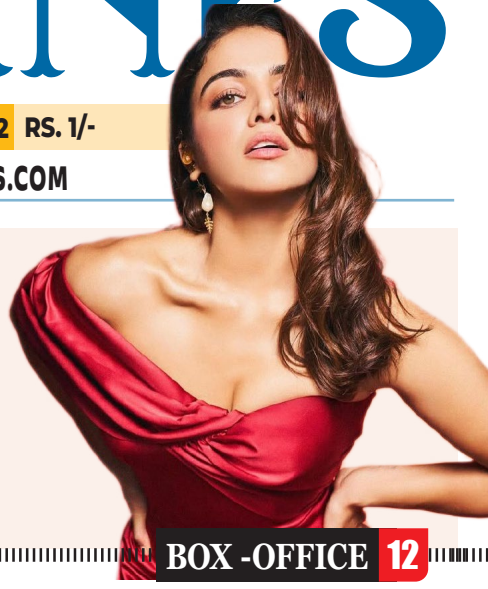


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STADIUM 11

BOX-OFFICE 12

NEPAL



Bhaktapur: A mask dancer performs at a musical celebration marking the upcoming Nepali New Year at Bhaktapur Durbar Square in Bhaktapur

SHORT TAKES



EAGLE FORCE BUSTS LAKH GANJA RACKET

In a major anti-narcotics crackdown, the EAGLE Force Telangana, in coordination with Dornakal Police, seized 26.8 kg of ganja worth over Rs.13 lakh and arrested four persons involved in inter-state drug trafficking.

SPECIAL 02



Markets End in Red

Indian equity markets came under significant selling pressure on Thursday, following a sharp rally in the previous session. Weak global cues and broad-based sectoral declines dragged the benchmarks lower.

MONEY MATTER 09



How Iran Ceasefire Helps Pak...

Pakistan is basking in a rare diplomatic success after helping broker a 14-day truce between the US and Iran, marking a major milestone in its uneven diplomatic history, its most notable achievement since facilitating Henry Kissinger's secret outreach to China in 1971.

OPINION 06

Repairs of 3 barrages at Kaleshwaram

- CM Revanth Reddy instructs officials to take up work expeditiously
- Prepare schedule for the completion of works till December
- Constitute a dedicated official team
- Involve CWC in the execution of the repair works.
- CM Revanth Reddy holds review of repairs of 3 barrages at Kaleshwaram project



HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

Chief Minister Shri A. Revanth Reddy directed the Irrigation officials to carry out the repairs of the 3 damaged barrages of the Kaleshwaram project expeditiously and resume operations of the barrages at the earliest. The officials were ordered to take up repairs and complete them as per the guide-

lines prescribed by the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA).

On Thursday, the CM accompanied by State Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy held a review of the status of 3 barrages - Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla in the Kaleshwaram project.

The Chief Minister instructed the authorities to formulate a specific action plan for the

repairs and to ensure continuous monitoring of the work progress. All the agencies involved should also be alert during the execution of the works, the Chief Minister made it clear that the tests and sample collection currently being conducted under the aegis of the Central Water and Power Research Station (CWPRS) must be

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Uttam places three key demands before Centre on paddy procurement

Hyderabad, April 9: Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has formally placed three specific demands before the union government to address the mismatch between the state's booming paddy production and the centre's shrinking procurement allocations.

In an official letter addressed to Union Food Minister Prahlad Joshi on Thursday,

the Minister highlighted the challenges of handling excess stocks while protecting farmers from distress sales.

He requested reallocation of 5 LMT boiled rice target for Rabi 2024-25 by reducing the FCI raw rice target. Currently, 8.45 LMT of rice is yet to be delivered. The original deadline of 28 February, 28, 2026 has already passed, and the state has sought a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Deakin University, AikamTM sign strategic MoU to advance applied AI

HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

Deakin University, Australia, and the Telangana government, through AikamTM, on Thursday formalised a landmark partnership with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance collaboration in applied artificial intelligence (AI), skilling, research, and innovation.

The MoU was signed at the Telangana State Secretariat, marking a significant step in strengthening global-local collaboration in emerging technologies and future workforce development.

The agreement was exchanged between Professor Iain Martin, President and Vice-Chancellor, Deakin University, and Phani Nagarjuna, Founding CEO of AikamTM, alongside senior representatives from both organisations.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

GLOBAL EXPERTS CONVERGE IN HYD FOR 13th ICCBP ON SUSTAINABLE PAVEMENTS

HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

The 13th International Conference on Concrete Block Pavement (ICCBP) commenced on Thursday at the Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre, marking its first-ever edition in India. Hosted by the Pavers and Blocks Manufacturers Association, the two-day event

brings together global experts to discuss cutting-edge innovations in concrete and segmental paving technologies.

The conference was inaugurated by K. Sreedhar Reddy, President of NAREDCO Telangana, who emphasized the role of advanced paving solutions in building sustainable infrastructure.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

CREDIBILITY COLLAPSE ON RECORD:

ISRAEL CALLS OUT PAK AS A 'USED INTERMEDIARY' IN HIGH-STAKES

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

Israel has delivered a calibrated but cutting diplomatic message: Pakistan's role in the US-Iran ceasefire is transactional, not trustworthy. The controversy over Lebanon has exposed fault lines within days of the agreement, raising questions about who controls the narrative and who merely amplifies it.

New Delhi witnessed a statement that was neither casual nor cosmetic. It was deliberate, measured, and loaded with intent. When Reuven Azar looked straight into the camera

and dismissed Pakistan as "not a credible player," he was not just reacting to a claim. He was resetting the frame. The timing is everything.

Within forty eight hours of a muchpublicised ceasefire between the United States and Iran, the narrative has already fractured. What was projected as a sweeping diplomatic success is now being dissected clause by clause, geography by geography.

And right at the centre of this unraveling stands Pakistan, claiming a role far larger than what key stakeholders are willing to concede.

CEASEFIRE CLAIM VS GROUND REALITY

Pakistan says Lebanon is covered. Israel says absolutely not. The United States backs Israel's reading. The gap is not semantic. It is strategic. Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif moved quickly to project Islamabad as the architect of a broad ceasefire architecture, stretching from the Strait of Hormuz to Lebanon. It was an ambitious assertion, aimed at elevating Pakistan's diplomatic weight in a volatile region. But within hours, that claim ran into a hard wall.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



Heavy Polling in Assam, Kerala; Puducherry Leads



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/ GUWAHATI, APRIL 9:

Assam recorded a historic voter turnout of over 85.64%, while Kerala saw strong participation of more than 78% in Thursday's Assembly elections, according to the Election Commission. Puducherry set a new benchmark with a record 89.87% turnout, the highest since its first election in 1964.

In Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma termed the turnout "historic," linking it to public optimism. Congress leader Gau-

rav Gogoi said it reflected a desire for change. A total of 722 candidates are contesting across 126 constituencies, with about 2.5 crore voters. The state had recorded 82.04% turnout in 2021.

In Kerala, polling reached 78.27%, surpassing 74.06% in 2021. As many as 883 candidates are contesting from 140 constituencies, with an electorate of 2.71 crore. CPI(M) leader C.N. Mohanan said higher turnout may favour the LDF, while BJP's K.S. Shaibu cited increased participation of women voters.

Congress leader Deepthi

Mary Varghese called for detailed analysis. Chief Electoral Officer Rathan U. Kelkar said turnout could touch 90%.

In Puducherry, polling for the 30-member Assembly saw robust participation. The Congress-led bloc is attempting to unseat the ruling AINRC alliance.

Polling was largely peaceful, though minor clashes were reported in Assam. Leaders including Pinarayi Vijayan and actors Mammootty and Mohanlal cast their votes. Counting will be held on May 4.

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Economic democracy must complement political democracy: Justice Sudarshan Reddy

HYDERABAD

Justice B Sudarshan Reddy, former Supreme Court judge, on Thursday stressed that true democracy in India can only be realized when economic democracy accompanies political democracy.

Addressing at the inaugural session of a two-day national seminar on "Economic Reforms and the Indian Constitution: Conflict, Contradictions and Ways Forward" organized by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU) in collaboration with Government Degree College, Chanchalguda, as part of Social Empowerment week, Justice Reddy highlighted that B. R. Ambedkar was not only the architect of the Constitution but also a distinguished economist. He noted that the Constitution inherently reflects socialist ideals, particularly through its emphasis on equality and justice. Referring to the Karachi Resolution, he said it laid the foundation for socio-economic rights in India. He also pointed to land reforms, including the abolition of the zamindari system, as key milestones in



advancing equality, while cautioning against emerging threats of authoritarian tendencies in modern times.

BRAOU Vice-Chancellor Ghanta Chakrapani, who presided over the event, expressed concern over declining public funding in higher education and the rapid expansion of private universities. He stressed the need to strengthen public institutions and safeguard the core values of education from unchecked

market forces.

Keynote speaker Prabhat Patnaik, Professor Emeritus, Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, underscored the importance of state control over key sectors to ensure public welfare. He advocated wealth redistribution measures such as wealth and inheritance taxes, warning of rising inequality and concentration of wealth among

the top one percent. Academic Director Pushpa Chakrapani emphasized the continued relevance of social and economic justice, particularly in the context of post-1991 economic reforms.

The seminar brought together academicians, researchers, and policymakers to deliberate on aligning economic reforms with constitutional values and ensuring inclusive growth. Prof. P. Venkateswarlu, Seminar Director highlighted the significance of the 1948 Industrial Policy in strengthening the public sector and emphasized that economic reforms must be firmly grounded in constitutional principles. Prof. Krishna Reddy, Seminar Co-Director & Head, Department of Economic, BRAOU; Prof. G. Nagoji (Convener), Senior Professor Prof. E. Sudha Rani, Prof. Pallavi Kabde, Prof. Anand Pawar, Prof. Srinivas Vaddanam, Prof. P. Venkata Ramana, Prof. G. Dayakar, Prof. K. Sridevi, and Prof. Prameela, along with teaching and non-teaching staff of BRAOU and Government Degree College, Chanchalguda, participated in the seminar.

Special on World Homeopathy Day (April 10)

Homeopathy: The Power of Subtlety, The Vastness of Health

Homeopathy is the science of balance in health

- YOGESH KUMAR GOYAL

Every year on April 10, World Homeopathy Day is celebrated on the birth anniversary of Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician, great scholar, researcher, linguist, and eminent scientist, regarded as the founder of homeopathy. The credit for developing an entire system of medicine based on the principles of homeopathy goes to Dr. Hahnemann. That is why his birth anniversary is observed as World Homeopathy Day. The objective of celebrating this day is to create awareness among people about this distinct system of medicine and to improve its accessibility and success rate for every individual. Born on April 10, 1755, Dr. Hahnemann held an MD degree but later left his medical practice to work as a translator. He studied medical and scientific texts in several languages, including English, French, Italian, Greek, and Latin.

Homeopathy is a medical system based on medicines and their application. In India, the Ministry of AYUSH determines the theme of Homeopathy Day each year, and the day is celebrated nationwide. This year, the theme is "Homeopathy for Sustainable Health." On this occasion, the 271st birth anniversary of Dr. Hahnemann is being observed. The main objectives of celebrating this day include strengthening the safety, quality, and efficacy of homeopathic medicines globally; understanding the challenges and future strategies for advancing homeopathy; developing national policies; promoting interdisciplinary and international research collaboration; ensuring high-quality medical education; encouraging evidence-based medical practice; and securing an appropriate place for homeopathy in healthcare systems worldwide to achieve the goal of universal health coverage.

The World Health Organization also recognizes that universal health goals cannot be achieved without promoting traditional and alternative systems of medicine, and homeopathy holds a prominent place among such systems worldwide. Due to its unique characteristics, homeopathy is practiced in more than 100 countries, and India is a leading nation in this field. Homeopathic medicines are considered effective in treating both infectious and non-infectious diseases, as well as ailments related to children and women. Although it is often believed that homeopathic medicines act slowly, one of their key features is that they aim to cure diseases from the root, with minimal or no side effects. These medicines work

differently on each individual, and their effects may vary from person to person. According to homeopathic practitioners, in conditions like diarrhea, cold, cough, and fever, homeopathic medicines can act as quickly as allopathic medicines. However, in chronic conditions such as asthma, arthritis, and skin diseases, they may take more time but are believed to address the root cause of the disease. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel once described homeopathy as a kind of miracle. According to the Central Council for Research in Homeopathy, homeopathy is an alternative system of medicine based on the principle of "Similia Similibus Curentur" (like cures like). It is a method of treatment in which a substance that produces symptoms in a healthy person is used in highly diluted form to treat similar symptoms in a diseased person.

In India, homeopathy is one of the most popular systems of medicine. There are over 210 homeopathic hospitals, more than 8,000 dispensaries, and nearly 300,000 practitioners across the country. Under the aegis of the Ministry of AYUSH, the Government of India organizes World Homeopathy Day. Although homeopathic medicines may appear



similar, there are more than 4,000 types of remedies used worldwide. Hahnemann believed that the highest ideal of cure is the rapid, gentle, and permanent restoration of health in the most reliable and least harmful way. Since homeopathic medicines often act more slowly compared to allopathic medicines, which are known for providing quick relief, comparisons between the two systems are common. Nevertheless, homeopathy continues to be one of the most widely practiced alternative medical systems globally.

This is not only due to its affordability and accessibility but also because of its unique approach that encourages the body to restore its own balance and health. Homeopathic treatment focuses on addressing the root cause of disease rather than merely suppressing symptoms, thereby reducing the chances of recurrence. It considers the physical, mental, and emotional aspects of an individual, making the treatment more holistic and effective. Moreover, as these medicines are derived from natural sources and administered in extremely small doses, they are generally considered safe, with minimal risk of adverse reactions or interactions with other medications. This is why, in today's complex and side-effect-prone medical environment, homeopathy is emerging as a safe, balanced, and long-term solution for health.

