for submarine studies and free surface simulations for surface ship research within a single integrated setup.

YSRCP protests limited RS time on Amaravati Bill

AMARAVATI, APRIL 3

The YSR Congress Party on Friday complained to the Vice President of India and Rajya Sabha Chairman C. P. Radhakrishnan about the denial of adequate time to the party in Rajya Sabha during the debate on the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill 2026. A delegation of the YSRCP MPs led by Parliamentary Party leader Y. V. Subba Reddy met Radhakrishnan in Delhi and submitted a representation to him. The delegation told him that despite having seven MPs, the YSRCP was given only five minutes, and their microphone was cut. They stated that the Telugu Desam



Party (TDP) and other smaller parties were allotted more time and sought a fair opportunity to present their voice. Subba Reddy urged the Rajya Sabha chairman to lay the text of his speech on the table. The party also sought an enquiry into deviation from parliamentary conventions and

established procedures. The YSRCP complained that the party was allocated grossly inadequate time to speak during the discussion on the Bill. It mentioned that TDP, which has only two members in the House, was allowed speaking time of over 15 minutes. Bharat Rashtia Samithi (BRS),

which has four members, was also allotted only five minutes. "This uneven and disproportionate treatment is particularly disturbing because the Bill under discussion directly concerns the State of Andhra Pradesh, its constitutional future, and the interests of the people represented by all seven Rajya Sabha members of the YSR Congress Party. In such a matter of profound federal and regional significance, denying the principal opposition party of Andhra Pradesh a fair and meaningful opportunity to articulate its views effectively amounts to denying adequate voice to the people of the State themselves," reads the representation. The YSRCP also

stated that the repeated times the camera focuses on the visitors' gallery, particularly on TDP MPs and state ministers, appears less a coincidence and more a pre-arranged exercise. The party sought an official enquiry into this. The Rajya Sabha on Thursday passed the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill 2026 to give statutory recognition to Amaravati as the sole and permanent capital of Andhra Pradesh. A day earlier, the Lok Sabha had passed the Bill.

YSRCP opposed the Bill in both Houses on the grounds that it failed to address the concerns of farmers who have given their lands for the development of the state capital.

Misinformed: Pinarayi Vijayan hits back at Revanth Reddy for 'ridiculing' Kerala

Inviting Revanth Reddy to visit and understand its welfare model, Pinarayi Vijayan said Kerala is progressing through sustainable and inclusive development.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday hit back at his Telangana counterpart Revanth Reddy after the latter's sharp criticism of the Left government during a campaign visit to the state. In a Facebook post, Vijayan said the Telangana Chief Minister was "misinformed," and accused Reddy of "ridiculing" Kerala and its people while concealing the weaknesses of his own state. "By conveniently ignoring the bulldozing of the homes of the poor in his own state, he appears ready to lecture Kerala on social progress and public welfare - clearly,

he has been seriously misinformed by someone," Vijayan wrote. "Telangana Chief Minister is welcome to Kerala to learn about welfare models", the Kerala CM said. He said Reddy, while campaigning for the UDF candidates for the April 9 Assembly polls in Kerala, had made remarks against the state. Inviting Reddy to the state to learn about its welfare model, Vijayan said Kerala was moving forward through "sustainable and inclusive development". He also accused Reddy of backing those trying to undermine it. Responding to allegations of corruption and administrative failure, Vijayan said, "He claims that Kerala is marked by 'corruption and administrative failure', but he should be willing to look at official data. Is he unaware that Kerala is among the least corrupt



states in the country?" Citing figures, he pointed out that Kerala ranked first in the NITI Aayog Sustainable Development Index (2023-24) with 79 points, while Telangana was placed sixth. He also highlighted social indicators, saying, "According to NITI Aayog data, Kerala's poverty rate is just 0.55 per cent - the lowest in India." In contrast, he noted, Telangana's poverty rate stood at 5.88 per cent. On education

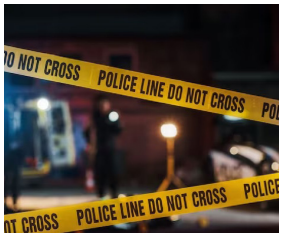


and health, Vijayan said Kerala's literacy rate was 95.3 per cent, far ahead of Telangana's 76.9 per cent, and added, "Kerala's infant mortality rate (IMR) has dropped to 5 per 1,000 live births," which he said was lower than that of countries like the United States. "In Telangana, the IMR is said to be nearly four times higher. Due to strong healthcare systems, an average Malayali lives 5 to 7 years longer than the average

Indian," Vijayan said. Questioning Reddy's criticism, Vijayan said, "When his own government seeks to learn from Kerala's initiatives, how is it that the chief minister himself ridicules them? What greater political hypocrisy could there be?" He also rejected Reddy's allegation that the Kerala government was colluding with the Centre, and instead accused the Congress of failing to oppose central policies that, he said, were financially constraining the state. "Let me humbly say that Kerala has nothing to learn from a chief minister who leads a government where salaries and pensions are frequently delayed," Vijayan added. Concluding his remarks, Vijayan said, "It is Revanth Reddy who should learn lessons in governance from Kerala. He is welcome to visit Kerala to study its

Karnataka gym trainer assaulted amid rape, blackmail allegations

A 23-year-old gym trainer was allegedly assaulted on Friday after being taken away by a group following a confrontation linked to his relationship with a girl in Karnataka's Hubballi, police said, adding that they are also probing allegations of rape and blackmail against him.



The 20-year-old woman has released a video statement alleging that the trainer, Sameer Mulla, took her to his house, gave her a drink, and raped her. She alleged that he recorded a video of the act and later used it to blackmail her. Police said an investigation has been launched and that allegations made by both sides are being examined. The incident occurred within the limits of the Old Hubballi police station. City Police Commissioner N Shashikumar said a detailed investigation would be conducted based on the complaints received. "A complaint has been lodged, and we are registering an FIR. The case will be investigated accordingly. Apart from this, two to three related incidents have also come to light, and cases are being taken up in the respective jurisdictional police stations," he told reporters. Explaining the allegations, he said the girl's parents had stated that she was harassed and that some of her photos and videos were used to blackmail her. "There are also allegations of attempt-

ed misuse by the youth concerned," he said. Earlier in the day, Shashikumar had said the incident stemmed from a personal dispute between two families and was not related to 'love jihad'. According to him, the incident took place between 8 am and 9 am, when a group of people went to the youth's house, leading to a confrontation. During the altercation, the youth was taken away and later brought to a police station. "It was found that the issue was related to a relationship between the youth and a girl. The girl's family members had come to threaten the man," he said. He added that after the youth was taken away, his family members went to the girl's house, where another confrontation took place. "There was some friction at both places. The man has been rescued and is undergoing treatment for minor injuries," he said. Responding to allegations by Hindutva organisations, terming the case as 'love jihad', the Commissioner said it was a personal dispute. "For us, it is a criminal case, and we will investigate accordingly," he said, adding that action would be taken based on complaints from both sides.

Daylight robbery in Darbhanga: Armed gang loots jewellery worth Rs 1.8 crore

PATNA, APRIL 3

Armed criminals carried out a major daylight robbery at a jewellery shop in Bihar's Darbhanga district on Friday, looting valuables worth nearly Rs 1.8 crore and raising fresh concerns over law and order in the state. The incident occurred at around 2:55 p.m. at "Prem Jewellers" in the busy Bara Bazar area under the Nagar Police Station limits. According to shop owner Manoj Kumar, four armed miscreants entered the showroom, held customers and staff hostage at gunpoint, and executed the robbery within minutes. "They abused and assaulted people. We were terrified and did not resist. They even tried to destroy the CCTV DVR and Wi-Fi system," Kumar said. Preliminary estimates suggest that gold and silver jewellery worth around Rs 1.5 crore, along with Rs 22-25 lakh in cash, was looted. As the shop operates on a wholesale basis, supplying ornaments to smaller traders, a large volume of stock was present at the time. The exact loss will

be confirmed after inventory verification. The robbery took place in one of the city's busiest commercial hubs, with allegations that police reached the spot nearly half an hour after the incident. Senior officials, including DIG Manoj Tiwari and SSP Jagannath Reddy, rushed to the scene and initiated a high-level probe. The SSP confirmed the incident. Police said the accused are believed to be between 25 and 30 years of age, with at least one suspect unaged. CCTV footage is being analysed, and district-wide checkpoints have been set up to track down the culprits. In contrast, a recent robbery case in Patna saw swift police action. Last Tuesday, four armed criminals looted jewellery worth Rs 4 lakh from a shop in the Danapur area. Acting promptly, police formed a special investigation team under senior officers. Using CCTV footage and technical surveillance, the team tracked the suspects' movements and mobile locations. Within two days, all four accused were arrested from locations outside Patna.

Maharashtra contractors threaten work halt over ₹96,000 crore dues

MUMBAI: (APR 3)

The Maharashtra State Contractors' Association wrote to the Mahayuti government on Friday threatening to stop work from April 7 if dues amounting to more than Rs 96,000 crore are not paid soon. The state government had cleared about Rs 20,000 crore last year following protests, but fresh bills from ongoing and completed works have pushed the total pending amount back to Rs 96,000 crore, said the MSCA, a state-level body representing contractors engaged in development works across departments. "In last over one-and-half years, the pending bill amount went up to Rs 1.16 lakh crore. Now it is around Rs 96,400 crore, which means the state government only paid around Rs 20,000 crore.

EDITORIAL

A POST-PAX AMERICANA:
TRUMP, NATO, AND THE FRACTURING
OF THE WESTERN ALLIANCE

The U.S. appears poised to break with 77 years of partnership with Western European nations under the security umbrella of NATO, especially after its President Donald Trump has said that he is "absolutely" considering withdrawing from the alliance, which in his view is a "paper tiger". This and similar remarks by Mr. Trump have followed White House's apparent frustration that European and other allies did not expediently send military assets into West Asia to assist the U.S. and Israel in their war campaign against Iran, particularly to secure safe passage for oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, currently under Tehran's control. Mr. Trump has frequently complained about getting less from NATO than Washington was putting into it, saying recently to the media, "... it's a one-way street". He has further hinted that NATO may have become an ineffectual global force when he recently observed that Russian President Vladimir Putin also "knows" that NATO lacks teeth to defend its members — a comment that gains additional salience in the context of Moscow's military aggression against Ukraine and its likely further military adventurism in the Baltic states region.

At the heart of the heightened tension in the U.S.-NATO relationship is Washington's constant refrain that defence spending by its European partners has fallen short of expectations — even if the immediate trigger for talk of withdrawing from NATO is the Iran war context. A prior question of legality remains unanswered too: under section 1250A of the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act, signed into force by former President Joe Biden, no U.S. President may unilaterally withdraw from NATO; rather they would require either a two-thirds Senate supermajority or an act of Congress towards this end. In the longer arc of history spanning the two Trump terms, a split with NATO, a security alliance, might not be of the same order as the eviscerating institutions of global governance and cooperation, which include the WTO and UN system organisations. But it is part of Mr. Trump's simultaneous pursuit of American global dominance and splendid isolation. On the one hand it may come as a relief to some that Mr. Trump's inward turn, pulling the U.S. back from global collaborative engagements could leave a security vacuum that could be opportunistically exploited by middle powers. However, for the world at large, and from a growth and economic stability perspective, the shock of a partner-nation abandoning its commitments worldwide will likely lead to a recalibration of trust and strategic calculus, ultimately remaking the rules-based international order and the global balance of cooperation across emerging powers. In this new post-Pax Americana world, Europe, more than most, will have to reimagine its security paradigm from first principles.

OPEN FORUM

How can Akhilesh surpass Netaji with the help of PDA?

In the politics of Uttar Pradesh, the name of Mulayam Singh Yadav is always remembered as a great political player, who was not only a teacher but also a skilled wrestler. Emerging from the wrestling arena into the political field, Mulayam had the ability to defeat his opponents with ease. Coming from the small village of Saifai in Etawah district, he established his dominance not only in Uttar Pradesh but also in Delhi politics. However, his son, Akhilesh Yadav, who inherited his political legacy, still appears far from matching Netaji's stature. Even after a long political journey of 15 years, he has not been able to deliver a major electoral victory for the Samajwadi Party purely on his own strength. Under Akhilesh's leadership, the party has fought two assembly and three general elections, but except for some success in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, his political influence has not been consistently visible. Despite efforts to strengthen the party, Akhilesh did not hesitate to ally with Congress and even Mayawati leaders who once had deep political rivalry with Mulayam Singh.

Mulayam Singh Yadav, founder of the Samajwadi Party and former Chief Minister, had built a strong coalition of backward classes, Yadavs, and Muslims a combination that proved extremely difficult for opponents to break. After founding the party in 1992, Mulayam went on to become Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh three times until his death in 2022. Following the party's victory in the 2012 assembly elections, he handed over the Chief Minister's post to his son Akhilesh. Mulayam's politics was deeply rooted in grassroots engagement visiting villages, listening to workers' grievances, and using strategic alliances when necessary to reach power. After he passed the baton, the question arose whether Akhilesh could step out of his father's shadow and establish his own identity. The 2024 Lok Sabha elections partially answered this question, though a deeper look reveals a more complex picture.

Mulayam began his political career with the Janata Dal, but in 1992 he formed his own party and consolidated backward classes and minorities as his core base. In the 1996 Lok Sabha elections, the Samajwadi Party won 16 seats



with around 20 percent vote share. This increased to 20 seats in 1998 and 26 in 1999. In 2004, under Mulayam's leadership, the party achieved a record 35 seats with a 26.74 percent vote share, mostly contesting independently without major alliances. His strength lay in his personal charisma he directly addressed crowds in rallies and challenged opponents in a bold, earthy style. His governments maintained a strong Yadav-Muslim equation, though internal conflicts occasionally surfaced. After winning 224 seats in the 2012 assembly elections, Mulayam made Akhilesh Chief Minister, marking a generational shift, though it also exposed cracks within the family.