(The Author is a senior journalist with 36 years of experience & has authored several books, including "Sagar se Antariksh Tak: Bharat ki Raksha Kranti")

Health Minister joins human chain to boost HIV/AIDS awareness

HYDERABAD

Minister for Health Damodar Raja Narasimha on Thursday participated in a human chain programme organised on the cable bridge by the Telangana AIDS Control Society to promote awareness on HIV/AIDS. Addressing the gathering, the Minister stated that, as part of statewide initiatives, rallies, human chains, and medical camps are being organised to enhance public awareness on HIV/AIDS.

Raja Narasimha explained that HIV is a virus that weakens the immune system and, if left untreated, can progress to AIDS. He clarified that HIV spreads through unprotected sexual contact, transfusion of contaminated blood, and similar causes, and does not spread through casual contact such as handshakes, hugging, or sharing food.

The Minister emphasised that lack of awareness leads to fear, misconceptions, and discrimination, and stressed that awareness is the only solution to address these challenges. He stated that people living with HIV should not face social discrimination and must be

treated with dignity, support, and equal rights.

He further noted that under the HIV & AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017, discrimination against HIV-positive individuals is a punishable offence. Highlighting medical advancements, the Minister said that while HIV was once considered a fatal disease, timely testing and proper treatment now enable individuals to lead normal lives for several decades. The government is providing free testing, treatment, and medicines. Across the state, 1.14 lakh patients are receiving medical services through 127 testing centres and 33 ART centres. Special screening camps for HIV and TB are also being conducted in government general hospitals and prisons, he said.

The Minister urged youth to avoid sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy habits, and to stay away from drugs, particularly injectable drugs, which significantly increase the risk of HIV and other infections. Stressing the importance of public health, he stated that without health, wealth has no value. Healthy individuals contribute to healthy families, which in turn build a strong society and a robust state.

CS directs collectors to curb rising road mishaps in Telangana

HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao on Thursday conducted a video conference with District Collectors to review the implementation of the "Arrive Alive" programme, a key initiative under the 99-day Praja Paalana Pragati Pranaliika.

The Chief Secretary emphasised that while the government has been proactively implementing several road safety measures, the number of road accidents continues to rise. He attributed this to the rapid increase in the number of vehicles, improved road infrastructure leading to higher speeds, lack of adequate driver training, over-speeding and reckless driving behavior. Stressing the need for urgent and innovative

interventions, the Chief Secretary directed District Collectors to prioritize road safety and come up with creative, locally relevant solutions to reduce accidents.

He instructed that District Road Safety Committee meetings be convened immediately to plan and effectively implement the week-long "Arrive Alive" programme. The Chief Secretary also underscored the importance of involving local public representatives to ensure wider outreach and community participation.

The "Arrive Alive" programme will be conducted across the State from the 13th to 18th of this month with a series of focused activities aimed at enhancing public awareness and promoting responsible road usage.

Deakin University, AikamTM sign strategic MoU to advance applied AI

> FROM PAGE 1

Reaffirming Telangana's strategic vision for global leadership in frontier technologies, Special Secretary, ITEC Dept., Bhavesh Mishra said "This partnership reflects Telangana's continued commitment to building a future-ready innovation ecosystem anchored in responsible and inclusive AI. By collaborating with leading global institutions like Deakin University, we are strengthening our capacity to translate advanced research into real-world impact across different sectors of governance. This MoU reinforces our vision for positioning Telangana as a global hub for frontier technologies and talent development." The MoU establishes an overarching framework for

long-term cooperation between Deakin and AikamTM, Telangana's flagship innovation entity designed to position the state as the world's AI proving ground. At the core of this collaboration is a shared vision to harness artificial intelligence for real-world impact at scale, with a strong focus on public good, economic growth, and workforce transformation. It seeks to advance outcome-oriented efforts across three key pillars, including AI skilling and education, research and applied innovation, and ecosystem and industry engagement. A key initiative under this MoU is the establishment of the Aikam-Deakin Hub for Research in Intelligent Technology & Innovation (Aikam-DHRI-TI), a Joint Centre of Excellence in Applied Artificial Intelligence.

Repairs of 3 barrages at Kaleshwaram

> FROM PAGE 1

completed before the onset of the monsoon season. A dedicated team comprising representatives from the Irrigation department, CWPRS, barrage construction agencies, and design consultants would also be created. The members of the Central Water Commission (CWC) will be involved in every stage of the work. Engineers brought to the Chief Minister's attention the necessity of conducting a comprehensive study of the entire 1.6-kilometer barrage at Medigadda and not merely the specific piers which got damaged. The Chief Minister directed officials to prepare a special action plan for drilling 500 borewells near Medigadda and procure necessary machinery for this purpose. The designs for the required repairs should be prepared and a detailed schedule outlining the completion of the works till December should also be finalized. CM Revanth Reddy warned that delay in the execution of works will not be tolerated. The Chief Minister assured that required funds would be provided and suggested establishing a base camp at Medigadda. The CM would personally visit the site once the works commenced. Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao, Irrigation Secretary Sridhar, CM's Secretary Manik Raj, and other senior officials from the Irrigation Department were also present.

Eagle Force busts ₹13.4 lakh ganja racket, four arrested in Khammam

KHAMMAM

In a major anti-narcotics crackdown, the EAGLE Force Telangana, in coordination with Dornakal Police, seized 26.8 kg of ganja worth over Rs.13 lakh and arrested four persons involved in inter-state drug trafficking. Acting on credible intelligence, officials intercepted a Bajaj Pulsar motorcycle and a Maruti Ertiga car near Dornakal. A search revealed 17 packets of ganja concealed in three bags. The accused - identified as Chandrasekhar, Vijay Kanth, Vinod and Shashikanth - had allegedly procured the contraband from a supplier in Odisha and were transporting it from Bhadrachalam to Hyderabad via Yellandu.

Police seized the narcotics, two vehicles, four mobile phones and packing materials. The accused and seized items have been handed over to Dornakal Police Station for further legal action. Efforts are underway to nab the absconding accused Vaskula Raju. Authorities have urged citizens to remain vigilant and report drug-related activities via the EAGLE helpline (1908), WhatsApp (8712671111), or email - tsnaabo-hyd@tspolice.gov.in

Global experts converge in Hyd for 13th ICCBP on sustainable pavements

> FROM PAGE 1

Since its inception in 1980, ICCBP has served as a premier international platform fostering innovation in block pavement design and construction. This year's edition continues that legacy, attracting professionals from Germany, Austria, United Kingdom, Canada, United States, South Africa and Uruguay.

The 2026 conference focuses on long-term performance, sustainability and innovative applications in pavement engineering. Key themes include heavy-duty pavements, permeable solutions for urban drainage, railway infrastructure advancements, and high-performance pavers using polycarboxylate ether (PCE) technology.

Experts highlighted the growing importance of eco-friendly materials such as Recycled Concrete Aggregates (RCA), which can reduce carbon emissions by up to 30% while maintaining structural strength. Innovations like high Solar Reflectance Index (SRI) "cool roof" tiles and permeable interlocking systems are also gaining traction for their ability to improve thermal comfort and manage urban water runoff.

With growing demands on public transportation, railway platforms require paving materials that combine strength, slip resistance and durability. Precast flagstones produced via vacuum wet press technology have shown excellent bending strength, low water absorption, and long-lasting performance under heavy foot traffic. Long-term field studies in busy Indian stations confirm their suitability for such demanding environments.

With a strong emphasis on translating research into real-world applications, the conference underscores the role of collaboration between researchers, manufacturers and policymakers in shaping resilient urban infrastructure.

Credibility collapse on record: Israel calls out Pak as a 'used intermediary' in high-stakes

> FROM PAGE 1

Benjamin Netanyahu drew a sharp boundary. Lebanon is not part of the deal. Military operations against Hezbollah continue. No dilution. No ambiguity. Then came Washington's alignment. Quiet but firm. The ceasefire is Iran specific. Lebanon was never on the table. And that is when Azar's remark landed with full force. "Not a credible player... the United States used their services." This is not diplomatic language dressed for politeness. This is strategic signalling in plain sight. Israel is effectively saying: intermediaries are tools, not partners. The reference to countries like Qatar and Turkey is not accidental. It is a reminder of a pattern in American diplomacy where channels are opened through actors who are otherwise viewed with caution. The message is precise. Utility does not translate into legitimacy.

Pakistan, in this reading, is not shaping outcomes. It is facilitating conversations that others control. That distinction matters. Because Islamabad is attempting something bigger than me-

diation. It is attempting repositioning. From a regional player to a global broker. From participant to pivot. Israel has just slammed the brakes on that narrative.

LEBANON: THE REAL FAULTLINE

The ceasefire may be holding in the waters of the Strait of Hormuz, but on the ground in Lebanon, nothing has paused. Israeli operations targeting Hezbollah infrastructure continue with intensity. The Litani River remains a red line. Any suggestion that Hezbollah gains breathing space under a broader Iran deal is being rejected outright. This is not a side issue. This is the pressure point. If Lebanon stays active, the ceasefire remains partial. And a partial ceasefire is always unstable.

What we are witnessing is a classic power hierarchy asserting itself. The United States drives the negotiation. Israel defines the security perimeter. Iran negotiates under pressure. And Pakistan attempts to narrate the outcome. But narratives without endorsement collapse quickly. There is also a deeper under-

current here. Israel and Pakistan do not share diplomatic relations. Trust deficit is not incidental. It is structural. Decades of positioning on Palestine, ideological divides, and strategic alignments all feed into this moment. So when Israel questions credibility, it is not reacting to one statement. It is reflecting a long memory.

THE WASHINGTON CALCULUS

Why would the United States still engage Pakistan? Because diplomacy often operates on convenience, not comfort. When backchannels are needed, Washington uses whoever can deliver access. That does not mean alignment. It means expediency. And expediency has an expiry date. The ceasefire may still be alive, but its political packaging is already under strain. Pakistan sought recognition as a deal maker. Israel has responded by redefining it as a deal conduit. That difference is not cosmetic. It determines who commands the table and who waits outside it. This is no longer just about a ceasefire. It is about ownership of diplomacy. And right now, the ownership is being contested in full public view.

Uttam places three key demands before Centre on paddy procurement

> FROM PAGE 1

60-day extension, Uttam Kumar Reddy said. The Minister stated that Telangana paddy's superior grain characteristics and lower moisture levels make it ideal for boiled (parboiled) rice conversion. Rice millers have agreed in principle to supply with only 5% broken, offering a practical solution, he said. Uttam Kumar Reddy sought enhancement of the boiled rice target by 20.00 LMT for the entire KMS 2025-26 (covering both Kharif and Rabi seasons) - a significant jump from existing levels to better align with the state's rising production capacity.

He also stressed the need for further extension of two months for Rabi 2024-

25 deliveries. This is necessitated by pending physical verification of Kharif paddy stocks and the need for additional processing time, Uttam Kumar Reddy said. The Minister stated that the current Congress government, which assumed power in December 2023, has witnessed a rapid surge in paddy production in both Kharif and Rabi seasons.

The state procures paddy on behalf of the Union government under the Decentralised Procurement Scheme to ensure Minimum Support Price (MSP) to farmers and prevent distress sales, Uttam Kumar Reddy said. However, the Centre's policy of reducing Custom Milled Rice (CMR) and boiled rice targets has left Telangana struggling with excess stocks, storage costs, milling expenses, and in-

terest liabilities, the Minister said. Historical data shared in the letter shows a declining trend in the percentage of boiled rice delivered to FCI, dropping to as low as 66.78% in 2024-25, despite consistent procurement efforts. Telangana has seen exponential growth in paddy output post-2023 due to improved irrigation and farmer-centric policies, he pointed out.

The Minister emphasised that continued procurement is essential to safeguard lakhs of farmers, but the state cannot indefinitely bear the financial strain of excess paddy without adequate central support in the form of higher boiled rice allocations and timely extensions. He appealed to the Union Minister to consider the issues favourably.

The department of ECE has organised the 37th prof. k. k. Nair commemoration lecture

- The Honorable Vice-chancellor has graced the occasion as the chief guest of the programme
- The guest lecture for this event was delivered by Prof. S. P. Arun, professor, center for neuroscience, IISc Bangalore
- The event was also graced by senior Prof. A. Krishnaiah, the Dean, UCE, OU. Prof. P. Chandra Sekhar, Principal, UCE, OU. Prof. P. Naveen Kumar, Head, Dept. of ECE, UCE, OU



search work in the area of new technology. Dean, UCE, OU, Senior Prof. A. Krishnaiah has informed that the students should continue to do research and publish good papers in the areas, also should attend these kind of lectures and also should use AI in all different fields and see that good research & analysis are also made

Principal, UCE, OU, Prof. P. Chandra Sekhar has informed that the UCE is progressing in both research, academic and lot of research projects are being obtained and, patents are being published. He also informed that, there is good amount of CSR funding is given by different companies and lot of industries initiative programs, MOUs are taking place & students are also getting

good placements in UCE across all the departments. the Head, Dept. of ECE, UCE, OU, Prof. P. Naveen Kumar has highlighted the significance of the prof. k. k. Nair commemoration lecture. He informed that the first lecture of this series was conducted in the year 1979, which was delivered by a UPSC member, and continuously these lectures are being held & the dept. is also progressing very well in terms of research, academic, and conducting various training programmes etc.

Prof S. P. Arun during his talk has informed that AI machines in terms of vision they achieved 90%, but still reaching 100% up to humans is not that easy. he also informed that AI machine vision recognition pattern is completely

different as compared to that of humans. And he has also shared his lab results compared to the humans which were very encouraging, and he further he also requested the participants if they could also participate in the data collection, then they are also well come to do it.

S. P. Arun informed that there is a center for neuroscience & there is a vision lab there, where a lot of work is being going on in this particular area. & finally there was a Q&A session where participants enthusiastically clarified their doubts and were very happy. Around 150 members have attended this programme from various colleges, heads of the depts, directors and also affiliated colleges, Phd scholars and other students.

HYDERABAD

The Honorable Vice-Chancellor, during his address, stated that the Department is maintaining the legacy of conducting the Prof. K. K. Nair Commemoration Lecture. Prof. K. K. Nair was the founding Head of the Department of ECE and was instrumental in establishing this department at OU.