When Akhilesh became Chief Minister in 2012, he was seen as a young, educated, and development-oriented leader. Initiatives like distributing laptops, building roads, and improving electricity supply earned him the tag of a "laptop CM." However, in 2017, the party suffered a major setback, reduced to just 47 seats. In the 2019 general elections, it fell further to only five seats, with vote share dropping to around 18 percent. After Mulayam's death, Akhilesh contested the 2022 assembly elections independently. While his father's name remained a brand, Akhilesh had to prove himself. He introduced the PDA formula Backward, Dalit, and Minority and raised issues such as unemployment, paper leaks, and inflation.

Then came 2024, when Akhilesh achieved something unprecedented. In the Lok Sabha elections, the Samajwadi Party won 37 out of 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh, surpassing Mulayam's 2004 record of 35 seats. The vote share rose to 33.59 percent the highest in the party's 32-year history, an increase of about 15 percent compared to 2019. Within the INDIA alliance, Congress managed only

six seats, while the Samajwadi Party contested 62 seats and performed strongly. Akhilesh himself won from Kannauj, Dimple Yadav from Mainpuri, and other family members also secured victories. Notably, only five Yadav candidates were fielded something unimaginable during Mulayam's time. By moving beyond the traditional MY (Muslim-Yadav) equation and expanding to the broader PDA base, Akhilesh gained support from Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and other backward communities, making the Samajwadi Party the principal challenger to the BJP in Uttar Pradesh. Now, the real test of PDA will come in the 2027 assembly elections.

The key question remains: how different is Akhilesh's politics from Mulayam's? It can be said that until 2024, Akhilesh had not achieved success comparable to his father. Mulayam often positioned himself at the center of politics. Even in 2004, when the party supported the UPA, it still won 35 seats independently. In contrast, Akhilesh strategically leveraged alliances in 2024 to expand the party's reach. By limiting Yadav candidates, he signaled that the party is no longer confined to a single caste. About 86 percent of the party's MPs came from backward, Dalit, and minority communities, reflecting the success of the PDA formula. This performance, achieved while in opposition, surpassed even Mulayam's era when the party was in power.

Akhilesh's rallies are filled with youth, and he effectively uses social media. Like his father, he connects with people on the ground but maintains a more restrained and issue-focused language. However, challenges remain. Mulayam's towering personality helped manage family disputes, as seen during the 2016-17 conflict between Akhilesh and Shivpal. Without that guiding presence, Akhilesh must navigate these complexities alone.

With the 2027 elections approaching, the party aims to return to power. There are occasional signs of fragmentation within the Yadav-Muslim base. While reducing Yadav candidates enhances inclusivity, it may also risk alienating core supporters. Mulayam ran the party like a family; Akhilesh now needs to further strengthen organizational structure.

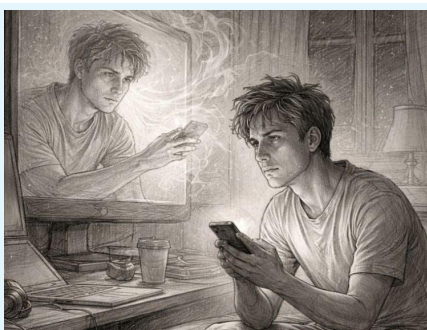
Akhilesh's politics appears more modern than Mulayam's. He blends development-focused governance with traditional socialist ideology. During his tenure as Chief Minister (2012-17), he attracted youth, and he continues to build on that appeal. His preparations for 2027 include policies aimed at financial support for women, better compensation for farmers, and social justice. Mulayam's strength lay in his grassroots connect and political toughness, while Akhilesh's lies in strategy and coalition-building.

The 2024 results show that he has revived the party. The Samajwadi Party has emerged as the third-largest political force in the country. However, the journey ahead is long. Mulayam built the party; Akhilesh must take it to new heights. The contrast is clear Mulayam's politics was marked by bold, wrestling-style maneuvers, while Akhilesh has surprised opponents with the PDA strategy. The father's legacy carried emotional resonance; the son's approach reflects youthful energy and modern tactics. Still, Akhilesh must earn the deep trust of the masses as Mulayam did. The bicycle is moving, but accelerating it further remains his challenge. Uttar Pradesh politics now watches closely how far this new chapter will go. Mulayam's shadow is still felt from Saifai to Lucknow, but Akhilesh has shown he can create his own light as well.



BY AJAY KUMAR,
Senior Journalist,
Lucknow (U.P.)

THE LUMINOUS RECKONING



This is me—yet that is me, you claim...
But who are you behind the name, O Enkanna?
A borrowed face, a mirrored frame—
A flicker lost in phantom drama.
Ensnared within the screen's soft glow,
Where whispering illusions weave their art,
While truth, unspoken, sinks below
The dim-lit corners of the heart.
You see so much—yet become so little,
You act—yet meaning slips between;
A restless mind, forever brittle,
A sovereign soul... now ruled by screen.
The seeds once sown by tender hands—
In soil of care, in time's embrace—
Now scatter like forgotten sands,
Unrooted in their rightful place.
Pause, O pause—interrogate:
Is this the path, or painted lie?
Between the dark and delicate,
Does wisdom live—or merely die?
If sight defines what truth must be,
Will sight itself not fade to blind?
If knowledge ends in what you see,
What light remains for deeper mind?
You trade the flame of inward sight
For sparks that glitter, fade, and fall;
While home's own lamp—once warm, once bright—
Grows faint... unnoticed by it all.
Is not the bread of home enough?
Is not its love a sacred art?
Why chase the world's enticing bluff
And starve the silence of your heart?
When speech decays to careless noise,
And virtue bends to vulgar claim,
When hollow laughs replace true joys—
What then remains of human name?
A form may walk, a breath persist,
Yet something sacred slips away;
A life reduced to shadowed mist,
A dawn that never meets its day.
Awaken now—before the end,
Before the hours in silence drown;
The screen's a guest, the mind's your friend—
Do not enthrone what pulls you down.
Return, reclaim the self you've lost,
Rekindle truths you left behind;
For time will never count the cost
Of a dimmed and drifting mind.

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

India Just Decided To Let Chinese Capital In Again. But There's A Catch

In March 2026, India eased regulations that had restricted Chinese capital in local companies, in a development that marks New Delhi's cautious pragmatism towards capital flows from Beijing. Instead, the new rules mandate that decisions on whether or not to allow proposals on capital flows from countries that share a land border with India will be taken within 60 days. Yet, India has not fully opened the sluice gates, and the relaxation is being allowed in sectors such as capital goods, electronic components, polysilicon and ingot wafers. Another caveat is that majority control must stay with an Indian company or entity, but investments from bordering countries that involve 'beneficial ownership' to the limit of 10% are permitted under the automatic route, which does not need government approval.

Economic engagement between India and China nosedived in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, a situation that was compounded by China's military coercion and border clashes that led to deaths of soldiers on both sides. In the wake of the pandemic, when stock prices plummeted, China's central bank raised its equity stake in India's HDFC from 0.8% to 1.1%, which immediately triggered a political blowback that China was indulging in opportunistic takeovers of India's corporate assets.

This development led to the government promulgating Press Note 3 (PN3), which stated that all investment from bordering countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Myanmar and China will go through deep scrutiny. It reflected New Delhi's effective targeting of Chinese capital and its besetting response to Beijing through economic signalling. Prior to 2020, India's startup ecosystem had a lot of Chinese investors, funding a wide range of technology companies in fintech, e-commerce, and digital services. The restrictions curbed BYD's plan to establish a plant in India and Great Wall Motors' \$1 billion investment, while Ant Group, Shunwei Capital, and Tencent Holdings Group also sold their share to Indian investors.

In October 2024, Prime Minister Nar-



endra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping conferred on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Russia and decided to defuse the military standoff. By agreeing to patrolling arrangements on the border, the Chinese tacitly admitted to their act of trying to create new facts on the ground. The understanding reached with China in October 2024 met an important aim, which was ensuring that the Indian Army could patrol till relevant points, and the resumption of grazing. With the resumption of patrolling, both sides began to take steps towards normalising relations.

The impetus for economic normalisation has come from both sides, with the 'Economic Survey 2023-24' suggesting that India must open doors to Chinese capital, inviting businesspeople to set up manufacturing units in India to reduce the trade deficit. Following this development, Niti Aayog member Rajiv Gauba suggested a calibrated reopening to economic cooperation with China. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman disclosed that China Inc had also approached the government through the Ministry of External Affairs to relax curbs, but added that a "sense of caution" would be built into the re-engagement. Thus, opening its doors to Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in select sectors through

the automatic route - though with caveats - reflects India's cautious decision-making and economic pragmatism. The recent moves of relaxing the rules demonstrate a pragmatic shift in India's foreign policy to balance national security with economic imperatives.

Economically, the relaxation of foreign direct investment rules could revive India's manufacturing and technology sectors, which are facing technological and capital gaps. Post-Galwan, Chinese FDI flows declined sharply. From April 2019 to March 2020, Chinese FDI in India was approximately \$163.8 million, but it went down drastically to \$2.7 million in April 2025-March 2025, creating financing challenges for several sectors, including electronics, manufacturing, renewable energy, and startups.

Allowing minority shares 10% beneficial ownership through automatic routes in these sectors, such as capital goods, electronic capital goods, electronic components, and solar manufacturing inputs such as polysilicon - except strategic sectors such as semiconductors - with a scrutiny period of 60 days is a calibrated approach.

This calculated relaxation could also complement New Delhi's broader industrial policy, such as "Make India 3.0" and the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, which aims to make India a manufacturing hub for traditional and new developing technology and strengthening manufacturing capacity.

In addition, it could play a role in strengthening India's integration into global supply chains. India has long sought to position itself as an alternative manufacturing hub amid rising costs in China, primarily for the MNCs that are planning to diversify their production base in response to geopolitical tensions and supply chain disruptions amid protracted geopolitical crises. However, developing manufacturing capacity requires access not only to markets but also to capital and technology and supplier networks; Chinese companies are dominant in several global manufacturing supply chains and technology and are looking for overseas expansion. This limited window could give India an im-

petus to establish domestic component manufacturing and reduce vulnerability.

The strategic calibration in investment easing is also good for small and new tech startups, which are looking for fiscal support and technological backing.

However, this relaxation is also accompanied by some invisible risks. Chinese companies often operate with strong state backing and fiscal support; this raises concern about potential market dominance or strategic influence in critical industries. So, Indian policymakers are sceptical that, rather than facilitating the creation of an independent ecosystem, it might create new dependencies or increase the level of dependencies. The Indian market is already heavily dependent on China; around 70-75% of mobile phones used by Indians are accounted for by Chinese companies such as Xiaomi, Vivo, Oppo, OnePlus, Nothing, etc. Even a lot of electronics components, toys, apparel, etc., are imported from China despite trade barriers and anti-dumping duties. Therefore, efficient regulatory screening and sector-specific firewalls are crucial to mitigate this anomaly.

In the domestic policy sphere, it is being debated that the relaxation might undermine national security and render consumer and critical data vulnerable, or even enable Beijing to have economic leverage to create complex interdependence. However, industrial groups and economists say this move is a pragmatic shift, necessary to fill investment shortages, thanks to the deep pockets and technology know-how of Chinese companies.

In sum, the calibrated decision of India reflects its effort to navigate an increasingly complex geopolitical atmosphere amid the ongoing Middle East crisis. As major power rivalries intensify and global supply chains undergo stress, India's selective engagement with China while preserving strategic autonomy represents a pragmatic approach in advancing its long-term developmental goals.

KALPIT
International Researcher

Disclaimer: These are the personal opinions of the author

Lucknow Buddhist conclave attracts ₹3,000 crore proposals

LUCKNOW: (APR 3)

Investment proposals worth around Rs 3,000 crore were received during the International Buddhist Conclave-2026 held in Kushinagar, officials said.

The three-day event, organised at the Mahaparinirvana site of Gautama Buddha from March 31 to April 2, aimed to promote Uttar Pradesh as a global Buddhist tourism hub and attract investment in the sector.

As per a press statement, over 2,300 participants, including monks, scholars and policymakers, attended the conclave, along with more than 300 delegates from Thailand, Japan, Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal.

Vote for Congress Candidates... We Are Committed to Implementing Promises

PONDICHERRY, APRIL 03:

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka urged voters to elect the candidates supported by the Congress-DMK alliance with a huge majority to protect democracy and safeguard the dignity and freedom granted by the Constitution. On Friday evening, along with Minister Ponnambal Prabhakar and Puducherry PCC President Vaidyalingam, he campaigned extensively in the Manavelly Assembly constituency in support of Congress candidate Anantharaman, and in the M. Balam constituency in support of Congress candidate Lakshmi Kant. Addressing the local people, the Deputy Chief Minister appealed to voters to bring the Congress party back to power and "save Puducherry." He assured that the SPA alliance, comprising Con-

Large-scale welfare schemes are being implemented in Telangana

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and Minister Ponnambal Prabhakar campaign in Puducherry Assembly elections



gress and DMK, is firmly committed to implementing all the promises it has made. He cautioned voters not to believe the misinformation being spread by the NDA alliance regarding the implementation of these guarantees. He emphasized that electing the SPA alliance is the only way to ensure a bright future for Puducherry. Responding to doubts about whether guarantees can be implemented, the Deputy Chief Minister said Telangana itself is the answer. He stated that immediately after coming to power, the Congress government in Telangana began implementing its guarantees

from the very first Cabinet meeting. He highlighted that farm loans worth ₹21,000 crore belonging to 2.5 million farmer families have been waived. Additionally, ₹18,000 crore is being provided annually under the Rythu Bharosa scheme, at ₹12,000 per acre for farmers. He further stated that 67,173 government jobs have been filled, with recruitment completed across departments and appointment letters distributed transparently in the presence of the public. Under the Mahalakshmi scheme, free bus travel has been provided to women, and the RTC—operating 10,000 buses with 50,000 employees—has been turned from losses into profits. Women are saving ₹6,000 to ₹7,000 per month due to free bus travel.

He added that 200 units of free electricity are being provided, and 450,000 Indiramma houses have been sanctioned, with ₹5 lakh allocated for each house. The ₹500 gas cylinder scheme is also being implemented. He noted that efforts are being made to transform women into bus owners and entrepreneurs.

Expressing confidence, the Deputy Chief Minister said that under the Telangana Rising Vision Document-2047, the state aims to become a \$1 trillion economy by 2034 and a \$3 trillion economy by 2047. He added that Telangana's growth rate stands at 10.8% and asserted that development is possible without increasing taxes, which the government has successfully demonstrated.



A Review meeting of the PDDU Prashikshan-2026

NEW DELHI, APRIL 3:

Today, a review meeting of the "Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Prashikshan Maha Abhiyan-2026" was held at the BJP headquarters in Delhi under the leadership of National President Sri Nitin Nabin Ji, along with Sri BL Santhosh Ji National General Secretary (Organisation), Sri Shivaprakash Ji National Jt General Secre-

tary (Org), Sri Tharun Chugh Ji National General Secretary, I (Dr Kasam Venkateshwarlu, BJP State Vice President & "Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Prashikshan Maha Abhiyan-2026") participated along with National Prashikshan team. During the meeting detailed discussions were held on the current progress of the campaign and on making the upcoming phases more effective.

AAP launches full-blown attack on Raghav Chadha, BJP comes out in support

Several Aam Aadmi Party leaders on Friday shared videos attacking Raghav Chadha for not speaking against PM Modi and the BJP-led Central government. The Aam Aadmi Party has launched a full-blown attack against its own leader, Raghav Chadha, with party leaders sharing videos blasting the Punjab MP. Until day before yesterday, Chadha, once Arvind Kejriwal's blue-eyed boy, was "raising issues of the common man" in Rajya Sabha before AAP dropped him as deputy leader, alleging he was not raising "real issues". Raghav Chadha is now facing an all-out attack from his party colleagues, who accuse him of "being afraid to speak against PM Modi" and not standing with the party. The videos came after Chadha, breaking his silence on being replaced by Ashok Mittal, alleged that the move was an attempt to silence him. "The party has formally requested the Rajya Sabha Secretariat to stop him from speaking under the AAP quota. Is it wrong to speak for the people? I ask this because my own party has now formally requested the Rajya Sabha Secretariat to stop me from speaking," he said in a video statement. He questioned why raising issues that help the public had upset the party leadership. "These discussions helped



the public, but how did they upset the Aam Aadmi Party? I am silenced, not defeated." Later, the 37-year-old MP also dropped AAP from his X bio which now reads, "Memb While AAP leaders continued their attack on Chadha, the BJP praised the MP for speaking up and accused Arvind Kejriwal of using people and then getting rid of them. BJP leaders also praised his Rajya Sabha speeches and lauded him for raising public issues.

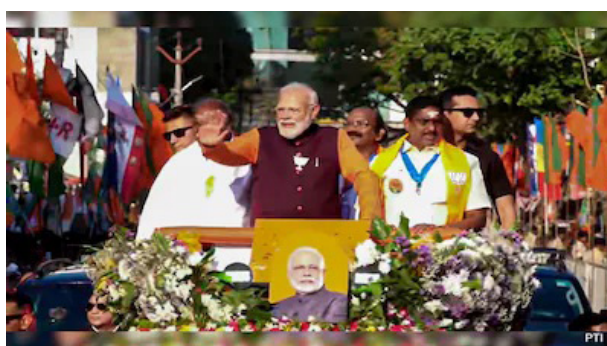
AAP LEADERS VS RAGHAV CHADHA

After Chadha shared a video alleging that AAP was trying to silence him despite him raising issues of the common man, AAP leaders shared videos highlighting what went wrong for him. The rift is no longer internal now, it has turned into a public bashing with leaders mincing no words. They said Chadha was afraid to speak against the PM, and had wasted his parliamentary time discussing samosas instead of pressing national issues.

PM Modi holds grand roadshow in Puducherry ahead of April 9 polls

PUDUCHERRY, APRIL 3

With the Union Territory heading to the Assembly elections on April 9, Prime Minister Narendra Modi intensified the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) campaign on Friday by holding a high-profile roadshow in Puducherry, drawing enthusiastic crowds and tight security arrangements across the city. The NDA alliance in Puducherry, comprising the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the All India NR Congress led by Chief Minister N. Rangasamy, the AIADMK, and other regional partners, is seeking to consolidate its position in the upcoming polls. Prime Minister Modi arrived in Chennai from New Delhi earlier in the day via a special flight. From Chennai airport, he proceeded to Puducherry by helicopter, underscoring the importance



of the BJP leadership is placing on the Union Territory's electoral battle. Upon his arrival at Puducherry airport, the Prime Minister was warmly received by Chief Minister Rangasamy along with senior BJP leaders and party functionaries. The reception marked the beginning of a carefully choreographed campaign event aimed at energising party workers and attracting undecided voters. From the airport, PM Modi travelled by car

parties turning out in large numbers. The roadshow is seen as a key campaign push to boost the NDA's prospects just days before polling. Given the Prime Minister's visit, authorities imposed a stringent five-layer security arrangement across Puducherry. The entire route was heavily guarded, and the use of drones was strictly prohibited to prevent any security breaches. Police personnel and central security forces were deployed in large numbers to ensure the event's smooth conduct. After concluding his campaign programme in Puducherry, Prime Minister Modi is scheduled to return to Chennai by helicopter later in the evening. With campaigning entering its final phase, the Prime Minister's visit is expected to provide significant momentum to the NDA alliance as it gears up for the crucial April 9 vote.

MP chlorine gas leak: 49 hospitalised in Jhabua

BHOPAL/THANDLA (JHABUA), APRIL 3

A chlorine gas leak occurred at the gas filtration plant in Thandla town of Jhabua district on Friday morning due to a technical malfunction, affecting plant employees and nearby residents. The incident triggered panic in the area as several

people complained of breathing difficulties, irritation in the eyes and throat, and anxiety. Prompt action by the district administration quickly brought the situation under control. Immediately after receiving information, a high-level rescue team comprising Sub-Divisional Magistrate Bhaskar Gachle, Chief Municipal Officer

Kamlesh Jaiswal, and District Commandant S.D. Pillai rushed to the spot. Technical support was also provided by an industrial unit from Meghnagar. An expert team from Indore has arrived to inspect the remaining tanks and assess the plant's safety. According to the Block Medical Officer, Thandla, an initial group of 20-25 people

was admitted to the hospital with breathing problems. As a precautionary measure, the Health Department conducted a door-to-door survey, and more people with mild symptoms were placed under observation. Currently, 49 patients are undergoing treatment, and all are reported to be in stable condition.



NE Railway will operate the Chhapra-Jammu Tawi weekly Spl. Train

GORAKHPUR, APRIL 3, 2026:

For the convenience of passengers during the summer season, the Railway Administration will operate the 05193/05194 Chhapra-Jammu Tawi-Chhapra via Gorakhpur Summer Weekly Special Train. This train will run from Chhapra every Monday from April 6 to July 13, 2026, and from Jammu Tawi every Wednesday from April 8 to July 15, 2026, for a total of 15 trips. 05193 Chhapra-Jammu Tawi Summer Weekly Special Train will depart from Chhapra at 14:00 hrs every Monday between April 6 and July 13, 2026. It will stop at Chhapra Kacheri (14:12), Dighwa Dubouli (15:34), Thawe (17:05), Tamkuhi Road (17:37), Padrauna (18:10), Kaptanganj (19:35), Gorakhpur (20:55), Basti (21:59), Gonda (23:25), and on the next day at Sitapur Junction (03:10), Shahjahanpur (05:00), Bareilly Junction (05:57), Moradabad (07:58), Laksar (09:46), Roorkee (10:14), Saharanpur (11:30), Yamunanagar Jagadhri (11:59), Ambala Cantt (12:55), Ludhiana

(14:33), Jalandhar Cantt (15:30), and will reach Pathankot at 22:15 hrs.

Return journey (05194 Jammu Tawi-Chhapra Summer Weekly Special Train): This train will run every Wednesday from April 8 to July 15, 2026. It will depart from Pathankot at 00:30 hrs, Jalandhar Cantt (05:00), Ludhiana (06:00), Ambala Cantt (08:25), Yamunanagar Jagadhri (09:20), Saharanpur (10:35), Roorkee (11:42), Laksar (12:07), Moradabad (15:30), Bareilly Junction (17:02), Shahjahanpur (18:30), Sitapur Junction (20:25), Gonda (23:35), and on the next day Basti (01:05), Gorakhpur (02:35), Kaptanganj (03:32), Padrauna (04:12), Tamkuhi Road (04:47), Thawe (06:00), Dighwa Dubouli (06:57), Chhapra Kacheri (08:35), and will reach Chhapra at 09:15 hrs. The train will consist of a total of 19 coaches, including 1 generator-cum-luggage van, 1 LSLRD coach, 2 general second-class/chairet cars, 5 sleeper class coaches, 2 AC third economy class coaches, 6 AC third tier coaches, and 2 AC second class coaches.

RPF of NFR has reinforced its commitment to safety, security and service

MALIGAON, 03 APRIL, 2026:

The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has demonstrated a strong and sustained commitment to passenger safety, security and public service through the commendable performance of its Railway Protection Force (RPF) during the financial year 2025-26. Through intensified surveillance, prompt action and a proactive enforcement strategy, the RPF has significantly strengthened security across railway premises, ensuring a safer travel environment for passengers across its jurisdiction. During the year, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway carried out focused drives against theft, touting and other unauthorized activities, leading to multiple detections, arrests and seizure of illegal tickets. It also acted firmly against stone pelting and removed encroachments to safeguard railway property, reflecting a zero-tolerance approach towards threats to safety and operations. Alongside enforcement, the RPF continued its humanitarian efforts by rescuing trafficking victims and assisting persons

through its achievements in FY 2025-26



in distress, including women and children. Significant recoveries of contraband and narcotics further highlight its vigilance, underscoring its commitment to passenger safety, security and the integrity of railway operations. As part of its efforts to leverage technology for enhanced passenger security, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway has made notable progress in the recovery of stolen mobile phones through the CEIR portal. During the period, a total of 2,355 mobile phones were blocked, 1,265 devices were successfully traced and 291 phones were recovered, out

of which 264 were returned to their rightful owners. This initiative highlights the effective use of digital tools by the RPF in addressing passenger grievances and ensuring swift recovery of lost or stolen property, further strengthening public trust in railway security. During the year, the RPF registered 219 cases of theft of passenger belongings, leading to the arrest of 285 individuals. In its continued crackdown on unauthorized activities, 120 cases against touts were detected, resulting in 128 arrests. A total of 757 tickets were seized in these operations, with an estimated value of more than

Rs. 23 lakhs. The force also addressed public safety concerns through action on 154 reported incidents of stone pelting, in which 116 persons were apprehended. Efforts to maintain railway property and prevent illegal occupation saw a notable rise, with 699 encroachments removed in 2025-26 compared to 437 in the previous financial year. In its humanitarian initiatives, the RPF rescued 89 individuals from trafficking, a substantial increase from 10 in 2024-25. Additionally, 1,125 persons, including boys, girls and women in distress (other than trafficking cases), were rescued during the year, up from 952 in the previous year. The RPF also made major recoveries during the period, seizing contraband worth Rs. 1.29 crore and narcotics valued at Rs. 55.29 crore, demonstrating its vigilance against illegal activities. These achievements underline the proactive approach and enhanced operational efficiency of the RPF under NFR, contributing to safer railway operations and improved passenger security across the region.

AAP govt gave 65,000 jobs in Punjab in 4 years, mostly in education

The Aam Aadmi Party government in Punjab announced on Friday that more than 65,000 government jobs have been provided over the past four years under what it calls an "Employment Revolution". Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann highlighted the figures in a statement, presenting the initiative as a major step toward transparent and merit-based recruitment in the state.



According to details shared by the party's Punjab unit, a total of 65,264 government jobs have been handed over across departments without alleged corruption or favouritism. The largest share—16,308 jobs—was created in the education sector, followed by 12,966 in the Punjab Police and 8,306 in the electricity department, it said. Additional recruitment included 6,176 positions in health and medical education and 5,556 in local government bodies, among others. Addressing the media, Mann reiterated the government's commitment to clean hiring practices. "This is the first time in the history of Punjab that the government has given 5,204 jobs in four years. There

who previously considered overseas opportunities or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) preparation are now opting for local employment avenues due to increased opportunities.

The Chief Minister also noted that age limits for several posts were relaxed by up to five years to accommodate candidates who had missed earlier chances due to delays under previous administrations. Mann further criticised past governments, alleging that recruitment processes were often delayed or mired in legal issues, leaving many aspirants over-aged. He contrasted this with his administration's approach, which he said prioritises fairness and efficiency. The chief minister also pointed out that some candidates have progressed through multiple roles, leaving earlier positions after securing better opportunities through competitive exams, reflecting what he described as a dynamic employment ecosystem. The announcement is likely to remain a key political talking point for the ruling party as it continues to highlight governance achievements, particularly in employment generation, ahead of future electoral contests in the state.



TMC seeks Bhabanipur RO removal, alleges BJP link

KOLKATA: (Apr 3) The TMC on Friday sought the immediate removal of the returning officer for the Bhabanipur assembly constituency in West Bengal, alleging his proximity with BJP candidate Suwendu Adhikari. In a representation submitted to West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Agarwal, the ruling party raised objections to the appointment of RO for the Bhabanipur seat in southern Kolkata. The party alleged that the returning officer has a "documented and close association" with senior BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari, who is contesting from Bhabanipur against Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee.

Former Pak PM Imran Khan moves to High Court for early hearing in case

BY SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD: (Apr 3) Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, on Friday approached a high court for an early hearing of their appeals in a case related to unlawfully selling state gifts.

The couple was sentenced to 14 years in the Toshkhana-I case on January 31, 2024, for unlawfully selling state gifts, and they challenged the conviction in the Islamabad High Court (IHC), which suspended the sentences in April, 2024.

In the latest petitions in the IHC, they sought early fixation of appeals against conviction for final adjudication.

One crew member rescued from downed U.S. fighter jet over Iran: U.S. media reports

Unidentified sources quoted by U.S. media reported that one of the two crew on the plane had already been rescued by U.S. special forces but that the search was ongoing for the second crew member.

A crew member from a U.S. fighter jet that was shot down over Iran on Friday (April 3, 2026) has been rescued by U.S. forces.