The Honorable Vice-Chancellor also informed that the topic is very good based on neuroscience & he also informed that, students, the faculties, research scholars and all others should take the best out of it and do good re-

Chief Secretary Reviews Arrangements for Godavari Pushkaralu

HYDERABAD

The State Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao has directed officials to make extensive arrangements to ensure that devotees attending the upcoming Godavari Pushkaralu do not face any inconvenience. A review meeting on the preparations for the Godavari Pushkaralu was held today at the Secretariat. Endowments Department Principal Secretary Shailaja Ramaier, Commissioner Hanumantha Rao, and other senior officials attended the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary said that the Godavari river basin extends across eight districts, from Kandakurthi in Nizamabad to



Basara and Bhadrachalam. As a large number of devotees are expected to visit these districts for the holy Pushkarbaths, he instructed officials to make large-scale arrangements.

He further stated that the Chief Minister has already given necessary directions regarding the Pushkar arrangements, and officials should prepare detailed proposals accordingly and submit them to the Cabinet Sub-Committee constituted for the Godavari Pushkaralu. The Chief Secretary also directed that the committee of Engineers-in-Chief (ENCS) and Chief Engineers, already appointed, should examine the proposed works related to Pushkar arrangements.



DGP B. Shivadhar Reddy Visits PTO

HYDERABAD

Director General of Police B. Shivadhar Reddy visited the Police Transport Organization (PTO) at Petlaburj on Thursday. During his visit, he inaugurated a newly established yoga center at the PTO office. He later inspected various departments of the organization and gave directions to officials regarding vehicle maintenance and technical aspects.

Visit to OCTOPUS Office

Heatwave alert: Health Dept issues advisory

HYDERABAD

With temperatures expected to rise by 2-3°C over the next three days, the Telangana Health Department has issued a public advisory urging strict precautions.

Director of Public Health and Family Welfare Ravinder Naik advised the people to avoid stepping outdoors between 12 PM and 3 PM, stay in cool and ventilated spaces, and avoid strenuous activity during peak heat hours.

The key safety guidelines included - stay hydrated; drink water frequently even if not thirsty; use ORS and consume lemon water, buttermilk and fruit juices; avoid alcohol, caffeine, sugary and high-protein foods; wear light, loose cotton clothing and cover the head outdoors; carry water while traveling and prefer outdoor activities during morning or evening.

DGP B. Shivadhar Reddy also visited the OCTOPUS office in the Ibrahimpatnam area on Wednesday. He was welcomed by Additional DGP (Operations) of Greyhounds and OCTOPUS, Dr. Anil Kumar.

On this occasion, the DGP inspected the newly constructed administrative building of OCTOPUS and viewed an exhibition of modern weapons. He reviewed the functioning of the Shot Combat wing and the Bomb Disposal Unit (IED Center). He also conducted a

review of the activities of OCTOPUS, the state's elite commando force.

During the visit, Additional DGP Anil Kumar briefed the DGP about various divisions of OCTOPUS and their functioning. The visit was attended by Future City Police Commissioner G. Sudheer Babu, Maheshwaram DCP Narayana Reddy, OCTOPUS SP M. Venkateswarlu, Additional SP Raghunandan Rao, training expert Colonel Bharat Prasad, and others.

ADVERTISEMENT NO. 01/2026

FILLING UP THE POST OF EXECUTIVE ENGINEER & ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (OFFICIAL LANGUAGE) THROUGH TRANSFER ON DEPUTATION IN KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA SANGATHAN

Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) an autonomous body under Ministry of Education intends to fill the 01 (One) post of Executive Engineer in Pay Level -11 and 01 (One) post of Assistant Director (Official Language) in Pay Level 10, through transfer on Deputation. For more details i.e. the eligibility criteria, qualification and terms & conditions visit website www.kvsangathan.nic.in of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan & Edition dated 4th April, 2026 of Employment News.

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"Health is true wealth": Call for 'Healthcare for All' at Health Conclave 2026

HYDERABAD

A strong call for equitable and accessible healthcare marked the national-level "Health Conclave-2026", held on the occasion of World Health Day. Addressing the gathering, Dundra Kumara Swamy stressed that "health is the real wealth" and must be treated as a national priority.

The conclave, jointly organised by Bliss Berg Future Of and SIMS Hospital, brought together leading doctors, policymakers, and healthcare professionals. Dr. Srinivas, medical director of SIMS Hospital, executive director Sattar Kurma Rao, Dr Somayajulu (general & laparoscopic surgeon), Dr Rajasekhar

Reddy (Robotic & Orthopaedic surgeon) and other experts highlighted the urgent need to shift focus from treatment to prevention and early intervention.

In his address, Dundra Kumara Swamy remarked that while the military safeguards a nation, it is the health of its people that truly builds it. He emphasised that health is not merely the absence of disease but a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.

Reiterating the core message of World Health Day, he stressed that access to quality healthcare must reach every citizen, especially during emergencies and future health crises. Calling for urgent reforms, he urged the government to increase public health expenditure to

at least 5% of GDP, strengthen primary healthcare infrastructure in rural areas, expand the medical workforce and ensure uninterrupted supply of medicines.

Dr. Srinivas, Medical Director of SIMS Hospital, observed that modern healthcare must move beyond treatment to focus on prevention and early intervention. He stressed the importance of extending advanced medical technologies to rural areas and enhancing public awareness through sustained initiatives.

The conclave concluded with a strong message: healthcare must be recognised not as a privilege, but as a fundamental right. The call for "Health for All" resonated as the central theme of the event.

Kapra Press Club's initiatives for Journalists commendable, says Uppal MLA BLR



Dr AS Rao Nagar, Medchal Malkajgiri

HYDERABAD

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy on Thursday lauded the Kapra Press Club for its continued efforts toward safeguarding the welfare and professional security of journalists. He noted that journalists, who work tirelessly to deliver unbiased and factual information to the public, often operate under challenging circumstances, and said he was pleased to see a local organisation step forward to support them.

Speaking at a meeting organised by the Kapra Press Club, the MLA said the club's initiatives ranging from the protection of journalists' rights to financial assistance

and healthcare support reflect a strong commitment to strengthening the media fraternity. "The measures being taken by the Kapra Press Club for the welfare of journalists are truly commendable. Their work will go a long way in addressing the issues faced by media personnel," he said. Bandari Lakshma Reddy emphasised that the media continues to serve as the fourth pillar of democracy, playing a pivotal role in ensuring transparency, accountability, and public awareness. He added that the empowerment and well-being of journalists directly contribute to a more robust democratic system.

Assuring continued government support, the MLA said that the state would extend all necessary assistance to initiatives aimed at improving the working conditions and social security of journalists. "The government stands with jour-

nalists and recognises their contribution. We will continue to support all efforts made for their welfare," he said. Members of the press club expressed gratitude for the MLA's encouragement, stating that his assurance of support would motivate them to expand their activities for the benefit of journalists across the region.

On this occasion, Former Corporator Kotha Ramarao, BRS State Leader Singireddy Somasekhar Reddy, Senior Congress Leader Kotha Anji Reddy, Congress Party AS Rao Nagar Division President Keshetti Prasad, Medchal Agricultural Market Committee Vice Chairman Vittal Naik, BRS AS Rao Nagar Division President Kasam Mahipal Reddy, BRS leader Shivakumar, Congress Leader Tillu Yadav, BJP Division President Tummalala Sandhya Reddy, Senior BJP Leaders Venkatachalam, Sampath Rao, K. Uma Sridhar, Somesh Naidu, Raju Yadav, Murali Dev Goud, Kapra Press Club Advisors Empalli Padma Reddy, Belide Ashok, President Merugu Chandramohan, General Secretary Muthyam Mukesh Goud, Treasurer Ramachandramurthy, Vice Presidents Yavapuram Ravi, Dommati Kiran Kumar Rao, Garlapati Srinivas Rao, Govindukuntla Anjaneyulu, Joint Secretaries D. Srinivas, K. Venkat, Organizing Secretaries O. Narasimha Keerthi Srinivas, Executive Committee Members Budampalli Niranth Goud, Balakrishna; Former Treasurer Yataraju and others participated in the event.

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SHORT TAKES

Instagram abuse lands man in police net in Cyberabad

HYDERABAD: The Cyber Crime Police in Cyberabad have apprehended a man for posting an abusive comment on social media targeting an actress. The accused, Idadasu Apparao, a resident of Visakhapatnam, allegedly created a fake Instagram account and posted an offensive remark on a reel featuring actress Renu Desai. Following a complaint, police tracked the account, identified the individual and apprehended him from Visakhapatnam. He was brought to the Cyber Crime Police Station in Gachibowli here, where he submitted the mobile phone used to post the comment as part of the investigation. Police have urged citizens (social media users) to exercise caution and responsibility on social media platforms. Posting abusive or defamatory content can invite legal action under relevant provisions of law.

Jeevan Reddy cites 20 months of humiliation for Congress exit

JAGTIAL: Former minister Jeevan Reddy on Thursday expressed gratitude to BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao for visiting his residence and inviting him into the party on K. Chandrashekar Rao's behalf. Speaking to the media at his residence in Jagtial along with K.T. Rama Rao and BRS leaders on Thursday, Jeevan Reddy said resigning from the Congress party was an emotional decision but expressed happiness at joining BRS. He stated that he endured humiliation over the past 20 months with patience and added that, having seen many governments, he believes the present government is moving in a regressive direction. Jeevan Reddy said his decision was based on public opinion and expressed happiness at the opportunity to work under KCR's leadership.

Cyber fraud: BRS MLA Palla Rajeshwar Reddy duped of ₹1 lakh

HYDERABAD: BRS MLA Palla Rajeshwar Reddy has fallen victim to a cyber fraud, losing Rs.1 lakh to a scammer. As for the case, the incident occurred on April 5 while the MLA was in Hyderabad. An unidentified caller, posing as an Additional Secretary in the Finance Department, contacted him and claimed that loans of up to Rs.10 lakh could be arranged for unemployed youth under a Central Government scheme. The fraudster convinced the MLA that a processing fee of Rs.2,500 per beneficiary was required. Believing the claim and intending to help youth in his constituency, Rajeshwar Reddy transferred Rs.1 lakh via the PhonePe platform. However, upon later contacting the actual Finance Department official,

Merge Hanumakonda district with Warangal and develop Warangal as a metropolitan city

Demand by civil society leaders and intellectuals

WARANGAL

Leaders of civil society organizations and intellectuals have demanded that the state government merge Hanumakonda district with Warangal district and develop Warangal as the second-largest city in Telangana.

At a seminar held at the Hanumakonda District Press Club under the chairmanship of Professor Kurapati Venkata Narayana, State Chairman of the Telangana Activists Forum, several civil society leaders and intellectuals participated and spoke on the need to merge Hanumakonda district with Warangal and develop it into a metropolitan city.

They stated that the development of metropolitan cities should not be neglected and expressed disappointment that the expectations of the people—who believed that after achieving Telangana statehood, not only the capital but also district headquarters would become engines of development—have not been fulfilled. They pointed out that for the past 40 years, development in Telangana has largely been limited to Hyderabad, and called for the development of all districts and the welfare of four crore people.

KTR Invites Jeevan Reddy to Join BRS



■ **KCR Must Return as Chief Minister for Farmers and the Poor to Prosper Again: KTR**

■ **Growing Internal Dissent in Congress; Even congress Cadre Want BRS Back in Power: KTR**

JAGTIAL

BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) today visited the residence of senior Congress leader and former minister Sri Jeevan Reddy in Jagtial to invite him to join the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) on behalf of party president Sri K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR). Several party leaders and public representatives accompanied him during the visit.

Speaking to the media, KTR stated that Jeevan Reddy responded positively to the invitation. He said that Jeevan Reddy acknowledged his long-standing personal association with KCR and expressed happiness over the visit, adding that he would meet KCR soon and announce his decision within a couple of days.

KTR emphasized that for farmers and the poor in the state to regain stability and happiness, KCR must return as Chief Minister. He said experienced leaders like Jeevan Reddy are essential for rebuilding Telangana's growth trajectory.

Highlighting Jeevan Reddy's political journey, KTR noted that he has served the Congress party for over four decades with commitment. He also recalled that KCR had invited him to join BRS even before the 2014 elections, but he continued in Congress at the time due to his loyalty to the party. KTR elaborated on the long-standing personal bond between KCR and Jeevan Reddy, built over four decades of mutu-

al respect. He recalled that during KCR's first official tour of Karimnagar district as Chief Minister in 2014, development works requested by Jeevan Reddy, despite being in the opposition, were immediately sanctioned—reflecting statesmanship beyond party lines.

He also highlighted Jeevan Reddy's strong advocacy for farmers in the Assembly and his consistent fight on issues like Nizam Sugars. KTR recalled that KCR had even offered to support the revival of the sugar factory under a cooperative model, inspired by Maharashtra, with financial backing and leadership responsibility to Jeevan Reddy if he wished.

KTR thanked the Jagtial district leadership for proactively supporting the initiative and inviting Jeevan Reddy into the party fold. He appreciated their commitment to strengthening the party and working towards bringing BRS back to power, stating that Jeevan Reddy's entry would significantly strengthen the party.

Sharp Criticism of Congress Government and CM Revanth Reddy

KTR launched a strong attack on the Congress government, stating that over the past two and a half years, it has failed in governance and is resorting to diversionary politics to hide its inefficiencies.

He alleged that the government defaulted on the Rythu Bandhu scheme three times, accumulating dues of ₹27,000 crore to farmers, while misleading them in the name of loan waivers. He said this has led to widespread anger among farmers.

KTR strongly condemned remarks made by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, stating that such comments were inappropriate and unbecoming of a person holding the highest office in the state. He accused the Chief Minister of us-

ing language that insults the dignity of women and goes against Telangana's cultural values.

He further accused the government of betraying youth by failing to deliver on its promise of providing two lakh jobs, leading to frustration and anger among unemployed youth.

KTR said none of the six guarantees promised by the Congress party have been fully implemented and accused the leadership of deceiving the public after claiming full awareness of the state's financial position before elections.

He also stated that dissatisfaction is growing within the Congress party itself, with even party workers expressing a desire for BRS to return to power. He accused Congress leadership of insulting its own senior leaders and undermining their self-respect.