Axios and CBS News, citing unidentified sources, reported that one of the two crew on the plane had already been rescued by US special forces but that the search was ongoing for the second crew member.

According to The New York Times and Wall Street Journal, the plane was an F-15E fighter, which is crewed by a pilot and a weapons-systems officer in the back seat.

CNN also said that analysis of what Iranian media said



were photos of the wreckage showed an F-15, rather than an F-35 stealth fighter, as claimed in some Iranian reports. U.S. media reported that U.S. President Donald Trump had been briefed on the situation. The U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), responsible for military operations in West Asia, did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment following what would be the first known loss of a U.S. jet inside Iran since U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the war. "Military forces have

launched a search operation to find the American fighter pilot who was hit earlier today," Iran's Fars news agency reported. Also Read | U.S. military says refuelling aircraft crashed in Iraq 'during Operation Epic Fury'; rescue effort under way A local official television station in southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province aired footage of what it said was wreckage of the downed plane, showing a pile of twisted metal fragments in the back of a truck. It broadcast a message from provincial police urging the area's

nomadic peoples and villagers to join the military in the hunt for the crew of the aircraft that may have gone down in the province. "Dear and honourable people of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, if you capture the enemy pilot or pilots alive and hand them over to the police and military forces, you will receive a valuable reward and bonus," said a reporter on the channel. The incident is the first report of a U.S. fighter jet being downed in Iranian territory since the United States and Israel launched its war on the Islamic Republic on February 28, 2026. It was unclear what aircraft was involved, with reports referring to both an F35 and F-15E fighter jet. The New York Times quoted U.S. and Israeli officials confirming the Iranian claims to have shot down a jet, and other major American outlets reported that U.S. forces had launched

a rescue operation.

According to a Western fighter pilot, in the event of ejection over hostile territory, "the first thing to do is to hide and try to signal your position to your comrades".

Pilots wear a combat vest containing a radio/GPS-coded beacon to transmit their position and communicate with search teams, using a system of code words for signalling, the pilot told AFP, on condition of anonymity.

The vest is also equipped with water, vitamin bars, a first-aid kit and a pistol. Pilots are trained to fend for themselves in the wilderness while evading enemy soldiers after an ejection.

Last week, Iranian state media published footage purporting to show a missile targeting a F/A-18 flying over Chabahar, southeast Iran. The images show the U.S. jet flying away with no visible damage.



Pak makes public transport free for a month amid protests over fuel price hike

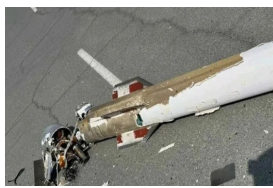
The price of diesel has been raised by 54.9 per cent to 520.35 Pakistani rupees (USD 1.88) per litre, while petrol prices have shot up by 42.7 per cent to 458.40 Pakistani rupees per litre. The revised rates are currently in effect. Pakistani officials have said that state-run public transport in Punjab and Islamabad will be free starting April 4, following a steep rise in fuel prices, news agency AFP reported. A day earlier, the government raised petrol and diesel prices for the second time in less than a month. The price of diesel has been raised by 54.9 per cent to 520.35 Pakistani rupees (USD 1.88) per litre, while petrol prices have shot up by 42.7 per cent to 458.40 Pakistani rupees per litre. The revised rates are currently in effect. The price surge led to massive protests in Pakistan and long queues at the fuel stations. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi announced free-of-cost travel on state-run public transport in Islamabad for a month. The Pakistani government will bear a whopping cost of 350 million Pakistani rupees to support the measure. Meanwhile, the Punjab Chief Minister announced both free travel and targeted subsidies for buses and trucks. Mar-

yam Nawaz Sharif, Punjab's leader, has urged transport operators not to increase fares and promised financial relief as soon as conditions improve. In Sindh, the Karachi provincial government has announced subsidies for bikers and small farmers to lessen the effect of the rising fuel expenses, the AFP report added. Protesters have criticised the government for the sudden fuel price hike, calling it a major burden on a population already grappling with the ripple effects of the economic crisis. Pakistan has been following an austerity drive to conserve fuel amid the global crisis. Last month, the Shehbaz Sharif cabinet introduced a four-day work week for government offices, universities, and extended school holidays and online classes. Even so, protests continue to mar several cities, including Lahore, where citizens demanded an overturn of the fuel price surge. The International Monetary Fund recently reached an initial deal with Pakistan to provide the country with a USD 1.2 billion support package, the AFP report added. The ongoing Iran war, and with the Strait of Hormuz blockade, fuel crisis has hit worldwide and led to price rates surging.

UAE: Five Indians among 12 injured by falling missile debris in Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI, APRIL 3

As many as 12 people, including five Indian nationals, were injured on Friday due to the falling missile debris after a successful interception carried out by UAE's air defence systems in Ajman area of Abu Dhabi. "As part of the ongoing follow-up to the previously reported incident in the Ajman area caused by falling debris following the successful interception by air defence systems, authorities confirm that the incident has resulted in minor to moderate injuries sustained by six individuals of Nepali nationality and five individuals of Indian nationality, and one major injury sustained by an individual of Nepali nationality. The public is reminded to obtain information only from official sources and to avoid



spreading rumours or unverified information," Abu Dhabi Media Office posted on X. Earlier in the day, the office said that authorities responded to an incident of falling debris in the Ajman area after a successful interception by air defence systems. Meanwhile, UAE's Ministry of Defence said that its air defence on Friday engaged 18 ballistic missiles, four cruise missiles and 47 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) launched from Iran. According to the statement, UAE's air defences have engaged 475 ballistic missiles, 23 cruise missiles and 2085 UAVs since the start of Iranian attacks.

Iran not willing to meet US officials in Pak, calls American demands unacceptable

US-Iran ceasefire talks have stalled after Iran refused Islamabad meeting, calling US demands unacceptable, dealing a blow to regional mediation efforts, The Wall Street Journal reported.

Efforts to broker a ceasefire between the United States and Iran have reached a dead end, with Tehran refusing to engage in planned talks, according to a report by The Wall Street Journal.

"Current mediation efforts led by regional countries, including Pakistan, to broker a ceasefire between the United States and Iran have reached a dead end," the report said, underscoring a sharp setback in diplomatic attempts to ease tensions. Iran has told mediators it is unwilling to meet US officials in Islamabad in the coming days and considers Washington's demands un-



acceptable, the Journal reported. "Iran has officially told mediators that it is unwilling to meet US officials in Islamabad and that US demands are unacceptable," according to the report. The refusal comes despite ongoing efforts by regional intermediaries to bring both sides to the negotiating table, with Pakistan playing a key role in facilitating dialogue. Meanwhile, Pakistan's earlier offer to host talks between the United States and Iran now appears uncertain after mediation efforts

failed to make progress. Islamabad had said it was prepared to facilitate discussions, with Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar noting the country would be "honoured to host and facilitate meaningful talks." US President Donald Trump had also indicated that Washington was in discussions with Iran, saying "we're doing extremely well in that negotiation," though he offered no further details. Iran had earlier rejected claims that it was participating in Pakistan-facilitated talks to end

the ongoing conflict, saying it had no role in such efforts. In a statement shared on X by its Consul General in Mumbai, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said there were no direct talks with the United States and that Tehran had only received "excessive and unreasonable demands" through intermediaries. "Pakistan's forums are their own; we didn't participate," the statement said, adding that while regional calls to end the war were welcome, "one must remember who started it." Baghaei also said Iran had received a 15-point proposal from Trump's administration but described the plan as "excessive, unrealistic and irrational." The remarks add to uncertainty around diplomatic efforts involving Pakistan, suggesting that any potential engagement may not be direct and that prospects for talks remain unclear.

US jet crash in Iran: one rescued, search on for second

A pilot and a weapons systems officer of a US F-15E fighter jet that was shot down by the IRGC ejected over Iran. While one of them has been rescued, reports on the other differ. Some say that the American is in Iran's custody, with others reporting that a hunt is on.

Two crew members of a US F-15E shot down by the IRGC on Friday had ejected over Iranian territory. One of the two has since been rescued, according to US and Israeli officials. However, accounts regarding the second crew member vary, with some media reports claiming he is in Iranian custody

while others suggest that search efforts are still underway. US forces launched a search-and-rescue operation before Iran could reach any "survivors," reported The New York Times, citing American and Israeli officials. Sources also told American news website Axios that the aircraft had a two-person crew. The F15-E has two crew members, including the pilot in the front seat, and a Weapons Systems Officer (WSO) in the back seat. According to Israel's Channel 12, citing a Western source, one of the two American crewmembers onboard the downed F-15E Strike Eagle has been rescued and evacuated from southern Iran. US President Trump has been briefed on the downing of an American fighter jet, White House



Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told CNN, as search and rescue efforts continue for the aircraft's crew, a pilot and weapons officer. Iran's Tasnim News Agency and several open-source intelligence handles had earlier reported that at least one American pilot ejected after the jet was shot down over southern Iran. The fighter jet was

reportedly downed by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps on Friday. The news agency also reported that there are indications the US forces attempted to extract them from Iranian territory in a combat-search-and-rescue operation. However, some sources told Tasnim News Agency that at least one pilot has likely been captured

by Iranian forces. The IRGC announced on Friday morning that a second F-35 fighter jet was destroyed in the skies of central Iran by the new advanced defence system of the IRGC Aerospace Force. It said the doomed fighter jet belonged to the Lakenheath squadron. On March 19, Iranian forces claimed that they shot down the first-ever F-35 jet. The IRGC noted that the intruding F-35 fighter jet that was shot down on Friday was completely destroyed and has crashed, and its pilot likely did not eject.

IRANIAN GOVERNOR, MEDIA URGED LOCALS TO HUNT DOWN THE US PILOT, GET REWARDED

An Iranian state media affiliate channel has urged that citizens in the area should help hunt the pilot

down. A report by news agency Reuters said that the governor of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province has announced that whoever captures or kills crew of downed US jet "will be specially commended by the governorate." A local TV channel in Iran's Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province urged citizens who see Americans to "shoot them as soon as you see them." Then they changed the instructions, and the news anchor announced, "Anyone who captures the enemy pilot alive and hands them over to the police will be rewarded with a valuable prize." The Iranian channel also showed metal debris in the back of a pickup truck while making the announcement, reported news agency AP.

Trump's \$1.5 trillion defence budget prioritises military over domestic spending

Amid heightened geopolitical tensions and a US-led Iran conflict, the administration said increased defence spending is vital for security, stressing its goal of strengthening military power to ensure peace through strength.



Donald Trump has unveiled a sweeping 2027 federal budget proposal that prioritises military spending at an unprecedented scale while calling for notable reductions in domestic programs. According to the Associated Press, the plan includes a USD 1.5 trillion allocation for defence—the largest such request in decades—underscoring the administration's focus on strengthening US military capabilities.

The proposed increase had been anticipated, particularly amid rising geopolitical tensions and the backdrop of a US-led conflict involving Iran. The administration argues that bolstering defence is essential to maintaining national security and global stability. "President Trump is committed to rebuilding our military to secure peace through strength," the budget document states. At the same time, the proposal outlines a 10% cut in non-defence spending. The administration

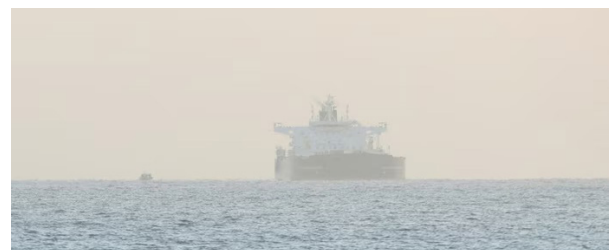
suggests that certain responsibilities currently managed at the federal level—such as childcare and aspects of healthcare—should be shifted to state and local governments. Trump reinforced this stance in remarks ahead of a national address, saying the federal government cannot simultaneously fund wars and expansive domestic programs. "We're fighting wars. We can't take care of day care," Trump said at a low-key White House event on Wednesday. "It's not possible for us to take care of day care, Medicaid, Medicare — all these individual things," he said, adding, "They can do it on a state basis. You can't do it on a federal". While the president's budget reflects policy priorities, it does not carry the force of law. Congress ultimately determines feder-

al spending and frequently modifies or rejects presidential proposals. The document, prepared under Budget Director Russ Vought, serves as a policy blueprint intended to guide lawmakers as they craft appropriations bills. The proposal sets up a likely clash in Congress, where debates over defence and domestic spending are expected to intensify. Lawmakers must weigh competing priorities amid already strained federal finances. The US currently faces nearly USD 2 trillion in annual deficits, with total national debt exceeding USD 39 trillion.

A significant portion of federal spending—around two-thirds of an estimated USD 7 trillion annual budget—is automatically directed toward entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Tanker carrying Iranian crude diverts to China after signalling India

An Eswatini-flagged crude oil tanker Ping Shun, with 6 lakh barrels of Iranian oil, which was India-bound, to deliver India's first shipment in seven years, has changed course to China near Gujarat's Vadinar port.



A US-sanctioned tanker carrying Iranian crude has changed its declared destination mid-voyage from India to China, according to ship-tracking data, casting doubt over what could have been India's first such import in nearly seven years. The Aframax vessel Ping Shun, built in 2002 and sanctioned by the US in 2025, is now signalling Dongying in China with 6 lakh barrels of Iranian oil. Earlier this week, the tanker had listed Vadinar in Gujarat as its intended destination, Kpler data showed. The development came

even as Indian refiners have been exploring opportunities to procure Iranian oil cargoes at sea, following a recent sanctions waiver issued by Washington. If the shipment had reached India, it would have marked the country's first import of Iranian crude since 2019, when purchases were halted after tighter US sanctions came into force.

According to Sumit Ritolia, Lead Research Analyst (Refining and Modelling) at Kpler, the vessel had been en route to Vadinar for the past three days before dropping India as its de-

clared destination near arrival and switching its signal to China. He indicated that the change in route appears to be linked to payment-related concerns. Sellers, Ritolia said, are tightening terms, moving away from the earlier 30–60 day credit window and increasingly seeking upfront or near-term settlement. The identities of the buyer and seller involved in the cargo remained unclear. However, the destination reflected on a ship's Automatic Identification System (AIS), a mandatory tracking system for most commercial

vessels, is not definitive and can be altered at any stage of the voyage. Vadinar, the port initially indicated, houses a 20-million-tonne-per-year refinery operated by Rosneft-backed Nayara Energy. Ritolia noted that while such mid-voyage changes are not uncommon in Iranian crude shipments, they highlight the growing sensitivity of these trades to financial terms and counterparty risks. He added that if payment-related issues are resolved, the cargo could still be redirected to an Indian refinery. At the same time, the episode underscores how commercial conditions are becoming as crucial as logistical factors in determining the flow of Iranian crude to destinations beyond China. India's oil ministry has maintained that any decision on resuming imports from Iran will be guided by techno-commercial feasibility.

Price, Currency Stress Put RBI on Watch

In December 2025, announcing the monetary policy, Sanjay Malhotra, the Reserve Bank of India Governor said the economy was in a "rare goldilocks period." After all CPI (consumer price index) inflation was benign then, even as growth was strong at around 8%. In February 2026, Malhotra stated Indian economy was in a "good spot," pointing to strong growth and low inflation.

As he gets ready to announce the monetary policy next week on April 8, the conflict in West Asia has dramatically altered the situation and the central bank is now faced with a rapidly depreciating rupee, and increasing uncertainty around growth and inflation as the US and Israel war against Iran drags on. The conflict has led to a surge in oil prices to \$100 a barrel and disrupted natural gas supplies, which has hurt several industries. The West Asian region also accounts for a third of remittances and nearly 15 per cent of exports, compounding matters.

The monetary policy committee (MPC) was largely expected to leave interest rates unchanged in the first MPC meeting of the 2026-27 financial year, having



cumulatively reduced the repo rate by 125 bps to 5.25% from 6.50% over 2025. However, now some have begun to wonder if there will be a need to raise interest rates this year, if the conflict prolongs and that drives up inflation. More importantly, the central bank will also be expected to take further steps to shore up the rupee, which declined 4% against the US dollar in March.

The Economic Survey this year had

projected India's GDP to grow in the 6.8-7.2% range in FY27. The estimates were revised upwards in February to 7.0-7.4%. Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran, though, warned recently that there was a "considerable downside" to the growth expectations.

Sonal Badhan, economist at Bank of Baroda, expects the MPC to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at 5.25%, while also maintaining the stance at neutral.

Importantly, she feels this policy should mark the end of the rate cut cycle.

"Impact of war on growth and inflation will become clearer in the next 3-4 months. RBI is likely to then take a call on the direction of its rate trajectory. If inflation overshoots its upper band of tolerance (6%), then there will be a chance of rate hike towards the end of the year," said Badhan.

Rajani Sinha, chief economist at CareEdge Ratings is also expecting the MPC to keep interest rates on hold this time. The immediate effects of higher global crude oil prices are expected to remain somewhat contained with the price increase burden being shared by the oil marketing companies, she noted. "The moderation in domestic growth prospects and heightened inflation risks amid the highly volatile global landscape have complicated the RBI's policy trade-offs, warranting a careful balance between supporting growth impulses and containing inflation pressures," said Sinha.

Rupee worries

The rupee had been depreciating against the US dollar over 2025 and the

conflict has only added to the downward pressures. Heavy selling by foreign portfolio investors has also weighed adversely on the currency. On March 30, the rupee hit an intraday low of 95.21 against the greenback, and closed at a record low of 94.83, forcing the Reserve Bank to step in with measures to stem the slide.

Late on Wednesday, the Reserve Bank barred banks from offering rupee non-deliverable forward (NDF) contracts to corporate clients a move aimed at curbing speculative activity. NDF is a financial derivative used to hedge or speculate on currency exchange rates.

The move had its desired effect, with the rupee strengthening by 1.6% to 93.10 against the dollar on Thursday. Analysts say more measures efforts towards supporting the rupee and ensuring liquidity in the system could be expected in the MPC meet next week. "Weakness in foreign investment flows, pressures on the current account deficit and global risk-off sentiment have kept the rupee under pressure," said Sinha of CareEdge, who feels the rupee was significantly undervalued at the end of February in terms of real effective exchange rate, suggesting

that should global conditions improve, the rupee could appreciate.

She expects the rupee to average 92-93 if the conflict ends soon and oil averages around \$90 a barrel through FY27. However, if the conflict were to intensify, the weakening pressure on the rupee may persist, Sinha added.

Economists at SBI Mutual Fund note that if foreign institutional investor flows fail to revive, the rupee will remain vulnerable to global shocks. They are expecting a 4-5% depreciation in 2026, more than earlier expected 2-3% fall. They are also expecting the real GDP growth to moderate to around 6.9% in the current financial year from 7.8% in FY26.

They expect the RBI to keep rates on hold, given the downside risks to growth and manufacturing activity.

"Current oil prices are 50% above RBI's assumption of \$70 per barrel. Despite this, the we continue to see a high bar for monetary tightening. Growth risks appear underpriced, and the policy mix is likely to tilt decisively towards fiscal rather than monetary measures in a stagflationary environment," the SBI MF economists said.

India, China Explore Trade Cooperation

NEW DELHI, APRIL 3

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal held a meeting with China's Commerce Minister Wang Wentao to discuss bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the World Trade Organisation's 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14).

Sharing the details of the meeting, spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in India in a social media post on X said during the meeting, both the leaders expressed willingness to deepen engagement between the two countries.

"China's Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao met



with Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry of India, during the 14th WTO ministerial conference. China stands ready to work with India to fully leverage the role of bilateral economic and trade cooperation as a ballast," the post read. Earlier, sharing his experience at the WTO meet-

ing, Goyal had highlighted India's engagement with the United States and said India is pushing for preferential access. He also menito and the best possible deal in its ongoing trade engagement with the United States, underlining that the country is currently in a very sweet spot among

emerging economies.

"Our approach is that India should get preferential access, market access and, having got the best deal compared to any of our competitors or any other emerging or developing economy, we are sitting on a very sweet spot," Goyal said.

He added that as the world's fastest-growing major economy, India offers a compelling India opportunity that global investors are expected to increasingly tap. Piyush Goyal also held extensive diplomatic outreach, including 12 multilateral and 24 bilateral meetings aimed at strengthening trade partnerships at the WTO.

While addressing the media

after the four-day conference, Minister Goyal said the discussion witnessed intensive deliberations on key global trade issues, including WTO reforms, fisheries subsidies, investment facilitation for development, e-commerce, agriculture, and other developmental concerns.

He informed that three key decisions were announced during the conference, including measures aimed at strengthening the integration of small economies into the multilateral trading system, with a focus on improving trade logistics, connectivity, and border processes to enhance their participation in global trade

US Pharma Tariffs: Limited Hit to India

India's generic pharmaceutical industry, which accounts for the bulk of domestic pharmaceutical exports to the US, is expected to remain largely insulated from the fresh tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump.

A year after announcing the "Liberation Day" reciprocal tariffs that were later struck down by the US Supreme Court, President Trump on April 2 announced a levy of up to 100% tariffs on certain branded medicines and key pharmaceutical ingredients. Generic pharmaceuticals and their associated ingredients, including biosimilar products, have been excluded at this time from the tariffs. The order following a Section 232 investigation by the US launched on May 1, 2025, is expected to be implemented over 120 days or from August and September this year.

"According to the Food and Drug Administration, as of 2025, approximately 53% of patented pharmaceutical products distributed domestically are produced outside the country. The degree of import reliance is significant at the API level with only 15% of patented APIs by volume domestically produced for the United States market," the order noted. However, India, for which the US is the top export market with pharmaceuticals being among the largest



exports, will not be severely impacted by the move for now. Experts point out that most of India's pharmaceutical exports to the US are in the nature of generic drugs. "Around 90% of India's pharmaceutical exports to the US are generics, which remain exempt," said Ajay Srivastava, founder, Global Trade Research Initiative. However, Indian firms producing branded or specialty drugs, or supplying inputs for patented medicines, could face tariff pressure, he cautioned, adding that the larger concern is future uncertainty if tariffs are extended to generics.

India's pharmaceutical exports to the US have been growing steadily over the last few years—from \$6.62 billion in 2021 to \$8.87 billion in 2024. In 2025, it grew further and India exported \$9.7 billion worth of pharmaceuticals to the US, accounting for 38% of its global pharmaceutical exports of \$25.8 billion. In fact,

pharma exports remained excluded from the reciprocal tariffs that were levied by the US last year.

However, the US has been far from satisfied with India's trade policies on medical device and pharmaceutical price controls, which it also highlighted in its recent 2026 National Trade Estimate Report on foreign trade barriers. It pointed out that US medical device and pharmaceutical companies continue to raise concerns that price controls by India have not been increased in line with inflation and do not differentiate on the basis of the cost of production or technological innovation, which dissuades U.S. companies from serving the market. "Additionally, US innovative pharmaceutical companies are largely unable to access the majority of India's pharmaceutical market because the Indian Government's largest public health program," it said.

33,000 Volunteers Storm 1,400 Water Bodies in Reliance's #Water4Life Blitz



MUMBAI, APRIL 3

In a tidal wave of community action for World Water Day, Reliance Foundation's #Water4Life has rallied over 33,000 volunteers to cleanse and restore 1,400+ water bodies across 108 districts in 15 states and one Union Territory—just 10 days in. The nationwide push hit 912 villages, hauling out 85,000

kg of waste while fixing channels and boosting water flow. Southern India led with 146 villages in 15 Andhra Pradesh and Telangana districts, powered by 2,500 Village Climate Champions.

Highlights: Waste removal, segregation, and disposal from lakes, rivers, ponds, and coasts. **Long-term focus:** Governance, ownership, and replication

via awareness drives. Ties into Foundation's rural revolution—2,000 lakh cubic meters harvested in 91,000+ villages, sustaining millions. Farmers, women, youth, institutions, and employees united for immediate cleanups and enduring stewardship. The campaign surges forward, scaling participation for India's water future.

HPCL Suspends 10 LPG Distributors

NEW DELHI, APRIL 3

State-owned Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) on Friday said it has suspended 10 liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) distributors for alleged malpractices, reiterating its zero-tolerance policy against irregularities in its distribution network. Taking to the social media platform X, the company informed that it initiated strict action by suspending 10 LPG distributors found involved in malpractice. "With a zero-tolerance approach, we are ensuring accountability and taking timely disciplinary action wherever required," the company said in a statement. The development comes amid heightened government focus on curbing irregularities and misinformation related to LPG availability and distribution.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas had on Thursday urged states and Union Territories to intensify proactive communication to counter rumours and misinformation that have triggered panic buying and hoarding in some areas. In its communication, the ministry noted that misinformation and fake news regarding availability and pricing of petroleum products, including LPG, had increased significantly across social media platforms, putting additional strain on the distribution network. It also called on states and UTs to conduct daily press briefings at a senior level and ensure timely dissemination of accurate information through social and electronic media to reassure citizens about adequate availability and smooth supply.

The government further asked authorities to continue strict action against malpractices such as hoarding and black marketing.

It also called on states and UTs to conduct daily press briefings at a senior level and ensure timely dissemination of accurate information through social and electronic media to reassure citizens about adequate availability and smooth supply.

The government further asked authorities to continue strict action against malpractices such as hoarding and black marketing.

Japan sets up special cell to boost FDI flows into India

NEW DELHI, APRIL 3

Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has established a new Japan-India Economic Affairs Division to help Japanese companies invest in India, as part of its strategy to bolster bilateral economic ties.

"Through the establishment of the Japan-India Economic Affairs Division, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan will further make public-private efforts to promote companies' expansion of business and investment from Japan to India and to deepen cooperation in the area of economic security with India," the ministry said in a statement.

"Given India's high rate of economic growth, the importance of economic cooperation in Japan-India relations is growing day by day," it said.

The new initiative is expected to support collaboration in high-growth sectors such as artificial intelligence, startups, and critical minerals, aligning

with broader strategic priorities between the two countries.

The initiative reflects Tokyo's growing focus on India as a key economic and strategic partner amid shifting global supply chains and geopolitical alignments. The move also complements the India-Japan goal of achieving 10 trillion yen (around \$62.6 billion) in private sector investment in India by 2035, as agreed during the 2025 bilateral summit.

Cumulative Japanese FDI in India has reached about \$43.2 billion since 2000, with key investments concentrated in sectors such as automobiles, electronics, telecommunications, chemicals, and financial services.

Surveys indicate that while Japanese manufacturers view India as a promising growth market, many remain cautious as they are not familiar with the rules and regulations in the country, which vary across states.

The new facilitation cell aims to address these concerns by providing institu-

tional support and easing entry barriers for companies looking to expand in India.

Japanese FDI into India has been increasing, with inflows totalling \$3.1 billion in 2023-24. Capital has primarily flowed into automobiles, electrical equipment, telecommunications, chemicals, financial services, and pharmaceuticals. Dedicated Japan Industrial Townships (JITs) are also operating in India, such as those in Neemrana and Sri City, hosting over 100 Japanese companies.

This new office complements existing support mechanisms, such as the SME Facilitation Cell launched by the Indian Embassy in Tokyo and JETRO's support for startups. This initiative is part of a larger, long-term strategic partnership discussed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and then Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba in August 2025 to strengthen security and economic ties between the two countries, particularly within the Quad framework.

AIBEA Seeks Probe into HDFC Bank Issue

MUMBAI

The All India Bank Employees' Association has written to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, seeking an inquiry into the affairs at HDFC Bank after the surprise resignation of its non-executive chairman Atanu Chakraborty last month.

The AIBEA said there is a need for HDFC Bank's 120 million customers, shareholders and also the general public to feel reassured, and hence sought Sitharaman's intervention in the matter.

In a letter written on March 31 and shared with the media on Thursday, the AIBEA said the largest private sector lender, classified as a domes-



tically systemically important bank by the RBI, faces developments that raise serious questions about governance standards, regulatory oversight, and systemic stability.

"The explicit mention of ethical incongruence by an Independent Director is highly unusual and warrants immediate investigation," the letter,

a copy of which was reviewed by PTL, said.