KTR alleged that CM Revanth Reddy is acting with arrogance due to power and has failed to address public issues. He reminded that power is not permanent and said the government has lost the trust of the people. He expressed confidence that BRS will return to power with public support.

Happy to Work Under KCR's Leadership: Jeevan Reddy

Former minister Jeevan Reddy expressed gratitude to KTR for visiting his residence and inviting him into BRS on KCR's behalf. He said resigning from the Congress party was an emotional decision but expressed happiness at joining BRS. He stated that he endured humiliation over the past 20 months with patience and added that, having seen many governments, he believes the present government is moving in a regressive direction. He said his decision was based on public opinion and expressed happiness at the opportunity to work under KCR's leadership.

Women's bill is a post-dated cheque, Kavitha slams BJP's implementation delay

■ **Kavitha denounces women's bill framework, Deceptive move to sideline BC Women**

■ **Kavitha credits Jagruti for national momentum on Women's representation**

■ **Circulate the draft now, Kavitha demands transparency in Women's bill discussion**

■ **Jagruti President Kavitha rejects 2011 Census for Women's Reservations**

HYDERABAD

Kavitha issued a powerful call to action today, asserting that the national momentum for the Women's Reservation Bill is a direct result of the relentless struggle spearheaded by Jagruti. While acknowledging the bill's introduction as a milestone, she condemned the central government's current implementation framework as "deceptive" and a "post-dated cheque" that fails to deliver immediate or equitable justice to women.

The Triumph of Jagruti's advocacy

Kavitha highlighted that the "lamp lit" by Jagruti activists has illuminated the path toward legislative progress. She noted that the coordinated protest in Delhi, which successfully united 18 political parties, exerted the necessary political pressure to force the Women's Bill onto the national agenda.

"The role of Jagruti in bringing this bill to the forefront cannot be forgotten," Ms. Kavitha stated. "Through strategic coordination, we ensured that MPs across party lines raised their voices in Parliament, making it impossible for the Centre to ignore the demand any longer."

Critical Concerns: The "Post-Dated Cheque"

Despite the bill's passage, Ms. Kavitha expressed grave concerns regarding its execution. • **The Delimitation Delay:** By linking the bill to the delimitation process, the government effectively denied women their rights in the recent parliamentary elections and subsequent elections in 12 states.



• **The 2011 Census Injustice:** She strongly condemned the proposal to use 2011 Census data as the basis for reservations. "Using outdated data is a disservice to the current reality of our population. Reservations must only be announced following the completion of the 2027 Census."

• **Exclusion of BC Women:** Ms. Kavitha demanded that the 2027 Census must include specific BC (Backward Classes) population data to facilitate a mandatory sub-quota for BC women.

Demands for Transparency and Inclusion

Ms. Kavitha took aim at the BJP's "deceptive approach" regarding the draft bill's circulation. Reports indicate the government intends to share copies only on the morning of its introduction, a move she claims is designed to stifle objections and bypass meaningful debate.

Her key demands include:

1. Immediate disclosure of the draft bill to all political parties for thorough review.
2. Decoupling the bill from the 2011 Census in favor of the 2027 Census.
3. The provision of a BC sub-quota to ensure intersectional representation.

A Call to Continued Struggle

Concluding her statement, Ms. Kavitha urged BC communities and women across India to remain vigilant and united. She announced plans to re-engage with the leaders of the 18 supporting political parties to intensify the movement. "We must continue this struggle until our rights are fully realized and the 2027 Census is completed fairly," she said. "We will not allow the rights we have fought so hard for to be undermined by political maneuvering."

KSPPP to Host Fourth Graduation Ceremony on 10 April 2026

HYDERABAD

The Kautilya School of Public Policy (KSPPP), GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, will host its 4th Graduation Ceremony for the Batch of 2026 on Friday, April 10, 2026, from 10:00 AM onwards. The event will mark a significant milestone as 35 graduates step into the field of public policy and governance. The ceremony will be graced by Shri Amitabh Kant, former CEO of NITI Aayog and India's G20 Sherpa, as the Chief Guest. A distinguished reformer and thought leader, he played



a pivotal role during India's G20 Presidency, contributing to the landmark New Delhi Leaders' Declaration. With a distinguished career in public service, Mr. Kant has led transformative initiatives such as Startup India, Make in India, and Ease of Doing Business reforms, significantly shaping India's economic and governance landscape. The ceremony will celebrate the achievements of the graduating cohort while reaffirming KSPPP's commitment to nurturing future leaders dedicated to inclusive growth and nation-building.

Komatireddy Raj Gopal Reddy's remarkable efforts to strengthen government education in public schools

■ **Komatireddy Raj Gopal Reddy has been making notable efforts to strengthen government education in public schools**

■ **In the previous academic year, he provided financial incentives of Rs.15,000, Rs.10,000, and Rs.7,500 to students studying in government schools who secured first, second, and third positions in Class 10**

■ **This year, he announced increased incentives of Rs.25,000, Rs.15,000, and Rs.10,000 for students who achieve first, second, and third ranks respectively**

■ **He emphasized that there is a need for fundamental reforms in the government education system. He stated that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is focusing strongly on improving the education system and bringing about transformative changes**

■ **He also remarked that many people who have reached the highest levels globally studied in government schools**

MUNUGODE

These remarks were made by Komatireddy Raj Gopal Reddy during a government school annual day function. "A school is equal to a temple" — call for collective responsibility Munugode MLA Komatireddy Raj Gopal Reddy said that schools are like temples and that people in every village must come together to develop government schools.

He participated in the annual day celebrations of a government school in Pulipala village of Munugode mandal, where he reiterated his commitment to promoting government education. He mentioned that last year he provided incentives of ₹15,000, ₹10,000, and ₹7,500 to top-performing Class 10 students, and that these amounts have been increased this year to



₹25,000, ₹15,000, and ₹10,000.

He stressed the need for comprehensive reforms in Telangana's government education system and praised Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for focusing on this sector. He added that many successful individuals at national and international levels studied in government schools, highlighting the value of public education.

He further stated that just as people care for their families, they should also think about the poor, their villages, and their regions, as such collective thinking will help develop government schools. He also pledged that he would continue to provide financial assistance to the poor through the Komatireddy Susheelamma Foundation.

On development projects and irrigation He recalled that Komatireddy Venkat Reddy fought with former Chief Minister Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy to bring the Udaya Samudram project. He criticized the previous BRS government for not completing the remaining 10% of the project

even after 10 years in power. He stated that after their government came to power, they completed the remaining works, including land acquisition and rehabilitation (R&R), and initiated pump operations under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

Regarding the Dindi Lift Irrigation Scheme, he alleged that the previous government focused on commissions rather than proper water sourcing, leaving reservoirs incomplete. He said that ₹1,800 crore has now been sanctioned to draw water from the Yedula reservoir, and works have begun. He also mentioned ongoing land acquisition to provide permanent irrigation and drinking water to villages in Munugode mandal from the Brahmanavalle project.

Commitment to Munugode constituency development

He stated that he is working sincerely and selflessly for the development of Munugode constituency. He advised that political leaders should focus on development rather than unnecessary criticism.

He highlighted that while only 31 substations were built in the constituency since independence, 24 substations have been sanctioned in just the last two years under the current government. He added that there are currently three 132 KV substations, and three more have been approved. He concluded by saying that efforts are being made to eliminate low-voltage issues in the constituency for the next 25–30 years.

Father-Son Padayatras Mark the Beginning of Good Governance

TADEPALLI, APRIL 09

At the YSRCP central office in Tadepalli, party leaders celebrated the completion of 23 years of the historic padayatra undertaken by the late Chief Minister Dr. Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy by cutting a cake and paying tributes. Former minister Ambati Rambabu, MLAs Lella Appireddy and P. Ramasubba Reddy, former MLAs Gadikota Srikanth Reddy and Malladi Vishnu, Nedurumalli Ramkumar Reddy, Kakumanu Rajasekhara, Chella Madhusudhan Reddy, Varsha Vardhan Reddy, and Narayanamurthy participated.

ther-son combination of padayatras is rare in the country and unique to Andhra Pradesh. He expressed pride in being part of those journeys. On the occasion of the 23rd anniversary of YSR's historic Praja Prasthanam padayatra, leaders paid tribute by cutting a cake at the party office. Several leaders including Ambati Rambabu, Appireddy, Ramasubba Reddy, Gadikota Srikanth Reddy, Malladi Vishnu, Nedurumalli Ramkumar Reddy, Kakumanu Rajasekhara, Chella Madhusudhan Reddy, Varsha Vardhan Reddy, and Narayanamurthy participated.

What the leaders said:

"Praja Prasthanam shook the nation" — Ambati Rambabu

When the Congress party was in opposition in undivided Andhra Pradesh, Dr. Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy began the Praja Prasthanam padayatra from Chevella. Undertaken in the scorching heat of April, the journey aimed to understand people's problems directly. The padayatra continued up



to Ichchapuram, during which YSR closely interacted with the public. Despite the lack of modern facilities or caravans, he continued the journey by resting roadside. The padayatra created a nationwide impact and paved the way for welfare governance. It eventually helped Congress return to power in the state and influenced national politics as well. He said he, along with Lagadapati Rajagopal and Bhoomana Karunakar Reddy, participated throughout the journey. He added

that Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy undertook an even longer padayatra, emerging as a leader surpassing his father by directly connecting with people and reflecting their issues in governance.

"A turning point in state politics" — Gadikota Srikanth Reddy

He said YSR's padayatra marked a major turning point in state politics. To understand the transformation, one must compare conditions before and after 2004. YSR understood public issues during

the journey and later implemented welfare governance after coming to power.

The Praja Prasthanam was not just a political march but a people's movement that remains in public memory. Inspired by this, Jagan also worked toward resolving people's issues in governance.

"A historic father-son journey" — Appireddy (MLC)

He noted that it is rare in Indian history for both father and son to undertake padayatras and connect with people. YSR walked around 1,475 km and designed schemes like free electricity, Aarogyasri, and fee reimbursement.

Similarly, Jagan walked over 3,600 km, won people's trust, and came to power. He said Jagan moved "four steps ahead" of his father in delivering welfare governance.

"A historic milestone written in golden letters" — Malladi Vishnu

He said the day YSR began his padayatra should be recorded in golden letters in

Andhra Pradesh's history. At a time when farmers, women, and students were facing hardships, YSR launched the march in extreme heat.

The impact of the padayatra changed the political landscape. YSR was the leader who first signed the file for free electricity to farmers and implemented Aarogyasri, providing quality healthcare to the poor. He added that Jagan Mohan Reddy is following in YSR's footsteps, and through YSRCP governance, has carried forward his father's vision.

"YSR lives forever in the hearts of the poor" — Ramasubba Reddy (MLC)

He stated that schemes introduced by YSR such as free electricity, Aarogyasri, and fee reimbursement are still continuing and supporting the poor in health and education. Through the Jalayagnam project, irrigation was provided to thousands of acres, making them fertile. He added that Jagan also initiated lift irrigation projects for the development of Rayalaseema.

New Principal Chief Personnel Officer for Southern Railway

Shri R. Mohanraja, IRPS, has assumed charge as the Principal Chief Personnel Officer (PCPO) of Southern Railway today

CHENNAI, APRIL 9:



An officer of the Indian Railway Personnel Service (IRPS), Shri Mohanraja belongs to the 1990 batch. Prior to this assignment, he was serving as Principal Chief Personnel Officer at the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai. Over the years, he has held several key positions across Indian Railways, contributing extensively in the domains of human resources management and staff welfare. He has served as Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Guntur Division, as Additional Divisional Railway Manager (ADRM), Chennai Division and headed the Railway Recruitment Cell for over six years, playing a pivotal role in large-scale recruitments. His experience spans multiple divisions including Madurai, Chennai, Mysuru and Tiruchirappalli, besides his tenure at ICF. He has also served as Correspondent of various Railway Schools. Shri Mohanraja has undergone advanced management training at reputed international institutions including the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, and pre-

mier institutes in the USA. He has also completed the prestigious Advanced Management Programme at INSEAD, Singapore and ICLIF, Kuala Lumpur, as well as training at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. A recipient of several accolades, Shri Mohanraja has been conferred the National Award for Outstanding Service by the Ministry of Railways, the Zonal Railway Award for Outstanding Service by the General Manager, Southern Railway, and the Director General's Medal for securing first position with distinction in the Advanced Management Programme. Shri Mohanraja holds a Bachelor's degree in Metallurgical Engineering from the National Institute of Technology Tiruchirappalli (formerly Regional Engineering College), Tiruchirappalli.

Narendra Modi unveils 6 guarantees, attacks Mamata Banerjee govt

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday intensified the BJP's election campaign in West Bengal, unveiling a "six-point guarantee" while launching a strong attack on the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC) government.

Addressing rallies in Haldia, Asansol, and Suri—covering industrial hubs and tribal regions—Modi accused the TMC of pushing the state into "industrial decay" and allowing an "infiltration menace." He said Bengal was currently under a "reign of fear" (Bhoy) and promised that a BJP government would establish an atmosphere of "trust" (Bharaos).

Modi asserted that investment and development are not possible in an environment of fear, emphasizing that restoring public confidence would be a top priority. He also remarked that the "vessel of TMC's sins is full," calling for a "Trinamool-mukt Bengal" to ensure progress.

Six Guarantees Announced by Modi:

- Replace the "reign of fear" with trust-based governance
- Make the administration accountable to citizens



Reopen all cases of corruption and crimes against women allegedly suppressed by TMC

- Jail leaders involved in corruption, regardless of their position
- Provide benefits to refugees as per law while taking strict action against illegal infiltrators
- Implement the 7th Pay Commission for state government employees, teachers, and related sectors

At Haldia, Modi warned that those who "looted Bengal" would be held accountable. Campaigning in the stronghold of BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari, he expressed confidence that the party's electoral success in Purba Medinipur would be replicated across the state.

In Asansol, a key industrial and coal-mining re-

gion, Modi highlighted the decline of industries and blamed the TMC for driving away investments. He alleged the presence of a "mafia raj" linked to illegal coal and sand mining, promising that a BJP "double-engine government" would revive industrial growth and create jobs. In Suri, Modi referred to incidents like the 2022 Bagtui violence to accuse the TMC of fostering "jungle raj." He also raised the issue of illegal infiltration, pledging a special investigation to identify and punish those facilitating it.