Chakraborty, a retired bureaucrat, had quit the bank on March 18, and flagged issues of ethics and values, which raised more concerns about governance practices at HDFC Bank.

AIBEA said all banks must be answerable to the public and follow the highest standards of transparency and accountability. AIBEA said the government must do a comprehensive inquiry into the matter, assess governance, compliance, and risk management practices and initiate an independent probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation or Central Vigilance Commissioner if warranted.

All the findings must be disclosed publicly to ensure transparency and depositor confidence, and appropriate committees of the Parliament must also examine the matter, the letter said.

Chakraborty did not cite specific reasons in his resignation letter, and the bank's executives and some fellow board members claimed he did not divulge any specifics even after they were sought, leading them to term the developments as "baffling."

In a media interview two days ago, Chakraborty had said that alleged mis-selling of AT-1 bonds by its Dubai unit and underperformance were among the factors that led him to resign.

Activewear brand Techno Sport aims for Rs 1,000 cr in revenue

MUMBAI: Homegrown activewear brand TechnoSport is targeting Rs 1,000 crore revenue in 2026-27, supported by a stronger brand presence in the domestic market and growing exports, a senior company executive said. "We are looking at closing FY26 with Rs 600 crore revenue and going forward, this financial year, we are potentially looking at touching Rs 1,000 crore as a goal," TechnoSport CEO Puspun Maity told PTL. The company has a strong distribution channel with approximately 7,000 retailers across the country, with a strong presence in various states, including AP, Telangana, Karnataka, Odisha, and Maharashtra, among others.

The Indian real estate sector has reached a tipping point where guess work is being replaced by a data-driven "multi-layered stack." As the industry matures into a \$5.8 trillion giant by 2047, the role of the advisor has undergone a radical transformation. No longer just a broker of information, the modern real estate advisor has become a PropTech Strategist, navigating a buyer journey that is increasingly digital-first, non-linear, and intent-driven.



How PropTech and data strategy are redefining India's real estate advisory in 2026

2026: THE FOUR PILLARS OF ADVISORY INTELLIGENCE

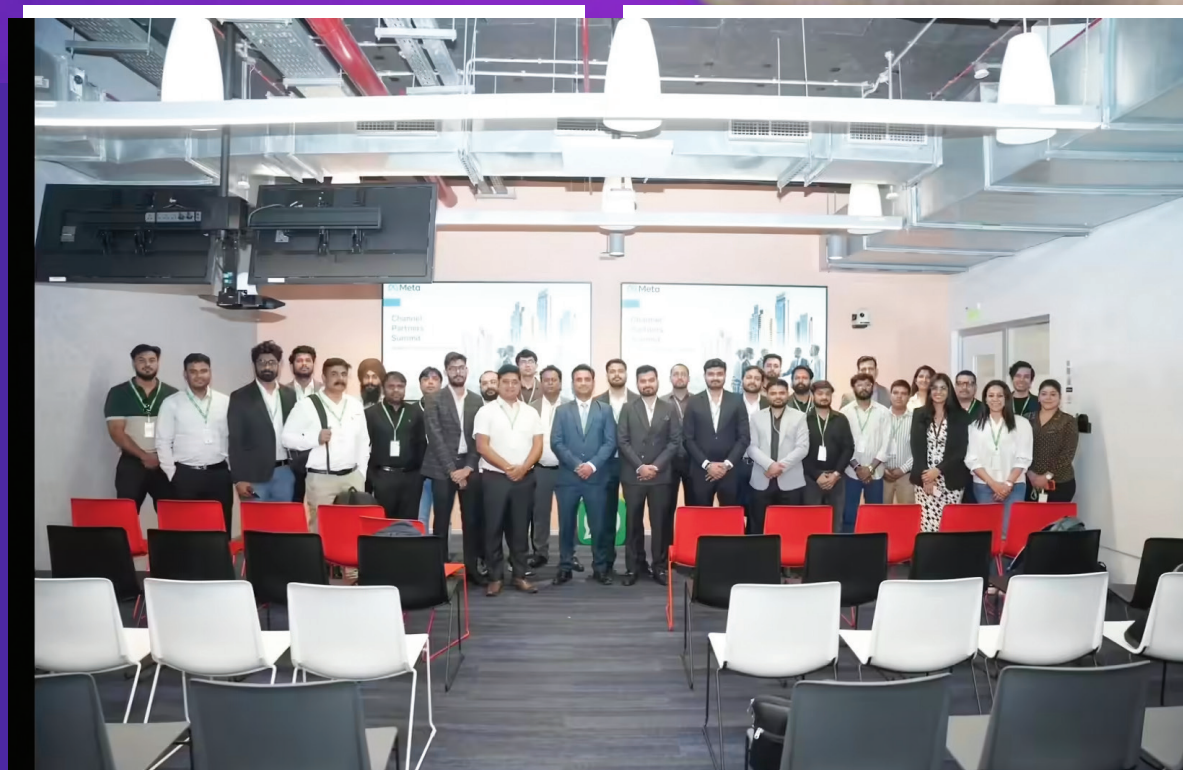
A deep dive into the current landscape reveals four dominant trends that are separating market leaders from traditional players:

■ **The "Digital Curb Appeal" Era** In 2026, a property's first impression doesn't happen at the site gate; it happens on a smartphone. "Digital Curb Appeal"—the ability of a creative asset to stop a scroll and capture intent within three seconds—is now the primary driver of site visits. Advisors are moving beyond static images to immersive 3D walkthroughs and AI-optimized video content that builds emotional resonance before a physical handshake ever occurs.

■ **Precision Micro-Market Dominance** The conversation has shifted from "which city" to "which specific corridor." Data intelligence now allows advisors to identify high-growth micro-pockets—where a three-kilometre difference can mean a completely different buyer profile and absorption curve. By leveraging geospatial tools and heatmaps, advisors are now providing "Precision Advisory" that predicts capital appreciation with higher accuracy than ever before.

■ **The Rise of Conversational Commerce** The era of intrusive cold-calling has given way to WhatsApp—specifically through Click-to-WhatsApp journeys—allowing advisors to manage high-intent leads with instant, automated responsiveness that transitions seamlessly into human consultation. This shift has improved lead capture rates by up to 40% for firms adopting a "chat-first" strategy.

■ **Collaborative Ad Intelligence (Co-Op Marketing)** The industry is moving toward a "unified data model" where national developers and advisory firms share marketing intelligence. This collaborative model ensures that advertising spends are optimized through shared platform insights, allowing for a more cohesive brand narrative and reducing the "noise" for the end consumer.



THE META-GODREJ PROPERTIES MASTERCLASS: A TACTICAL RESPONSE

To address these shifts, Godrej Properties, in collaboration with Meta India, recently hosted a high-level Real Estate Advisory Masterclass at Meta India's headquarters in Gurugram. The session brought together 18 of the country's most sophisticated advisory firms from its Platinum and Icons cohorts for a strategic briefing on the future of the industry. "Meta empowers Godrej's real estate channel partners with cutting-edge tools and insights, significantly boosting their digital business prospects. The day focussed on delivering transformative value, equipping partners to harness AI and advanced digital solutions for accelerated growth," says Meta Real Estate (India) Director Shweta Bajpai.

MOVING THE NEEDLE FOR THE ECOSYSTEM

"Godrej Properties has identified the shift from instinct-led selling to intelligence-led advising early and is building toward it deliberately. This partnership with Meta is the logical step, extending that same intelligence advantage to every partner in our network. As industry leaders, we believe it to be our duty to elevate the entire ecosystem as we move up the curve," says Godrej Properties CMO & CCO Lalit Makhijani. The significance of this initiative extends beyond a single event. It represents a deliberate effort by Godrej Properties to institutionalize digital maturity across its entire partner network. By empowering advisors with PropTech intelligence and advanced digital tools, Godrej is effectively raising the bar for the entire real estate ecosystem.



Hyderabad civic body locks over 100 big properties over tax dues

As the financial year comes to a close, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) is taking stronger action against long-standing property tax defaulters. So far, over 100 major commercial properties have been sealed, and the GHMC is targeting the recovery of hundreds of crores in unpaid dues. According to the GHMC, over 30,000 commercial establishments—ranging from luxury hotels and retail chains to small corner shops—have failed to pay their taxes. The civic body is now focusing on the worst offenders, sealing their premises to force them to pay up.

This follows multiple unanswered notices issued over the years. High-profile cases include the Katriya Hotel in Somajiguda, which remains sealed due to pending tax liabilities of Rs 6.16 crore, and the Aurora College in Nampally, which owes Rs 1.28 crore. Several other properties have also been affected. A complex in Chappal Bazar, Amberpet, was sealed for owing Rs 4 lakh since 2013, and a commercial building in Attapur was locked for owing Rs 11 lakh since 2021. The enforcement drive appears to be yielding quick results, with several businesses clearing their dues almost immediately after facing action. Recently, for instance, the Belson Taj Hotel in Secunderabad paid its outstanding bill of Rs 35 lakh within minutes of being sealed by the GHMC.

GHMC EXTENDS DRIVE TO VACANT LANDS

GHMC has extended its tax collection drive to include vacant land as well as built properties. Sandesh Estates in Jubilee Hills, which owes Rs 4.45 crore, and Leela Ventures, which owes Rs 2.62 crore, are among the top defaulters. Officials have warned that building permissions for these properties will be withheld until the outstanding payments have been made. "Non-payment could lead to action under the Revenue Recovery Act, including the auctioning of properties. With just days to go until the end of the 2025-26 financial year, we urge defaulters to take advantage of the ongoing One-Time Settlement (OTS) scheme, which offers a 90% waiver on interest. Once the scheme ends on April 1, outstanding dues will rise sharply," said a senior official in the GHMC revenue wing. Three civic bodies' property tax arrears hit Rs 4,000 crore. Meanwhile, property tax collections in CURE - GHMC, Cyberabad Municipal Corporation and Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation - stood at over Rs 2,300 crore. However, all three corporations fell short of Rs 4,000 crore of overall property tax collections, which include arrears from the previous years.

PROPERTY TAX COLLECTIONS IN TELANGANA HIT 100 CRORE IN ONE DAY



A sharp enforcement drive, coupled with the ongoing one-time settlement (OTS) scheme, has triggered a steep rise in property tax collections across three municipal corporations in the Telangana core urban region, with revenues crossing Rs 100 crore in a single day. Until last week, daily collections ranged between Rs 3 crore and Rs 5 crore. The past few days, however, saw a dramatic spike, with collections touching Rs 20 crore on Sunday, Rs 50 crore on Monday and over Rs 100 crore on Tuesday, taking the cumulative collections to around Rs 2,500 crore. Officials attributed the surge to a multi-pronged crackdown, including sealing of high-value commercial properties, issuing notices, and intensified field-level efforts. "There has been a big jump in property tax collections within a week. Measures like sealing commercial buildings, door-to-door campaigns and targeted SMS alerts have significantly improved compliance," a senior revenue official from GHMC said. The momentum is expected to continue, with civic bodies projecting collections of nearly Rs 120 crore in a day in the coming week. Meanwhile, GHMC commissioner RV Karnan urged citizens to leverage the early bird scheme by paying property tax in advance for the 2026-27 financial year. "A 5% rebate will be offered to taxpayers who clear their full property tax in April," he said. He clarified that the rebate applies only to advance payments for 2026-27 and not to pending dues from previous years, urging property owners to pay early and avail the benefit.

CAG questions land allotment by Telangana government to Amazon in Pharma City

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), in its report questioned the allotment of 48 acres to Amazon Data Services India Private Ltd within HPC limits, noting that the project was originally conceived as a dedicated pharmaceutical manufacturing cluster under National Investment and Manufacturing Zone (NIMZ) guidelines. In its report, the CAG examined land allotments and project implementation in HPC and highlighted key irregularities. As per these guidelines, land in such zones must be used strictly for purposes defined in the master plan. However, the audit said allotting land for a data centre amounted to a deviation from the stated objective of developing a pharma-focused industrial hub.

It also flagged concerns over employment generation, observing that the shift could impact the project's target of creating 1.66 lakh direct jobs, as data centres have relatively low employment potential. "The allotment of land in the HPC for the establishment of a data centre was a deviation from the purpose for which the HPC was proposed. The target of generation of direct employment for 1.66 lakh people at the HPC was also jeopardised since the employment potential of a data centre was very minimal. By executing the sale deed TGIC lost the remedy of resumption of the premises in the event of non-implementation of the unit," the CAG said in its report.

The Telangana govt, in its reply to the audit in Oct 2023, maintained that the project is still under implementation and that the allotment to the company does not impact the overall objectives of HPC. It said the decision was taken in line with the framework agreement entered into with the firm. HPC, proposed during the previous govt, was planned across 19,333 acres in Rangareddy district at an estimated cost of ₹19,098 crore, including ₹1,550 crore for land acquisition. The project was expected to attract investments of ₹64,000 crore and generate significant employment. Development was planned in two phases, with phase I covering around 8,200 acres between 2017 and 2020.



However, the audit found that land acquisition has been fragmented, with 10,238 acres not contiguous. This has delayed even phase I of the project, leading to non-achievement of the expected employment generation of 50,000 jobs in the initial phase. The report warned that delays could escalate project costs due to rising market value of surrounding land and potential demands for higher compensation. The CAG also flagged weak institutional monitoring. A special task force committee set up for speedy implementation of the project, which was supposed to meet monthly, met only three times till May 2016 and has not convened since.

Beyond HPC, the audit pointed to systemic issues in land management by the state's industrial infrastructure agency. It noted that despite holding a land bank of over 53,000 acres as of March

2022, the agency had not conducted periodic surveys since its formation in 2014. In the absence of regular surveys, it was unable to detect encroachments, track changes in land use, enforce contractual conditions, or ensure proper planning and maintenance of infrastructure. The audit also observed that inspections of industrial units were not carried out to check compliance with agreement conditions. This limited the govt's ability to take corrective action or impose penalties where required.

In its response, the state govt said that due to non-alienation of certain lands, only advance possession had been taken and these were not reflected in the books of accounts. As a result, physical verification was not undertaken and reconciliation remains pending. It added that a special drive is currently underway to reconcile the land bank.