The Prime Minister also touched upon fisheries, stating that despite high demand, Bengal still depends on imports from other states. He promised to make the state self-reliant in fish production and strengthen the seafood sector.

Mamata Banerjee hits back at Narendra Modi over fish, infiltration claims

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday strongly hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of misrepresenting facts on fish production and making misleading claims about the state. Speaking at a rally in Agarpara in North 24 Parganas district, Banerjee rejected Modi's allegation that West Bengal is not self-sufficient in fish production. She said the state produces enough fish locally and no longer depends on imports as it once did. Referring to Modi's remarks comparing Bengal with Bihar, she said that while he claims higher fish production elsewhere, BJP-ruled states allegedly restrict people from consuming non-vegetarian food. She asserted that in Bengal, people are free to eat fish, meat, and eggs without interference. Banerjee also accused the Prime Minister of relying on incorrect inputs from party members and urged him to verify facts before making public statements. She further questioned the Centre's policies, pointing out that meat is exported from Bengal even as BJP leaders allegedly oppose its consumption.

Counter on Infiltration Issue:

Responding to Modi's charge that Bengal has be-



come a hub of illegal infiltration, Banerjee cited figures presented in Parliament, claiming that only around 2,200 infiltrators were identified nationwide. She questioned how BJP leaders then speak of "lakhs" of illegal entrants. She also argued that border security is the responsibility of the Centre and directly questioned the role of the Border Security Force (BSF) and Union Home Minister Amit Shah in preventing infiltration.

The TMC chief accused the BJP-led Centre of:

- Spreading false narratives about Bengal
- Misusing central agencies like ED and CBI against opposition leaders
- Trying to influence elections with the help of institutions
- Promoting divisive politics and distorting history

She also criticised Modi for past promises, including job creation and financial benefits, alleging they were not fulfilled. Banerjee further accused the BJP of disrespecting Bengal's cultural icons like Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Rabindranath Tagore, and of spreading misinformation about the state's traditions, including Durga Puja celebrations.

Election Concerns and Claims:

Raising concerns about the electoral process, Banerjee alleged that the BJP may attempt to influence vote counting and manipulate outcomes. She urged party workers and voters to remain vigilant. She also warned against possible attempts to misuse voter data and claimed that BJP agents might approach people seeking bank account details for malpractice.



Andhra govt to restrict access to social media for children below 13 years

AMARAVATI, APRIL 9

The Andhra Pradesh government will prepare a comprehensive regulatory framework to restrict access to social media for children aged below 13 years and to design an age-appropriate digital environment for teenagers.

State Minister for Education, IT and Electronics, Nara Lokesh on Thursday called for the drafting of a legislation that balances digital access with child safety, creativity, and mental well-being. Chairing a high-level Group of Ministers (GoM) meeting with senior officials and representatives from leading social media platforms, Minister Lokesh emphasised the need for a graded, age-based content access system, particularly for users aged between 13 to 16 years, ensuring that children are not exposed to harmful or inappropriate content. The proposed framework aims to align Andhra Pradesh with emerging global standards in digital child protection, an official statement said. Officials have been tasked with studying best practices from countries such as Singapore, Australia, and Denmark to build a robust legal and technological framework tailored to India's needs. As part of enforcement archi-

ture, the state government is evaluating the use of secure age-verification mechanisms, including "age tokens" integrated with DigitalLocker. This could enable social media platforms to authenticate user age without compromising privacy, a critical step toward implementing age restrictions at scale. Representatives from major social media platforms, including Meta, YouTube, X, ShareChat, and Josh briefed the GoM on existing safeguards for restricting sensitive content and handling user complaints. They expressed willingness to collaborate closely with the Andhra Pradesh government in implementing these measures. The state government will also seek public feedback and submit recommendations to the Union government on aspects that fall under the central legislative domain, indicating a potential pathway toward national-level policy evolution. Minister Lokesh underscored that strict action will be taken against individuals posting abusive or hateful content, particularly targeting women. Strengthening enforcement under existing IT laws, including Section 46 of the IT Act, was highlighted, with directions issued to appoint adjudicating authorities at the earliest.

H. D. Kumaraswamy and V. Somanna, Conduct Window Trailing Inspection of KSR Bengaluru – Mysuru Rail Section

HUBBALLI, APRIL 9

Hon'ble Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel, Shri H. D. Kumaraswamy and Hon'ble Minister of State for Railways and Jal Shakti, Shri V. Somanna, conducted a window trailing inspection of the KSR Bengaluru – Mandya – Mysuru railway sections, reviewing the progress of infrastructure works and several key operational and safety aspects on the Bengaluru-Mysuru section today. Shri Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, Hon'ble Member of Parliament Mysuru-Kodagu, Shri C. S. Puttaraju, Former Minister, Shri D. C. Thamanana, Former MLA, Maddur, Shri Saramahesh, Former MLA, K. R. Nagara, Shri Ashutosh Kumar Singh, Divisional Railway Manager, Bengaluru, Shri Mudit Mittal, Divisional Railway Manager, Mysuru, and senior officers of South Western Railway were present during the inspection. During the inspection, Hon'ble MoSR Shri V. Somanna inspected Setthihalli, Maddur, Hanakere, Mandya, Yelipur, and Sridangapatna railway stations. He interacted

with railway staff at Setthihalli regarding train operations and their well-being, addressed public grievances from local residents along the route, and assured that all issues would be resolved at the earliest. Further, Hon'ble MoSR Shri V. Somanna addressed the media at the Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Mysuru, attended by Shri H. D. Kumaraswamy, Shri Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, DRM Mysuru Shri Mudit Mittal, DRM Bengaluru Shri Ashutosh Kumar Singh, and other senior officials of South Western Railway.

Addressing the media, Hon'ble MoSR Shri V. Somanna stated that Karnataka has been sanctioned a record budgetary outlay for railway development. He highlighted the following key achievements and ongoing initiatives of Indian Railways in Karnataka:

- Record Railway Budget 2026-27: A record allocation of ₹2,93,030 crore has been made for railway development across the country in Financial Year 2026-27, which is approximately 9 times higher than the annual average allo-



cation during 2009-2014.

- Karnataka's Railway Allocation: ₹7,748 crore has been allocated to Karnataka in 2026-27, as against ₹7,564 crore in 2025-26.
- Ongoing Railway Works in Karnataka: Railway works worth ₹52,950 crore are currently progressing at various stages across the state.
- Amrit Bharat Station Scheme: 61 stations across Karnataka are being redeveloped under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, with an investment of ₹1,981 crore, providing modern amenities and improved passenger facilities.
- Major Station Redevelopment:

Major stations including KSR Bengaluru, Yesvantpur, and Bengaluru Cantonment are being redeveloped with a focus on modern infrastructure, enhanced passenger amenities, and seamless multimodal integration.

- Electrification – Sakleshpur-Subrahmanya Ghat Section: Electrification of the most challenging Sakleshpur-Subrahmanya Ghat section (55 km) in Mysuru Division has been successfully completed, marking a significant milestone in railway electrification.
- Overall Electrification in SWR: 97% of the Route Kilo-

metres (RKM) across South Western Railway have been electrified. Approximately 3,742 route kilometres have been electrified in Karnataka since 2014.

- New Railway Projects: 31 new line projects spanning a total length of 3,840 km are at various stages of implementation across Karnataka.
- New Rail Lines Since 2014: Approximately 1,750 km of new railway tracks have been laid in Karnataka since 2014.
- Road Over Bridges & Underpasses: A total of 707 flyovers and underpasses have been constructed in the state since 2014. The Hon'ble Minister also reviewed the progress of ongoing ROB and RUB works along the Bengaluru-Mysuru section.
- Kavach – Train Collision Avoidance System: The indigenous train collision avoidance system, Kavach, is being implemented across South Western Railway, reinforcing the safety of train operations. He stated that 5 ROB and 1 RUB have been sanctioned along the Bengaluru-Mysuru route. Of these, ROB No. 431 on the Ben-

galuru-Kengeri section has been reconstructed and inaugurated in December 2025, and the ROB at Channapatna Yard (LC No. 47), completed in October 2025 at a cost of ₹20 crore, is scheduled for inauguration shortly. Work on the ROB at Srirangapatna-Pandavapura (LC No. 97) is currently under implementation at an estimated cost of ₹41.14 crore. The RUB at Nayandahalli-Kengeri (LC No. 10) worth ₹33.65 crore and ROB at Setthihalli-Nidagata (LC Nos. 53 & 56) are at the DPR approval stage. Further, the Final Location Survey for four-laning of the Bengaluru-Mysuru section was sanctioned on 12.09.2023. Key surveys have been completed and preparation of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) is in progress. Hon'ble Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel, Shri H. D. Kumaraswamy, acknowledged the numerous requests and demands received from local people, farmers, and passengers during the inspection. He appreciated the Prime Minister's vision of eliminating level crossings by replacing them with ROB and RUBs as a transformative step forward for rail safety.

EDITORIAL

A MEASURED
MILESTONE FOR
INDIA'S NUCLEAR AMBITIONS

The Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) in Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu, achieving first criticality is a genuine cause for satisfaction, albeit a measured one. A Parliamentary Standing Committee reported this year that the project's final cost is ₹8,181 crore, more than twice the sanctioned amount. Criticality itself is at least 16 years behind schedule; the fast reactor fuel cycle facility is expected to be commissioned by 2029, over a decade late. Poor planning and flawed procurement, abetted by political insulation, are the causes of the delay. The PFBR is the first commercial-scale component of the second stage of India's nuclear power programme. Its purpose is to use spent fuel, after reprocessing, from the first stage, and depleted uranium to produce more plutonium. In the final stage, reactors will use plutonium and thorium as fuel. The programme's design is based on India's abundant thorium deposits, but this sword cuts both ways. The nuclear establishment must also be scrupulous about the PFBR's performance as it is prepared for commercial operation, and admit mistakes or under-performance plainly. The goal is not to use thorium at any cost but to achieve energy security and self-sufficiency. If the economics of solar and wind power render the current nuclear power paradigm a poor allocation of scarce public capital, that finding should honestly determine policy.

Nuclear power contributes around 3% of India's electricity from 8.78 GW of installed capacity. The country has committed to becoming a net-zero economy by 2070 amid an energy demand growth that will be among the largest of any major economy over the next two decades. Nuclear power facilities are expected to consume 6% of the land area required for equivalent solar power generation per unit of electricity produced. Considering that India's biodiversity commitments depend on not converting green cover, nuclear power offers a non-trivial path forward. Breeder reactors are more fuel-efficient, and will also extend the fuel cycle and reduce dependence on uranium imports. The challenge is to realise these merits without squandering time and public money. This means fixing the problems that the PFBR throws up during commissioning, and proceeding with the planned FBR1 and FBR2 units at Kalpakkam based on lessons learned, without the opacity that has prevailed so far. The PFBR also comes online alongside the SHANTI Act, private nuclear power operations, the advent of small modular reactors, and a new liability regime. Now is an opportune time for India to revamp its regulatory regime. So far, the AERB and the DAE have reported to the Atomic Energy Commission, which is thus both the promoter and the regulator of nuclear energy. The government must resolve this administrative short-circuit before any new complexities arise.

Suriname President Passes Away:

How Iran Ceasefire Helps Pakistan Fix
A 10-Year-Old 'Mess' With Saudi And UAE

Pakistan is basking in the glory of its diplomatic exploits. No matter how the 14-day truce between Iran and the US, put in place through Islamabad's midwifery, pans out, it is a major highlight in the country's chequered diplomatic trajectory - the first perhaps since 1971, when it helped then US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger reach out to China. Early on Wednesday, as the world held its breath, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced the two-week ceasefire between the warring parties. He also invited delegations from the US and Iran to Islamabad on Friday "to further negotiate for a conclusive agreement to settle all disputes". The ceasefire itself establishes Pakistan as a key mediator on an extremely tricky terrain, coming as it did just hours after President Trump threatened that "an entire civilization will die tonight".

Pakistan Redeems Itself?

Glowing praise poured in for Pakistan from both Tehran and Washington. Trump credited Sharif and Pakistan's Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir for his decision to accept a ceasefire, while Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, thanked "my dear brothers HE Prime Minister of Pakistan Sharif and HE Field Marshal Munir for their tireless efforts to end the war in the region". Besides, China, Turkey and Egypt are all hailing Pakistan's efforts to diffuse an extraordinarily tense situation, which could be catastrophic.

The war may yet continue. But in more ways than one, Pakistan has redeemed itself from a fallout it had with its Gulf patrons exactly a decade ago.

The Yemen War

Yemen's Civil War of 2015 drew the Gulf states in, forcing their direct military intervention on the side of the internationally recognised government of President Abdur Hadi Mansour against the Iran-backed Houthis. Pakistan, which had by then provided numerous military and policing services to Gulf monarchies in exchange for hefty grants and investments, dithered. Intense domestic opposition, coupled with fears of Sunni-Shia fault lines opening up inside the country, constrained the then government of Nawaz Sharif. He had been beholden to the House of Saud, both through marriage and because they had provided him asylum when President Pervez Musharraf had ousted

him from power. The Saudis and their partner, the Emiratis, who had jointly intervened in Yemen, saw red. This triggered a fallout between the long-term partners.

Though India's relations with the Gulf states, especially the UAE and Saudi Arabia, have their own inherent strengths, this has also played a role in the two sides forging closer bonds. This was evident when Prime Minister Narendra Modi made his first visit to the UAE in August 2015, and the two sides, for the first time, included a clause on "cross-border" threats in their joint statement. It also opened up counter-terrorism and intelligence cooperation between the two sides. Pakistani citizens on India's wanted list began to be extradited to India, and India, not Pakistan, became the destination for Gulf investments.

Munir, Trump's 'Favourite Field Marshal' This is why India will have to tread carefully and recalibrate its approach towards the region, where it has in recent years seen some of its best foreign policy successes. Pakistan is on the ascendancy there - about that there is no doubt - a path that began with Donald Trump's embrace of Munir, whom he called his "favourite field Marshall" and whom he feted at the White House soon after Operation Sindhoo.

An article in Foreign Policy explains this approach: "Trump boasts of his ability to secure the best deals in history, and he has found in Pakistani Army chief Asim Munir exactly the sort of interlocutor that he likes - a hard-power operator with direct access to the White House and a willingness to sell himself as useful." Be that as it may, Pakistan, with all its drawbacks and shortcomings, is now in the news not for yet another act of terrorism or negotiations over a fresh loan, but for playing a constructive role at a particularly trying time for the region and the global economy.

That Saudi Deal

Geopolitical realignments, including Pakistan's ties with the Gulf region, have been underway for a while. The starkest manifestation was in the Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement signed last September. It has a clause that stipulates that if one party is attacked, then the other will come to its defence. That clause was not invoked during Pakistan's recent conflict with Afghanistan, and neither have the Saudis called it into use till now despite being the target of Iran's missiles and drones. How-

ever, after initially trying to exercise some strategic ambiguity, Pakistan has had to state unequivocally whose side its loyalty would lie on if push came to shove.

On April 6-7, an attack by Israel on Iran on Monday provoked a strike on Saudi energy facilities in Jubail by Iran. The Pakistani Foreign Office promptly issued a stern condemnation of the attack, terming it a "dangerous escalation", and reaffirmed its support for the Kingdom, invoking the 2025 pact. Munir, too, said that the attack on Saudi Arabia "spoils sincere efforts to resolve the conflict through peaceful means". Earlier as well, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar, had informed the Iranian side about the defence agreement in order to dissuade attacks on Saudi Arabia. Pakistan has some 2.5 million of its citizens living in Saudi Arabia, and only about 33,000 in Iran, though Shiites form a sizable minority. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have provided billions in financial deposits to stabilise Pakistan's reserves, as well as in energy loans. That Pakistan is on the brink of bankruptcy and is surviving on loans and grants - and has been hit hard by the current energy crisis emanating from the Hormuz crisis - is no secret.

The 'STEP' Alliance

This partnership in the Gulf now may indeed be laying the foundation for a new Sunni bloc comprising Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and Pakistan: 'STEP'. Following the Saudi-Pakistan pact, reports emerged earlier this year of a Sunni NATO in the making, with Turkey, too, joining the alliance. However, such speculation was soon put to rest, given the deep-rooted suspicions between Saudi Arabia and Turkey. That arrangement, however, may now be reconsidered, given that the current ceasefire was a result of intense negotiations between these four Sunni countries.

The four first met in Riyadh in a bid to de-escalate the tensions. More recently, they met in Islamabad to hammer out an end to the war. Pakistan has also consulted with China, which has been the main behind-the-scenes conduit to Iran. All four are members of Donald Trump's Board of Peace for Gaza, established earlier this year. All four bring major strengths to the table - Saudi Arabia has the world's second-largest proven oil reserves, Egypt is the region's military strongman with the most powerful army, Turkey is a NATO member, a bridge between Europe and the Middle East and a major defence

exporter with cutting-edge defence technology, and Pakistan is a nuclear-armed state with an equally professional army.

Pakistan and Egypt have an intelligence-sharing and counterterrorism agreement in place, while Turkey and Egypt signed a \$350 million defence cooperation deal in February this year. According to Pakistan's Minister for Defence Production, Raza Hayat Haraj, a draft for a trilateral defence agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey also exists.

A New Middle East

Both Israel and Iran have emerged as major disruptors in the region. If, till now, there had been a tacit understanding that Israel could take on Iran on behalf of the Gulf states - with at least two of which Israel has forged close ties - then that perception has been busted by the current war. It has also shown the limits of military force alone, even for the US. Iran remains defiant, with its regime well-ensconced. At the same time, the US has demonstrated that it will always prioritise Israel's security over its Gulf allies. In spite of spending billions on arming themselves with US weaponry, the war has underscored the fragility of Gulf security. Most of all, these states lack the necessary wherewithal to put boots on the ground. Here, Pakistan, Turkey and Egypt are well-poised to fill that gap. While there are fissures and trust deficits between the Saudis and the Turks, and the Egyptians and the Turks, the bigger threat of Israel for Turkey and Iran for the Saudis may facilitate a rapprochement. Moreover, they also have good ties with China. And Pakistan, in any case, is now in the very good books of Trump.

The debate around Pakistan's 'mediation' efforts continues. For sure, if the ceasefire falls apart, it will be held responsible. But the fact remains that the country is in the geopolitical limelight for appropriate reasons after a long, long time.

Meanwhile, the possibility of STEP materialising into a formidable bloc is very real. India will have to recalibrate its policy accordingly, for as the war has shown, it is not in our interest to tilt on either side.

ADITI BHADURI,
SENIOR JOURNALIST

Disclaimer: These are the personal opinions of the author



AGNILINE: A TREATISE
ON BECOMING

Within the architecture of illusion, the mind—half-beast, half-wing—descends what failed ascent trembles in its marrow? what phantom rehearses hope into disguise? Hunger writes upon the void not need, but the erosion of meaning tears, untranslatable, remain the last language of a dissolving self. Sleep withdraws its covenant with light night inherits the corridors of will silence gathers not peace, but the discipline of absence. A soul unsheltered hovers at the edge of appetite a form ungrounded rehearses collapse. Strength—cinder. relation—barren ego, a flame estranged from origin. Here, fire is verdict. Here, silence is remainder. Thought arrives only to erase itself—a wave forgetting its ocean. Life fractures into pursuit, where pride perfects its undoing companionship flickers—syntax in the long sentence of aloneness. Truth does not declare it endures certainty is not given it is suffered. Limits adorn the heart with invisible wounds distance disguises itself as opportunity. Discipline teaches the shadow to follow when the shadow leads, the self ascends its unnamed sovereignty. Effort becomes topography—only the unyielding learn height victory does not arrive it inclines before will. Time does not gift it measures pause fractures, and fracture initiates. Let not hope orbit extinction, nor the self kneel to its own scaffolds. You are neither spark nor ruin you are ignition and horizon. Become the line fire draws when it refuses containment. Within the insurgency of failure, if faith stands without spectacle, triumph unfolds flight unburdened by witness. Each being—an uncharted army the mind—an empire without frontier. Silence, mastered, becomes invocation existence, a sovereignty no ruin inherits. Resolve, the bow; courage, the arrow of incandescent intent.



Time—armored indifference duty—the only legitimate war. Awareness burns to reveal perseverance walks without shrine. Society thickens into dusk, where chains speak in the grammar of need. Hunger corrodes not flesh alone, but ethic danger circles its own design crime moves quietly syntax within shadow. Yet let not the inward flame concede breath let not the soul dissolve into doubt. If truth is vessel navigate no current absolves the passive. The past inscribes wound and hymn the future flickers fragile conjecture. Deception enthroned reduces all to dust ease mistaken for heaven becomes ornament. Purpose alone survives its bearer. Stand beside yourself—witness, origin, guide. To embody the ideal is to consent to fire to become light is to relinquish all lesser names. Thus—the Agniline not boundary, but becoming not destruction, but disclosure not end but the precise moment the self, having burned through illusion, enters its first truth.

... Dr. Peruka Raju ...
7810032847

Need for Expansion of Parental
Protection & Welfare Laws Across India

The relationship between parents and children is built on love, care, and mutual respect, forming the foundation of a strong family. Parents raise their children, make numerous sacrifices, and guide them for a better future. As children grow older, it becomes their moral responsibility to support and protect their parents, especially during old age. By providing emotional care and financial assistance, children can help their parents live with dignity and happiness. This mutual bond strengthens family values and promotes a compassionate and responsible society.

Recently, the Telangana Assembly approved the Telangana Employees Accountability and Monitoring of Parental Support Bill, 2026, which aims to ensure social security and dignity for elderly parents. According to this bill, government employees, private sector employees, and public representatives are all mandatorily required to provide financial and social support to their parents. If anyone neglects their parents, authorities can impose a deduction of up to 15% of their salary or ₹10,000 (whichever is lower). The deducted amount will be directly credited to the parents' bank account. This law expands the existing provisions under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 by introducing stricter enforcement mechanisms. Parents can file complaints with designated authorities, and cases must be resolved within a specified time frame. The bill is more inclusive as it also covers adoptive parents. It introduces a structured grievance redressal system to protect the rights of the elderly. The government has stated that this law promotes not only moral responsibility but also legal accountability.

Even before this bill, several laws were in force in India, including in the erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh, to ensure that children take responsibility for supporting their parents. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 serves as the primary law, making it a legal obligation for children to provide maintenance to their parents. Under this Act, tribunals have the authority to enforce monthly maintenance payments. According to Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), parents who are unable to support themselves can seek financial assistance through the courts. Additionally, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 safeguards elderly mothers from abuse and neglect within families. In united Andhra Pradesh, these central laws were implemented through district-level maintenance tribunals and social welfare departments. Furthermore, state government schemes such as old-age pensions and healthcare support have reduced, to some extent, the dependency of parents on their children. Legal provisions also grant elderly parents

the right to reclaim property transferred to their children in cases of neglect. Therefore, the Telangana Bill is not entirely new but can be seen as an extension and strengthening of the existing legal framework. Indian courts have delivered several judgments reinforcing that it is the responsibility of children to take care of their parents. In the case of Dr. Vijaya Manohar Arbat v. Kashirao Rajaram Sawai (1987), the court held that even a married daughter has a legal obligation to maintain her parents under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). In Vanitha v. Deputy Commissioner, Bengaluru Urban District (2020), the Supreme Court upheld the rights of senior citizens to residence and protection under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007. Similarly, in Ashwani Kumar v. Union of India (2018), the Court emphasized the importance of effective implementation of laws related to the welfare of the elderly.

Various High Courts, including the Andhra Pradesh High Court, have also ruled that children have a duty to provide both financial and emotional support to their elderly parents. Many countries have also legally recognized the responsibility of children to care for their parents. In Singapore, under the Maintenance of Parents Act, 1995, elderly parents can seek financial support from their children through tribunals. In China, under the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly, children are not only required to take care of their parents but are also mandated to visit them regularly. In the United States, some states have "filial responsibility laws," which legally require children to support their parents if they are in financial need. In France and Canada, civil codes make it mandatory for children to provide financial assistance to elderly parents. Similarly, in Germany, under the social welfare system, children are expected to contribute towards the cost of caring for their parents. These international examples clearly show that the legal responsibility of children toward their parents is a widely recognized concept across the world.

There are several strong arguments in favor of this bill. It provides financial security to elderly parents who are often neglected despite having made significant sacrifices in raising their children. By legally recognizing the responsibility of children to care for their parents, it reinforces traditional family values in Indian society. Unlike previous laws, this bill offers a structured and enforceable mechanism for implementation. It includes provisions such as salary deductions for those who fail to fulfil their responsibilities. It promotes family-based care and helps reduce the burden on old-age homes. By protecting vulnerable elderly individuals from neglect and exploitation, the bill promotes social justice. The

grievance redressal system ensures that issues are resolved in a timely manner. It empowers parents who do not have their own source of income to claim the support they rightfully deserve. The system of directly transferring money into bank accounts ensures transparency and accountability. Finally, this bill stands as a progressive model for other states in addressing the growing problem of elderly neglect in modern society. It is commendable, and the Honourable Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy deserves appreciation for this initiative.

There have also been some criticisms of this bill. Critics argue that by legally enforcing emotional responsibilities within families, it interferes in personal family matters. They believe that imposing a salary deduction of up to 15% may violate individual financial freedom and could be especially burdensome for those with lower incomes. Some also feel that instead of resolving family issues, the law might worsen them and damage relationships. There are concerns that parents might misuse the law by filing false complaints to harass their children. Finally, it is argued that implementation challenges and administrative burdens may hinder the law from achieving meaningful social change.

To effectively implement the Telangana Employees Accountability and Monitoring of Parental Support Act, 2026, a balanced approach combining administrative efficiency, legal clarity, and social awareness is essential. To avoid ambiguity, the government should provide clear definitions of key terms to ensure uniform interpretation in all cases. Awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate people about their responsibilities. Special officers should be appointed at the district and mandal levels to efficiently handle complaints and oversee implementation. A transparent and time-bound grievance redressal system will help build trust and accountability. Providing family support services, adopting digital payment systems, and offering proper training to officials will ensure smooth implementation and long-term success of the law. If implemented effectively, this Act can help build a more compassionate and responsible society.



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BETWEEN SURVIVAL AND STRATEGY

WHY WASHINGTON AND TEL AVIV CAN NEVER TICK IN UNISON

BY DR. VYAKARNAM NAGESHWAR, GEOPOLITICAL ANALYST

The United States and Israel are not divided allies. They are differently wired allies. One calculates risk across continents and election cycles. The other confronts threats at its doorstep with no margin for delay. The friction is real, visible, and often uncomfortable. But it is not a breakdown. It is the very mechanism that keeps the partnership functional. Let us get one thing straight. The world is watching the same conflict, but it is not seeing the same clock. For Israel, every hour carries consequence. For the United States, every decision carries calculation. This is not a misunderstanding. This is design. Israel looks at Iran and sees proximity, immediacy, and a narrowing window. A nuclear-capable adversary is not a future scenario. It is a present danger inching closer. Add to that the constant shadow of

Hezbollah, the volatility along its borders, and the absence of strategic depth. There is no cushion, no fallback geography, no luxury of delay. The United States sees the same Iran, but through a wider lens. It is one theatre among many. There is China in the Indo-Pacific, Russia in Europe, domestic inflation, electoral pressures, and global energy stability. Washington is not blind to the threat. It simply refuses to be consumed by it. And that is where the divergence begins.

ISRAEL'S DOCTRINE IS SIMPLE

Neutralise the threat before it matures. Delay is danger. Hesitation is vulnerability. What we saw in the recent ceasefire episode is a textbook case of this divergence playing out in real time. Washington pushed for a pause. A breather. A moment to reassess. There were diplomatic channels activated, intermediaries engaged, and the language of restraint carefully deployed.