Shreyas Iyer leads Punjab to win over CSK

CHENNAI



Priyansh Arya's opening blitz of 39 off 11 balls and skipper Shreyas Iyer's fifty propelled Punjab Kings to their second victory in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, beating Chennai Super Kings by five wickets at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Friday.

Priyansh Arya ignited the chase with an impressive start, setting the tone for Punjab Kings' pursuit of 210 against Chennai Super Kings. Brought in as a substitute, Arya made his intentions clear. He attacked Khaleel Ahmed right from the beginning. A sharp, straight drive for four, followed by a powerful six over midwicket, marked his entrance. While Khaleel managed some movement against Prabhsimran Singh, he still gave away 14 runs in the first over.

There was no break in the second over as Arya attacked Matt Henry, hitting 4, 6, and 4 to reach 25 off just six balls. By the time PBKS scored their fifty in an incredible 3.2 overs, Arya had already piled up 27 off eight balls, easily finding the boundary. This was a bold, modern T20 strategy. Seeing a target of over 200, he went all out in the power play to take control of the chase. His 39 off 11 at a strike rate of 355 may not have been a match-winning innings by itself, but it clearly represented the role of an aggressive opener today: deal maximum damage early and establish a platform.

At the other end, Prabhsimran kept the momentum going, but CSK tried to regain control with spin by bringing in Noor Ahmad and adding Rahul Chahar as an impact bowler. However, PBKS kept pushing, with Cooper Connolly showing intent against spin. However, a costly mistake on a low-risk second call cost PBKS their momentum at a crucial time, when Shreyas Iyer walked confidently to the crease with a chance to score runs. Noor Ahmad sprinted from midwicket to intercept the ball, while Sarfaraz Khan made an excellent backup play and threw an accurate ball to

the non-strikers' end to catch Prabhsimran (43) out after Connolly returned him.

Connolly holed out off a full toss, which he couldn't quite hit past mid-off. That was a missed opportunity, and one he'll regret on the long walk back. With 83 runs needed off 49 balls, PBKS still has Shreyas Iyer and Nehal Wadhwa at the crease to steady the chase. CSK, on the other hand, has limited spin left. They have just one over from Noor Ahmad and two from Rahul Chahar. After that, it will be up to the pacers, who have given away runs all evening, to finish the job.

Ayush Mhatre starred with a sensational 73 off 43 as late cameos from Sarfaraz Khan (32 off 12) and Shivam Dube (45* off

27) powered Chennai Super Kings to 209/5. CSK's innings had a shaky start, with Sanju Samson (7) falling early yet again, exposing his struggles against movement. Amid the early setbacks, Mhatre took charge, showing great intent and preparation, especially against short balls. Having worked on his pull shot, he confidently took on the pacers, racing to 59 off 32 balls inside nine overs, including four fours and five sixes.

While Mhatre dominated, Ruturaj Gaikwad (28 off 22) struggled to accelerate, falling at a time when CSK needed momentum. Mhatre, however, continued to dictate terms even after the Power-play, cleverly countering the wide

Yorker strategy with smart placement and quick adjustments.

His dismissal proved to be a turning point. At 123, Mhatre had scored 73 of those runs — nearly 60% — highlighting CSK's over-reliance on him as the rest of the batting managed just 38 off 32 balls, with 12 extras. Sarfaraz then injected late momentum with an inventive cameo, using ramps and deft touches to counter both pace and yorkers, striking at 266. Though Dube initially struggled, he finished strongly, anchoring the death overs with a composed unbeaten 45. CSK's 209/5 also marked their first 200-plus total at Chepauk since April 2024, signalling a return to their high-scoring best.

'That's the way they have been battling for years now,' says Shreyas Iyer
Chennai, April 4 (SocialNews.XYZ) Punjab Kings captain Shreyas Iyer credited his side's explosive start and collective batting effort for chasing down a 200-plus total against Chennai Super Kings, highlighting the confidence within the group and a dressing-room mindset focused on internal standards rather than external expectations.

PBKS once again proved why they are the masters of 200-plus chases in the IPL, pulling off the feat for the ninth time as Priyansh Arya and Shreyas Iyer dismantled the Chennai Super Kings attack. Arya set the tone with a blistering start, racing to 33 off just 9 balls as PBKS brought up their fifty in no time, while Iyer anchored the chase with a calm yet commanding knock, accelerating from 4 off 5 to a 26-ball fifty.

"Obviously, there is a worry before getting onto the field. But the way we started today, I think it was an exceptional start. Priyansh and Prabh are doing the job at the start and setting the bench for us to go inside. I feel that the way they have been batting for years now stabilises the rhythm for us. I am glad that everyone is getting to bat in the first two games. It gives us confidence. Whenever we are stuck in a pressure situation, people know how to go about it. It is not planned. But we just decided inside each other rather than anyone outside. A certain sort of clarity as well," said Iyer after the match.

In contrast, CSK remain winless after two games, and the bigger concern will be being outplayed in conditions that should have favoured them. Despite posting a strong 209 for 5 on a surface suited to their batting strength, their bowling once again failed to hold up, exposing a key weakness early in the season. Priyansh Arya ignited the chase with an impressive start, setting the tone for Punjab Kings' pursuit of 210 against Chennai Super Kings.

All India Chess Masters

Mhasane takes sole lead; title race heads into final round



MUMBAI: Shriram Mhasane surged into the sole lead with an impressive 6.5 points after Round 7 of the All India Chess Masters (Season 3), underway at the Mumbai Chess Centre, Pedder Road in Mumbai on Friday. Mhasane's crucial victory over Arjun Singh helped him break away from the chasing pack, giving him a clear edge heading into the final round of the tournament. On the top board, Rajveer Nahar held Shreyansh Somaia to a draw in a tightly contested encounter, with both players moving to 5.5 points.

IPL 2026

DC are aiming to win at least five out of seven home games: Kuldeep



NEW DELHI: Delhi Capitals' (DC) left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav said the team's target in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 is to make their home games count by winning at least five of the seven matches scheduled at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi on Friday. After beating Lucknow Super Giants by six wickets, DC will begin their home leg of IPL 2026 by taking on five-time champions Mumbai Indians on Saturday afternoon. In IPL 2025, DC had a torrid time in New Delhi, winning just one out of five games and a win percentage standing at just 20, as they missed out on a spot in the playoffs.

Bihar: Indian wrestler defeats Iranian counterpart in a tight contest

PATNA

A thrilling and historic contest unfolded at the grand 'Mahadanga' wrestling tournament held in Nadwa village under Barh, at the ancestral residence of Moka MLA Anant Kumar Singh on Friday. The event drew a massive crowd and turned into a celebration of traditional wrestling with an international touch.

The highlight of the tournament was an electrifying bout between India and Iran. Delhi-based wrestler Jonty Gurjar took on Iran's renowned wrestler Halal in a high-intensity contest that kept spectators on the edge of their seats.

From the very beginning, both wrestlers displayed immense strength and skill, engaging in a closely fought contest.



However, Jonty Gurjar's agility, technique, and tactical superiority ultimately proved decisive, as he pinned his Iranian opponent to the ground and secured a decisive victory. The triumph was celebrated

not just as a personal win but as a moment of pride for the nation, with the crowd cheering loudly as the Indian wrestler brought glory to the Tricolour.

At the conclusion of the event, Anant Kumar Singh and Karm-

veer Singh honoured the winner by presenting him with the Winner's Cup. Addressing the gathering, Anant Singh emphasised the importance of promoting rural sports and nurturing talent at the grassroots level.

The Iranian wrestler was also appreciated for his sportsmanship, reflecting the spirit of international competition.

Adding a cultural flair to the event, Anant Singh entertained the crowd by waving his traditional gamcha to the beat of a song by renowned Bhojpuri singer Gunjan Singh, drawing cheers and applause. The Mahadanga not only showcased sporting excellence but also highlighted the vibrant rural sporting culture of Bihar, inspiring youth and reinforcing the importance of traditional games.



ISL 2025-26: Second-half turnaround helps Punjab edge Mohammedan

NEW DELHI

Punjab FC came from behind with two quick goals early in the second half to defeat Mohammedan Sporting Club 2-1 in the Indian Super League 2025-26 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi on Friday. The victory saw Punjab FC climb to fifth in the standings with 11 points, while Mohammedan remain pointless at the bottom. The Shers captain, Dani Ramirez, was named the Player of the Match. Punjab

FC head coach Panagiotis Dilmeris made two changes to his side, bringing in Bede Amarachi Osuji and Suresh Meitei. Mohammedan SC head coach Mehrajuddin Wadoo made six changes following their previous outing, introducing Yash Chickro, Makan Winkle Chothe, Zodingliana, Hira Mondal, Lalremsanga Fanai, and Israfil Dewan. Punjab made a positive start at home, creating early chances. Striker Nsungusi Jr struck the crossbar in the seventh minute.

Mary Kom, Bhutia emphasise how Khelo India Tribal Games can bridge gap between talent and excellence

RAIPUR

Six-time World Championship medalist Mary Kom and former India football captain Bhaichung Bhutia underlined the importance of grassroots investment and structured development pathways while addressing reporters at the Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 in Raipur on Friday.

For creating future champions, both the legendary sportspersons maintained that Indian families need to discourage children from indulging in more screen time and rather send them to playgrounds to experience various sports.

Bhutia, one of Indian football's most iconic figures, stressed that while initiatives like Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) are a strong starting point, long-term success hinges on strengthening the foundation of sport in the country. Reflecting on his own journey, he pointed to the role played by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) in nurturing young athletes at a time when sporting infrastructure was still evolving.

"I have been a SAI product since the first batch of SAI products in 1986. Investing in the grassroots level is the need, but we tend to overlook that and only focus on the top level," Bhutia said, emphasising the need for sustained attention at the base of the sporting pyramid.

He pointed out that talent exists in abundance, particularly in tribal regions, but requires the right ecosystem to flourish.

"Tribal communities naturally have immense sporting talent, and we've seen this very clearly, particularly from the Northeast, where so many athletes have represented India brilliantly and brought us to the world stage. Giving young people a



platform is very important. I feel that in the future, many more people from tribal communities will come through, and this is just the beginning. In the years to come, we will see a lot more talent emerging from tribal backgrounds," he said.

Bhutia also reflected on how environment and access play a defining role in shaping athletes, recalling his own early days. "See, when I talk about where I come from, I always say this everywhere, when you're from the Northeast, you do two things: football or music. That was my environment. Growing up, no other sport was played by the other kids around me. Football was the culture in Sikkim, in every village, every town."

Echoing his views, Mary Kom praised the Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) as a transformative initiative that can bridge long-standing gaps in access and awareness. "First of all, I want to congratulate

the Chhattisgarh Government. The Khelo India Tribal Games began here in Chhattisgarh, and I'm very happy about it. I was invited to support this initiative, and I do so wholeheartedly because our tribal communities have enormous potential. In earlier times, they didn't get platforms like this, and there wasn't enough awareness either. That's perhaps why many talented children couldn't advance further," the 2012 London Olympics bronze medalist boxer said.

The star boxer from Manipur also highlighted how government-backed programmes have begun to change the landscape. "But today, thanks to Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's Khelo India and Fit India programmes, children are slowly taking the initiative, participating, and representing the country. This is a tremendous thing for India's sporting future," she said.

If Cameron Green is not going to bowl, KKR should bring in another specialist batter: Sunil Gavaskar

MUMBAI

Cameron Green's unavailability to bowl for Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) because of workload management imposed by Cricket Australia is blowing up into a big controversy in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, with many former India players commenting on this issue. After KKR captain Ajinkya Rahane and former India opener Wasim Jaffer, batting legend Sunil Gavaskar has weighed in on the issue, advising KKR to consider bringing in another specialist to make up for the imbalance in the squad.

Green, who was signed for Rs 25.20 crore for his all-round capabilities, has yet to bowl in the tournament, including in the opening clash against the Mumbai Indians (MI), where his side conceded a hefty 221 runs, and their second match



against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), where they conceded 226 runs. His limited role has sparked debate over team balance and utilisation. Speaking on Star Sports' 'Amul Cricket Live', JioStar experts Sunil Gavaskar discussed Green's role in the team and said they should consider recruiting a specialist to make up for

the loss. "KKR will need to think about their combination if Cameron Green is not going to bowl. If he isn't contributing with the ball, then they might have to consider bringing in another specialist batter. We know he has scored a hundred in the IPL and that he can bat well, but his form hasn't been great recently.

"Yes, he scored a hundred in a red-ball game in Australia not long ago, but this is where the team needs to look closely at the numbers. Green at No. 4 is fine, but the bigger concern seems to be the No. 5 and No. 6 positions, where they appear to be struggling a bit," said Gavaskar. Jaffer took to X to voice his opinion on the matter, stressing that franchises should have full control over how players are used once they are part of a privately run competition.

Khelo India Tribal games conclude, cash prizes from next season

RAIPUR

The maiden, inaugural Khelo India Tribal Games 2026, hosted by Chhattisgarh, concluded on Friday on a high note with Karnataka emerging as the overall champion. The multi-sport event, aimed at unearthing hidden talent from tribal and remote areas of the country, witnessed enthusiastic participation and several outstanding performances. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, while congratulating the participating athletes, made a significant announcement to boost sports in the state.

He declared that from the next edition of the Khelo India Tribal Games, the Chhattisgarh government will award cash prizes to gold (Rs 2 lakh), silver (Rs

1.50 lakh), and bronze (Rs 1 lakh) medal winners in the individual category, while teams will be given Rs 1 lakh for gold, Rs 75,000 for silver, and Rs 50,000 for bronze medal winners. This move is expected to further motivate tribal youth to pursue sports seriously and bring more laurels to the state.