At the very same moment, Israel continued its calibrated strikes. Not reckless, not uncontrolled, but deliberate. Targeted. Message-driven. To some, this looked like disunity. It is not. It is parallel strategy under different compulsions. "Israel cannot afford to be wrong once. The United States can afford to be patient many times". The uncomfortable truth is this: Israel fights wars of survival. The United States manages conflicts of interest. That difference shapes everything. When Israel strikes, it is sending a signal of urgency. When America pauses, it is sending a signal of control.

Both signals matter. Both are necessary. But they are not identical. This is not a story of loyalty versus betrayal. It is a story of distance versus immediacy. And yet, despite the visible friction, the alliance does not weaken. It adapts. Because beneath the noise, there is complementarity. The United States brings scale. Military reach, intelligence networks, diplomatic cover, and economic leverage. It stabilises the system. Israel brings speed. Precision, real-time intelligence, and a willingness to act first. It disrupts the threat. One contains. The other confronts. Together, they create a balance that

neither could achieve alone. Back in the Middle East, the metaphor often used is that of negotiating with a tiger. For Israel, the tiger is within striking distance. For the United States, the tiger is one among several in a larger jungle. That difference cannot be wished away. It cannot be diplomatically massaged into uniformity. And it should not be. Because this so-called mismatch is precisely what keeps the alliance resilient. If both acted like Israel, escalation would spiral. If both acted like the United States, threats would fester. It is the tension between urgency and restraint that creates equilibrium. The mistake is to look for perfect alignment. There is none. There never was. What exists instead is a hard, pragmatic understanding. Israel will act when it must. The United States will pause when it can. The clocks will never match. But as long as they keep moving in the same direction, the alliance will

hold. And in a region where certainty is rare and stability is fragile, that may be the only balance that matters.

AMERICA'S DOCTRINE IS CALCULATED. Manage escalation. Avoid entrapment. Stability is strategy. Overreach is risk.

THE STRAIT THAT CAN SHAKE DELHI

For India, this is not distant geopolitics. It is immediate economics. Any instability around the Strait of Hormuz sends shockwaves through oil markets. Prices spike. Import bills rise. Inflation follows. At the same time, Iran remains central to India's connectivity ambitions through Chabahar and the International North South Transport Corridor. A weakened Iran creates uncertainty. An unstable region complicates access. India does not have the luxury of ideological alignment here. It has to read the situation for what it is a shifting equation of risk, opportunity, and timing.

NFR Enhances Passenger Connectivity with Special Trains and Extended Services

MALIGAON, 09H APRIL, 2026:

With a focus on improving passenger convenience and providing a seamless travel experience, Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has introduced additional special trains and extended existing services across key routes to efficiently cater to the extra rush of passengers during the ongoing travel season. As part of these efforts, Train No. 05754/05753 (New Jalpaiguri - Malda Town - New Jalpaiguri) Special has been introduced to enhance passenger convenience. Train No. 05754 (New Jalpaiguri - Malda Town) and Train



parting from Naharlagun on Mondays. Both services will complete seven trips each and the train will be composed of 22 coaches. In addition, NFR has introduced special train services to further facilitate passenger movement across the region. Train No. 05698/05697 (Guwahati - Jalpaiguri Road - Guwahati) Special will run bi-weekly with seven trips in each direction. Train No. 05698 (Guwahati - Jalpaiguri Road) will operate on Thursdays and Sundays from 09 th April to 30 th April 2026. In the return direction, Train No. 05697 (Jalpaiguri Road - Guwahati) will run on Fridays and Mondays from 10 th April to 01 st May 2026. Another special service, Train No. 05756/05755 (New Jalpaiguri - Balurghat - New Jalpaiguri) will operate weekly with three trips in each direction. Train No. 05756 (New Jalpaiguri - Balurghat) will run on Saturdays i.e., 11 th , 18 th and 25 th April 2026. In the return direction, Train No. 05755 (Balurghat - New Jalpaiguri) will run on Sundays i.e., 12 th , 19 th and 26 th April 2026. This train will be operated with modern 22 coaches, providing enhanced passenger comfort and safety. Further strengthening passenger services, the services of Train No. 04654/04653 (Amritsar - New Jalpaiguri - Amritsar) have been extended. Train No. 04654 (Amritsar - New Jalpaiguri) is running from 08 th April to 29 th April 2026 for four additional trips. Similarly, Train No. 04653 (New Jalpaiguri - Amritsar) will run from 10 th April to 01 st May 2026 for four additional trips. The composition, timings and stoppages of the trains will remain unchanged. NFR continues to enhance services and connectivity.

24 women held in ₹37 cr gold smuggling bust at Mumbai airport

MUMBAI: (APR 9)

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) busted a gold smuggling racket at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMA) in Mumbai and arrested 24 female carriers with 29.37 kilograms of gold worth Rs 37.74 crore, an official said on Thursday. Based on specific intelligence, the DRI Mumbai Zonal Unit conducted 'Operation Dhahabu Blitz' on Wednesday, he said, adding it may be among the biggest busts at Mumbai airport this year. 'Dhahabu' is Swahili for gold. "DRI received a tip-off about women coming from Nairobi in Kenya with hidden gold. Following this, 24 foreign nationals, who had landed at Mumbai Airport from Nairobi, were stopped.

General Manager of Northeast Railway Inspects Gorakhpur-Mau Rail Section and Station Redevelopment Works

GORAKHPUR, APRIL 9, 2026

The General Manager of Northeast Railway, Shri Uday Borwankar, conducted a window trailing inspection of the Gorakhpur-Mau rail section along with Divisional Railway Manager (Varanasi) Shri Ashish Jain and senior officials from the headquarters and division. During the inspection, he also thoroughly reviewed the ongoing redevelopment works at Deoria Sadar, Bhatni, Salempur, Belthara Road, and Mau stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. At the beginning of the inspection, Shri Borwankar inspected the construction of a Limited Height Subway at level crossing No. 136B-1 in the Gauri Bazar-Baitalpur section and instructed officials to complete all works within the stipulated time frame while maintaining high quality. He then carried out a



window trailing inspection of the Gorakhpur-Deoria section and reached Deoria Sadar station, where he inspected the ongoing redevelopment works. During the visit, he reviewed the circulating area, platforms, waiting halls, reservation center, and passenger amenities. He also examined the redevelopment blueprint and directed officials to complete all works on time with high stand-

ards. The General Manager also inspected Ahilyapur Halt station and conducted a site inspection of the proposed goods shed. During the inspection at Bhatni Junction, he reviewed the circulating area, platforms, waiting halls, ticket counters, and other passenger facilities, along with the redevelopment works. He emphasized completing all works within the deadline while

ensuring quality. At Salempur yard, he carried out a safety inspection of level crossing No. 07 Special and examined all safety standards. He also inspected passenger facilities such as platforms, waiting halls, ticket counters, water booths, and reviewed the progress and quality of redevelopment works under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. At Belthara Road station, he inspected the circulating area, platforms, waiting halls, ticket counters, and passenger amenities. He also reviewed the redevelopment works and directed officials to ensure timely completion with high quality. Additionally, he conducted a safety inspection of points located at km 33/21 in the station yard. He inspected the non-interlocked level crossing gate No. 29C at km 50/06 between Kidharapur-Indara block section, examined all safety parameters, and assessed the safety knowl-

edge of gatekeeper Shri Ashok Kumar Yadav, expressing satisfaction. Further, he conducted a detailed inspection of the south line of Major Bridge No. 72 located between km 66/21-27 in the Indara-Mau section. At Mau Junction, he inspected passenger facilities including circulating area, platforms, waiting halls, ticket counters, facilities for differently-abled passengers, water booths, toilets, escalators, and the "One Station One Product" counter. He also inspected the Railway Protection Force barracks and reviewed the facilities provided to personnel. He instructed officials to complete all redevelopment works at Mau Junction within the stipulated time and with high quality standards. At the "One Station One Product" stall, he observed various saree products and interacted with the shopkeeper to learn about local textile items.

Rs 590-crore Haryana funds scam CBI takes over probe, 2 IAS officers suspended

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has taken over the probe into a massive Rs 590-crore alleged fraud involving Haryana government funds, formally registering an FIR on April 8 and launching a full-scale investigation. The case centres on the diversion of public money from accounts in IDFC First Bank and AU Small Finance Bank, Panchkula, through forged documents, unauthorised transactions and an alleged criminal conspiracy. Two IAS officers - R K Singh and Pradeep Kumar - have been suspended, while several others are under scrutiny as part of a widening crackdown.



HOW THE FRAUD UNFOLDED

According to the FIR accessed by India Today, the alleged scam took place over nearly five months, between September 26, 2025 and February 23, 2026. Funds linked to a government scheme under the Development and Panchayats Department, including the Mukhya Mantri

Gramin Awas Yojana (MMGAY) 2.0 programme, were siphoned off without approvals. Around Rs 50 crore was parked in two accounts opened in IDFC First Bank, while another Rs 25 crore was deposited in AU Small Finance Bank, before being diverted through a series of suspicious transactions. Investigators have flagged the use of forged debit memos, fake authorisations and manipulated financial records. In one instance, a cheque mentioning Rs 2.5 crore in figures but "Rupees Twenty-Five Crores" in words was processed by the bank. Forged signatures of former Director General DK Be-

hera, who had demitted office in October 2025, were also allegedly used, raising serious concerns over verification lapses.

BANKING GAPS, SHELL COMPANIES UNDER LENS

The FIR points to significant procedural lapses by the banks, including incomplete account opening documents and missing transaction records during initial scrutiny. Alerts for high-value transactions were reportedly linked to an unauthorised mobile number instead of an official account holder. AU Small Finance Bank has also been flagged for not fully cooperating with investigators.

ISI-backed Khalistani terror module busted in Punjab, 2 arrested with cache of arms

Officials said a foreign-based handler ran the module, raising cross-border concerns. Top police officials called the operation a "major breakthrough," underscoring its seriousness.



In a major counter-terror operation, the Punjab Police on Thursday announced that it had busted a terror module linked to Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), allegedly backed by Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and with suspected links to ex-

trimest networks including ISIS. Two individuals have been arrested in connection with the case. The joint operation was carried out by teams from Amritsar Rural Police, Gurdaspur Police, and the State Special Operations Cell (SSOC), Amritsar, in coordi-

nation with central agencies. According to officials, the module was being operated by a foreign-based handler, raising concerns about cross-border coordination and support. Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav described the operation as a "major breakthrough," highlighting the scale and seriousness of the threat. "In a major breakthrough, District Amritsar Rural, District Gurdaspur, SSOC-Amritsar, in a joint operation with Central Agencies, busts an ISI-sponsored BKI terror module operated

by a foreign-based handler and arrests two accused," Yadav said. Police recovered a significant cache of arms and explosive materials from the accused. The seizure included five hand grenades, two special detonators, a push-to-talk (PTT) timer equipped with coder and decoder, a 9V battery, and approximately 1 kg of high explosive material packed with nails, indicative of an improvised explosive device (IED). Additionally, a Baofeng walkie-talkie along with a cable and trigger mechanisms was recovered.

Procurement Process of More Than 10 Departments Finalized, Infrastructure Projects to Gain Momentum in Haryana

CHANDIGARH, APRIL 9

Taking a major step towards accelerating development works in the state, the Haryana Government has finalized procurement processes and key projects of various departments. The decision was taken in a meeting of the High-Powered Purchase Committee held late Wednesday evening at Haryana Niwas under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini. During the meeting, approval was granted for expenditure of about ₹1,028 crore on various projects of more than 10 departments, including Haryana Police Housing Corporation, DHBVN, HSIIDC, PWD, Haryana Agro Industries Corporation Limited, DMER, FMDA, GMDA, the Irrigation Department, and PHED. Through negotiations with bidders, savings of approximately ₹96 crore were achieved. Chief Minister Sh.

Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini chairs meeting of High-Powered Purchase Committee

Nayab Singh Saini stated that the primary objective of the government is to provide better quality services to the people of the state. He directed officials to ensure regular monitoring of all projects so that they are completed within stipulated timelines and meet quality standards. He added that he would personally review the progress of projects and emphasized that all officers must ensure judicious use of funds. Any negligence in development works will not be tolerated. During the meeting, procurement processes for 11-meter-long PCC poles, single-phase and three-phase net meters, and 25 KVA transformers were finalized. Additionally, approval was granted for commodity procurement worth ₹29 crore under the supplementary nutrition programme as part of



the 'Har-Hith' retail project of Haryana Agro Industries Corporation Limited. A project worth ₹5.78 crore was approved for implementing the 'Student and Faculty Life Cycle Management System' (SFLM) in government medical colleges of the state, aimed at enhancing efficiency and integration in the medical education system. Moreover, a

project worth ₹6.60 crore was approved for conducting surveys and preparing a DPR for storm water diversion from Gurugram metropolitan area towards the Yamuna River. Under infrastructure development, ₹47.20 crore was sanctioned for the construction of a Home Guard and Civil Defence Training Centre in Hasanpur village of Karnal. ₹17.75 crore was approved for a master water supply scheme in Faridabad, while ₹17.75 crore was also sanctioned for the construction of a 100 MLD MPS and a 100 MLD STP at Dhanwapur in Gurugram. An amount of ₹101 crore will be spent on constructing a main pumping station with a capacity of 665.5 MLD in Gurugram. Additionally, ₹20 crore was approved for the development of Atal Park in Sector-1,

Panchkula, and ₹109.80 crore for the construction of a world-class shooting range sports complex in Sector-32. Under industrial and environmental improvements, ₹123.40 crore was approved for the construction of an additional Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) with a capacity of 21 MLD and a main pumping station of 63 MLD in Sector-29-II, Panipat. In the health sector, ₹15.80 crore was sanctioned for the construction of a Community Health Centre in Danoda village of Narwana block in Jind. Furthermore, ₹51.90 crore was approved for establishing an Integrated Aqua Park Centre of Excellence for the development of saline-affected areas in Garwa village of Bhiwani, and ₹13.50 crore for the construction of an 8 MLD

STP based on SBR technology in Palwal. In the irrigation sector, ₹14.50 crore was sanctioned for the reconstruction of an aqueduct and outlet at RD-83000 of the Bhalout sub-branch, and ₹23.80 crore for construction and reconstruction of various structures between RD-82500 and 124000. The meeting was attended by Energy Minister Sh. Anil Vij, Urban Local Bodies Minister Sh. Vipul Goel, Agriculture Minister Sh. Shyam Singh Rana, Public Health Engineering Minister Sh. Ranbir Singh Gangwa, Health Minister Arti Singh Rao, Additional Chief Secretary Sh. Raja Sekhar Vundru, Additional Chief Secretary Smt. G. Anupama, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Sh. Arun Gupta, along with senior officers of various departments.