Karnataka dominated the medal tally with a commanding performance. At the time of the latest updates, the top positions were as follows: Karnataka: 21 Gold, 6 Silver, 5 Bronze (Leading the table); Odisha: 9 Gold, 4 Silver, 10 Bronze (Second position); Arunachal Pradesh: Strong showing with multiple golds. Chhattisgarh (Host): Secured its best-ever performance with 3 Gold, 9 Silver, and 6 Bronze (Total 18 medals), finishing in

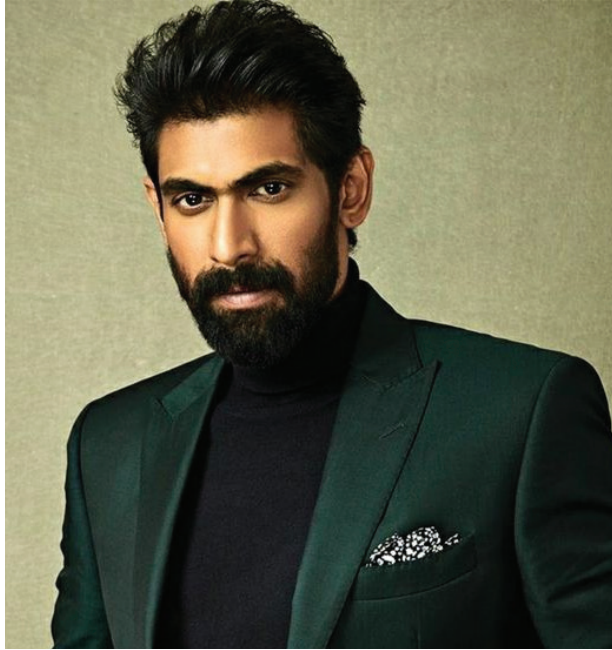
the top 10. Notable highlights for the host state included: Weightlifter Nikita winning Chhattisgarh's first gold in the women's 77kg category; Swimmer Anushka Bhagat consistently winning multiple silver medals. The women's football team defeated Jharkhand 1-0 to claim gold; Bronze medals in men's hockey and several athletics and swimming events.

The Games featured disciplines such as athletics, swimming, weightlifting, wrestling, archery, football, and hockey. Thousands of tribal athletes from across India competed, making the event a grand celebration of tribal sports talent. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said the successful hosting of the Games has put Chhattisgarh on the national sports map.

Rana Daggubati Speaks on the Hardships of Baahubali

Rana Daggubati, who portrayed the powerful King Bhallaladeva in the Baahubali duology directed by S. S. Rajamouli, has opened up about the intense challenges he faced during the making of the epic franchise. He revealed that the production process, which spanned nearly six years, was extremely demanding and took a significant toll on him both physically and mentally.

In a recent interaction, the Kaantha actor admitted that almost every scene required immense effort, from rigorous action sequences to maintaining a powerful on-screen presence. He explained that the team was venturing into uncharted territory, as Indian cinema had rarely attempted a film of such massive scale before. With very few war epics available as reference points and visual effects technology still evolving at the time, the cast and crew had to constantly experiment and innovate. Rana further shared that the role demanded a complete physical transformation, pushing him to undergo intense training and strict discipline. He even recalled moments when he wondered if audiences would recognize him due to his drastic change in appearance. Despite the hardships, he believes the struggle was worth it, as the film continues to age beautifully and has cemented its place as a landmark in Indian cinema, inspiring future filmmakers to dream bigger and aim higher.



Delhi Court Fines Rakshit Shetty ₹25L



A recent development has come as a setback for the production house Paramvah Studios, which is owned by Kannada star Rakshit Shetty. The Delhi High Court has imposed a fine of ₹25 lakh on the production house for the unauthorised use of songs scored by someone else in the film Bachelor Party, which was released in 2024. The film, produced by Rakshit Shetty, has Diganth Manchale, Yogesh, and Achyuth Kumar in the lead roles, and got a mixed reception at the Box office. The case is going on from a time when the songs "Nyaya Ellide" and "Omme Ninnanu" used in the movie are actually acquired by MRT Music earlier. Ever since the legal battle started, the court has made Paramvah Studios deposit ₹20 lakhs towards the licensee fee, and now an additional ₹5 lakhs should be paid as an additional penalty. This is no shocker, but expected for Rakshit Shetty's production house, because usage of old songs and remixed versions of copyrighted songs is resulting in hefty damage to the producers due to the legal fines.

In recent times, music rights have become a serious business. We have seen multiple cases where even small clips or background usage without permission have led to legal trouble. Even the likes of Ilayaraja have taken the likes of Mythri Movie Makers to Court, before collecting more than ₹1 crore from them as a fee for a single song used, if reports are to be believed. While filmmakers might see it as a minor usage or overlook clearances during production, Courts are clearly sending a message that copyrighted songs should be legally bought before use.

Ramayana: Ranbir Kapoor Says 'Couldn't Have Cast Someone Better' Than Sai Pallavi For Sita

The teaser of Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana, starring Ranbir Kapoor as Lord Rama, was recently unveiled at a special screening in Los Angeles. At the event, the actor interacted with the media and fans and also opened up about Sai Pallavi as Sita and Yash as Ravana. Ranbir said that once he saw Sai Pallavi as Sita, he knew they had nailed the casting.

Ranbir Kapoor said, "We all know Sai is such a brilliant actor. You know, she's accomplished so much. The first day, I remember, when I saw her as Sita, I just looked at Nitesh sir, and we both just knew that we couldn't have cast someone better than her." Have a look at the interaction here

While Sai Pallavi generated significant buzz with her casting, it was also Yash being Ravana which became a major talking point about the film. Ranbir Kapoor said, "Yash, of course, he has the stardom that he has. To play Ravana, you need somebody who has that aura and screen presence."

While Sai Pallavi and Yash's looks are yet to be fully unveiled, fans remain hopeful after Rama's first look launch. The teaser, however, offers a blurred glimpse of Sai Pallavi as Sita and visually stunning shots of Ravana's Pushpak Vimaan as Yash makes his way to the vehicle.

The teaser was launched in India on April 2 on Hanuman Jayanti. A media event had been scheduled to mark the occasion, with director Nitesh Tiwari and producer Namit Malhotra in attendance. However, Ranbir Kapoor was missing from the grand event, raising several eyebrows.

Just a day earlier, he had attended a closed-door special screening with select media, a contrast that left reporters on the ground wondering what had changed between the two appearances. Ranbir had been actively present elsewhere, like attending the Los Angeles event for the same film earlier.

Meanwhile, Ramayana has been filmed for IMAX and will be released worldwide, with Part 1 releasing in Diwali 2026 and Part 2 in Diwali 2027.



Movie Review

Sharwanand's "Biker" Rides on Emotions, Falls Short on Thrills

Putting a full stop to a streak of flops, Sharwanand bounced back with the Sankranthi success "Nari Nari Naduma Murari." Now, he explores a new concept—motocross racing—with "Biker," directed by Abhilash Reddy of Loser fame and produced by UV Creations. Does this outing click? Let's see.

Cast: Sharwanand, Malavika Nair, Rajasekhar, Atul Kulkarni, Brahmaji, Tulasi, and others
Music: Ghibran
Cinematography: Yuvaraj
Producers: Vamsi, Pramod
Writing & Direction: Abhilash Reddy
Rating: 3/5

Story: Vikas Narayan, aka Vicky (Sharwanand), lives a settled life in Hyderabad with his wife Ananya (**Malavika Nair**) and their son Ishan, running a go-karting zone. Once a talented bike racer, Vicky gave up the sport due to unavoidable circumstances.

His life takes a turn when his father Sunil Narayan (**Rajasekhar**)—who is branded a fraud in a corporate scam—pushes him to return to racing. What led to their strained relationship, why Vicky quit racing, and what challenges he faces during his comeback form the rest of the story.

Narrative & Analysis: "Biker" follows a familiar sports drama template seen in films like "Jersey"—a fallen athlete returning to prove himself. While the storyline is predictable, what usually elevates such films is emotional depth and gripping presentation.

Director Abhilash Reddy attempts to bring freshness by setting the story in motocross racing, a relatively unexplored sport in Indian cinema. The film scores well in showcasing the technical aspects of the sport—the rules, race dynamics, and preparation are explained organically through scenes rather than heavy exposition.

The racing sequences are visually impressive and technically sound, especially the climax. However, despite their quality, they lack the adrenaline rush and emotional high typically expected from sports dramas. The film doesn't deliver strong "wow" moments or pow-

erful twists, which limits its impact.

A major strength is the father-son dynamic. Rajasekhar's character is portrayed more as a strict coach than a father, adding an interesting emotional layer. The pressure and conflict arising from this relationship work well and provide the film with its core emotional strength.

On the downside, the story remains predictable, and the twists feel routine. The romantic track between the lead pair appears forced and doesn't add much value. Some scenes involving the young son also remind viewers of "Jersey", reducing the novelty factor.

Performances: Sharwanand delivers a convincing performance, embodying the role of a racer with believable body language and dedication. His effort in performing some stunts without relying heavily on body doubles adds authenticity.

Rajasekhar stands out with a sincere performance, bringing depth to the father-coach role. Though his look feels slightly inconsistent in parts, his role gives a boost to his second innings.

Malavika Nair is decent as Ananya, though her character lacks strong writing.

Supporting actors like Brahmaji and Tulasi perform adequately, while the young actor playing racer Anwar leaves a good impression.

Technical Aspects:

Technically, "Biker" is strong. Cinematographer Yuvaraj captures racing sequences with finesse, adding visual appeal. Ghibran delivers a solid background score that enhances the film, though the songs are mostly average.

The production values by UV Creations are commendable, especially considering the scale and investment. Abhilash Reddy's direction shines in execution and performance extraction, even if the story lacks novelty.

Verdict: "Biker" is a decent sports drama that blends racing with family emotions. While it doesn't break new ground in storytelling, the motocross backdrop and technical brilliance make it a one-time watch. Fans of sports dramas may find it engaging despite its predictable narrative.



Rakasa, worth it for a few laughs

Niharika Konidela already proved she has great taste as a producer with Committee Kurrollu. Now, she's back with Raakasa, introducing Manasa Sharma as director and starring MAD fame Sangeeth Shobhan. The film arrived in theaters today carrying a good amount of hype. Lets jump in and see if it actually lives up to the buzz!

Story: Veerabalu alias Veeru (Sangeeth Shobhan), who works in America, returns to his hometown with the intention of marrying his childhood friend Subbalakshmi (Nayan Sarika). But when he arrives, he finds that she is already ready to marry someone else. In his attempts to stop this wedding, Veeru gets into a series of complications. Things take a dark turn when he ends up in a situation where he is to be offered as a sacrifice to a demon that has been lurking in a fort adjacent to the village for several decades. Once Veeru steps into the fort as the intended sacrifice, what kind of situations does he face there? Is there really a demon inside? What is his story? Can Veeru, who went in as a sacrifice, manage to save his own life? Will he be able to meet Subbalakshmi again? All these questions will be answered only on the big screen.

Narrative-Analysis: Many filmmakers think that for a comedy film, they don't need to rack their brains too much over the story. Assuming audiences won't care much about the plot either, they tend to handle things casually. But they fail to realize that a solid story can take comedy to a whole different level. After watching the teaser and trailer of "Rakasa", there were hopes that this wasn't just another average comedy film, that it would take audiences into some new world and make them laugh. While that world isn't entirely new, it does contain elements rarely seen in average comedy films. However, the non-serious and slightly silly way the story is handled makes "Rakasa" feel too lightweight. That said, there's no shortage of laughs. Sangeeth Shobhan, who had audiences in splits with the 'Mad' franchise, brings his signature style of mischief once again. With Vennela Kishore and Getup Sreenu's comedy timing, along with funny situations and punches, "Rakasa" doesn't disappoint on the entertainment front. However, the illogical and overly convenient storytelling does reduce the film's overall impact. If you're looking for a timepass comedy, "Rakasa" is worth a look.

Just as a villain's strength elevates the hero's character, in horror or horror-comedy films, the more dangerous the ghost/demon feels, the more fear it generates and it's from that fear that the laughs



Cast: Sangeeth Shobhan, Nayan Sarika, Vennela Kishore, Getup Srinu, Tanikella Bharani, Cinematography: Raju Ederolu
Producers: Niharika Konidela, Umesh Kumar Bansal
Writing & Direction: Manasa Sharma
Rating: 2.75/5

emerge. In "Rakasa", writer Manasa Sharma has put together an interesting setup on paper; a village, an adjacent fort, a demon inside it, a curse on the village, a tradition of human sacrifice, the hero accidentally becoming part of that tradition and getting trapped in the fort while fighting the demon. But the way it's presented on screen isn't tight enough. The demon never manages to evoke fear at any point, there's no suspense even when the hero and company are trapped in the fort, the conflicts aren't strong, and the way they're resolved is very ordinary. This makes it impossible to take "Rakasa" seriously at any stage. You can imagine the kind of impact a film has when there's not even a trace of tension or fear while dealing with demons. That said, despite all the storytelling flaws, laughs are never in short supply. Sangeeth Shobhan, Vennela Kishore, and Getup Sreenu ensure that every time they appear on screen, non-stop punches keep smiles on the audience's faces. Sangeeth entertains throughout the first half with Getup Sreenu's support, and Vennela Kishore joins in during the second half. The trio's antics inside the fort are the major highlight of the film. The events in

the village during the first half generate some intrigue, but the inability to convey the village curse clearly and effectively weakens the story midway. The demon's presentation inside the fort makes "Rakasa" feel even lighter. However, the goal of making audiences laugh in every scene is largely achieved. The emotional angle related to the demon is another plus point, in fact, it's the best episode in the film. Had the entire story been crafted with the same effectiveness, "Rakasa" would have been on a different level altogether. If you're looking purely for entertainment and a few good laughs, "Rakasa" is worth a try.

Performances: Sangeeth Shobhan once again showcased his strength in comedy. Living up to the belief that his presence guarantees a minimum level of laughs, Sangeeth delivered humor even in ordinary scenes with his signature comedy timing. Just like how Allari Naresh in his prime could make audiences laugh with anything he did, Sangeeth is now able to bring smiles to audiences' faces in the same way. His punches resonate well with today's younger generation. Heroine Nayan Sarika also impressed. Rather than giving her a token role just for the sake of having a heroine, director Manasa has crafted her character to be pivotal to the story. Sarika too did justice to the role and won appreciation with her fine performance. Vennela Kishore and Getup Sreenu delivered good laughs. Tanikella Bharani showed his experience. There's not much to say about Ashish Vidyarthi. Annapurna and the rest of the cast were okay.