Nearly 100 fall ill after consuming snacks at religious event in Ahmedabad village

Health teams have launched an investigation, collected samples, and provided preventive treatment to over 200 others who consumed the snacks.



In a suspected case of food poisoning, nearly 100 people fell ill after consuming a local snack at a religious programme in a village in Ahmedabad district, an official said on Thursday. Dr Chintan Desai, district epidemic medical officer, said 96 residents of Rajpura village were taken to hospital in the week hours of Thursday after they fell sick on consuming 'sev-khamani' (a Gujarati snack) at the religious event on Wednesday night. He said while 38 of the affected people were still admitted to the hospital, others were discharged

after treatment. All those hospitalised are in stable condition, Desai informed. A health department team rushed to the village after cases of vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhoea were reported in the week hours. Apart from the 96 people who were taken to the hospital, 214 other villagers who consumed the snack were given preventive treatment, Desai said. Police and food safety authorities were informed about the incident. A team has taken food and water samples to determine the cause of suspected food poisoning, the officer added.

US, India agree to further cooperation under Pax Silica

WASHINGTON: (APR 9)

India and the US on Thursday agreed to further their cooperation under Pax Silica and broader economic and technology engagements, including in AI and critical minerals. The issues figured during discussions Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri had here with US Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Jacob S Helberg. "Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri had a productive meeting with the US Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Jacob Helberg @UnderSecE. They agreed to take forward cooperation under Pax Silica and the broader economic and technology engagements, including in AI and critical minerals," the Indian Embassy in the US said in a post on X.

Russia's Putin declares ceasefire in Ukraine for Orthodox Easter

MOSCOW: (APR 9)

Russia's President Vladimir Putin on Thursday declared a 32-hour ceasefire in Ukraine over the Orthodox Easter weekend. Putin's decree, released by the Kremlin, orders Russian forces to observe a ceasefire starting on 4 pm Saturday and lasting until the end of Sunday. Putin's move follows Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's proposal earlier this week to observe a pause in attacks on each other's energy infrastructure over the Orthodox Easter. He said he made the offer through the United States, which has been mediating talks between delegations from Moscow and Kyiv as the conflict stretches into a fifth year.

Trump gives ultimatum to European allies to provide support to secure Hormuz

The United States has asked European partners to present detailed plans within days on how they intend to help secure navigation through the Strait of Hormuz once fighting stops.



The fragile ceasefire between the United States and Iran has opened a narrow window for diplomacy. Now Washington is pressing its European allies to move fast on securing the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical energy routes. With global oil flows disrupted and prices under pressure, Donald Trump's administration has made it clear that declarations of support are no longer enough.

The United States has asked European partners to present detailed plans within days on how they intend to help secure navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, a Nato spokesperson confirmed to Reuters. The request was raised during high-level discussions at the White House, the Pentagon

and the State Department, including Trump's meeting with Nato Secretary-General Mark Rutte. Trump took aim at Nato and other allies in a sharply worded post on Truth Social, saying they fail to understand issues unless pressure is applied. Mark Rutte also briefed some capitals that the US President wants concrete commitments within the next few days for help securing Hormuz, as per Reuters.

A UK-led coalition of more than 40 countries, including European nations, Japan and Canada, had said it will help

reopen the Strait of Hormuz. The route carries nearly a fifth of the world's oil and gas. But the ground reality remains far from stable. Even after a 14-day ceasefire was announced, fighting has not fully stopped. Iran has pointed to continued Israeli strikes in Lebanon as a breach of the agreement, and the strait itself remains largely shut, with no clear sign of normal traffic resuming. Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf said that Lebanon and the entire Resistance Axis, as Iran's allies, form an

inseparable part of the ceasefire under a 10-point proposal framework. This gap between what has been promised and what is actually happening is driving Washington's urgency. US administration want to make sure that if the ceasefire holds, there is no delay in getting ships moving again through the Strait of Hormuz.

NATO UNDER PRESSURE
The issue has also exposed divisions between the United States and its Nato allies. In recent weeks, several European countries held back from supporting US military action against Iran and were reluctant to step in on Hormuz while fighting was still ongoing. Trump has openly criticised that stance. After meeting Nato chief Mark Rutte, he wrote, "NATO WASN'T THERE WHEN WE NEEDED THEM, AND THEY WON'T BE THERE IF WE NEED THEM AGAIN."

Trump's remarks reflect frustration in Washington over what it sees as limited support from allies. Trump has repeatedly questioned Nato's role and has even threatened that the US could step away from the alliance. For Mark Rutte, this is another difficult moment. He has managed ties with Trump in the past, but now faces pressure on multiple fronts -- from the Iran conflict to ongoing disagreements over defence spending and priorities within the alliance. US officials, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, have also made it clear that allies need to do more, hinting that Washington could rethink its commitments if support does not improve. Meanwhile, diplomatic efforts are still in motion. Vice President JD Vance is expected to lead a US team to Islamabad for direct talks with Iran on April 11, aimed at establishing a permanent truce. Now everything depends on whether the truce holds and how quickly allies respond. The Strait of Hormuz is still a major strategic route and a point of pressure.

Israel claims Hezbollah chief's nephew killed in Beirut strikes last night

The IDF killed Ali Yusuf Harshi in Beirut overnight and hit the country's weapon depots, crossings, and over 100 military sites. Lebanese authorities said that 254 people were killed and over 1,100 were injured in the Israeli strikes.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) confirmed on Thursday that it had killed Ali Yusuf Harshi, the nephew and personal secretary of Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem, in an overnight strike in Beirut, news agency

Reuters reported. The Israeli military said the operation targeted the Beirut area specifically to eliminate Harshi, a key aide within the Iran-backed Lebanese group. "The IDF struck in the Beirut area and eliminated Ali Yusuf Harshi, the personal secretary and nephew of Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem," the military said. Harshi was killed in a strike in Beirut's Tallet Khayat neighborhood, just outside Hezbollah's Dahiyeh stronghold. Footage from the site showed a multistory building partially collapsing after the attack.



Meanwhile, the IDF also revealed that it targeted two key crossings over the Litani River overnight, which Hezbollah reportedly used to

move thousands of weapons, rockets, and launchers into southern Lebanon. The military added that around ten weapon depots, rocket launchers, and Hezbollah headquarters in southern Lebanon were also hit during the operations.

Israel launched its heaviest strikes on Lebanon since the conflict with Hezbollah began last month, killing over 250 people on Wednesday. The attacks followed a resumption of rocket fire by the Iran-backed group into northern Israel after a brief pause under the two-week US-Iran ceasefire. On Wednesday afternoon,

Beirut was hit by at least five successive strikes, sending towering plumes of smoke into the sky. The Israeli military described it as the largest coordinated operation of the war, hitting over 100 Hezbollah command centers and military sites across Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and southern Lebanon in just ten minutes. Lebanon's civil defence reported 254 dead and more than 1,100 injured nationwide, with Beirut suffering the highest toll at 91 fatalities. The health ministry cited 182 deaths across the country, noting the figure was not final.



US's big move amid Iran war

The US has not conducted a draft since the Vietnam War, but rising global tensions, including the ongoing Iran conflict, have renewed focus on preparedness.

amid the ongoing West Asia conflict, the US is moving to overhaul its military draft system for the first time in decades, with a new proposal to automatically register eligible men. This will mark the most significant change since the Vietnam War, when the country last enforced conscription.

Under a proposed rule, the Selective Service System (SSS) plans to begin automatic registration by December 2026, shifting the responsibility away from individuals, a New York Post report said.

The US has not conducted a draft since the Viet-

nam War, but rising global tensions, including the Iran conflict, have renewed focus on preparedness.

The change follows approval by Congress in the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act, which mandates integrating federal data to enroll eligible men directly into the draft database. Currently, all men aged 18 to 25 are legally required to register with the Selective Service within 30 days of turning 18. Failure to do so is a felony, punishable by fines, imprisonment, and loss of access to government benefits and jobs.

While many US states already link draft registration to driver's licence applications, the new system will make registration automatic nationwide—modernising a system that has remained largely unchanged since the Vietnam War period.



Pakistan to blame for Lebanon confusion in US-Iran ceasefire?

April 8, 2026, was a day of jubilation for Pakistan. After all, it secured its biggest diplomatic win in years by mediating the US-Iran ceasefire. However, within hours, the ceasefire came under strain as Israel carried out its largest strike across Lebanon, Iran's ally, killing hundreds. The confusion - was Lebanon part of the ceasefire or not? Pakistan, which was responsible for interpreting the agreement to both sides, now finds itself at the centre of the storm.

The US and Israel said Lebanon, which Tel Aviv has pounded since March 2, was never part of the ceasefire deal. According to Iran, it was. When Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced the ceasefire between the US and Iran on Wednesday, he explicitly mentioned in capital letters that it applied "everywhere", including Lebanon. "Iran and the United States, along with their allies, have agreed to an immediate ceasefire everywhere, including Lebanon and elsewhere, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY," Sharif tweeted. Within minutes, Israel welcomed the truce deal but asserted that Lebanon was not part of it. Hours later, it unleashed its missiles on Lebanon. It was seconded by Pakistan's ambassador to the US, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, in an interview with CNN. Sheikh emphasised that Lebanon was included in the ceasefire framework and the announcement by Sharif "could not have been more authentic" to what had been agreed between the parties. However, in a cautious note, he also added that ceasefires in the region have historically been fragile. However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denied Pakistan's assertion that the ceasefire covered the conflict in Lebanon. Thus, within hours of the truce deal announcement, Israel

carried out a large wave of airstrikes, killing over 250 people and leaving over 1,000 injured. Lebanon got embroiled in the conflict after the armed group Hezbollah, a proxy of Iran, attacked Israel. Israel retaliated by pounding Beirut and key Lebanese cities, killing over 1,500 people since March 2. In a sharply worded statement, Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf accused the US and Israel of violating the ceasefire. "In such a situation, a ceasefire or negotiations are unreasonable," Ghalibaf, who is likely to lead peace talks with the US, said. In retaliation, Iran, which opened the Strait of Hormuz briefly after the ceasefire, closed it again and stopped the transit of oil tankers, Iran's state-run Fars news agency said.

DID PAKISTAN BOTCH IT UP?

Now, interpreting the ceasefire deal and communicating it to both sides was Pakistan's responsibility. In all likelihood, Pakistan botched it up. Iranian media reported that Pakistan might have handed the US a version different from the one it received from Iran. To Iran, Pakistan might have provided a different version from what it received from Washington, The Middle East reported. Even US Vice President JD Vance seemed to suggest so, without explicitly naming Pakistan. Speaking to reporters, Vance suggested that Iran's negotiators were made to believe that the two-week ceasefire deal included Lebanon. "This comes from a legitimate misunderstanding. I think the Iranians thought that the ceasefire included Lebanon, and it just didn't. We never made that promise," Vance, who will lead the US delegation for talks in Islamabad this weekend, said. He underscored that the agreement was intended to focus on Iran and US allies (Gulf states). The developments have led to growing scrutiny over Pakistan's role as the intermediary.

China behind scenes, Pak front face: Hamid Mir

Senior Pakistani journalist Hamid Mir, in an exclusive interview with India Today, said Pakistan and China worked in tandem to get Iran on board for the ceasefire deal with the US and Israel.

More than two weeks of frantic diplomatic efforts by Pakistan to get the US and Iran to reach a ceasefire would have come to naught had not China intervened at the eleventh hour, senior Pakistani journalist Ha-

mid Mir said. In an exclusive interview with India Today, Mir emphasised that Pakistan and China worked in tandem to get Iran on board for a ceasefire deal. The US, Israel and Iran eventually secured a fragile two-week truce, hours after US President Donald Trump warned that "a whole civilisation will die tonight" if Tehran did not reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the vital energy waterway.

'PAKISTAN, CHINA WERE FACILITATORS'
Mir pointed towards Pakistan's unique geopolitical position be-



hind its role as a negotiator. He said Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and army chief Asim Munir enjoyed a special relationship not only with Trump, but also with the Iranian presi-

dent and the Chinese leadership. "On April 7, Trump made a very nasty statement. After that, China helped Pakistan to convince Iran to agree to the ceasefire," he told India Today. However, Mir was quick to assert that Pakistan and China were only playing the role of a facilitator rather than a direct mediator. "Pakistan and China were playing the role of facilitator in coordinating with Iran," he said. "Pakistan doesn't have diplomatic relations with Israel. A mediator should have access to all parties. Pakistan had access to the US and Iran only,"

the senior Pakistani journalist explained. He said Pakistan's role as a "mediator" would begin when it hosts US and Iranian officials in Islamabad on Friday to find a permanent solution to end the conflict. Mir's insights reveal the quiet, but paramount role played by Pakistan's "all-weather friend" China in the US-Iran ceasefire. While China was initially reluctant to get involved in the Middle East turmoil, it later emerged from the background as an effective mediator. Pakistan knew China wielded crucial influence over Iran. It is one of the rea-

sons why Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Ishaq Dar, flew all the way to Beijing last week, when signs were palpable of a full-blown war breaking out. Pakistan sought a bigger commitment from Beijing to help end the war, which was already in its second month. When it mattered the most, China directly asked Iran to accept the ceasefire deal. In return, China promised to act as a guarantor of Iran's safety in any talks, The Guardian reported. "I hear yes," Trump told AFP when asked if China was involved in persuading Iran to negotiate.

Israel encouraged by India's support for free maritime navigation: Envoy Azar

NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

Spotlighting that India continues to pursue its national interests strongly amid the ongoing geopolitical conflicts, Reuven Azar, the Ambassador of Israel to India, on Thursday lauded New Delhi's stance on unimpeded freedom of navigation as efforts continue to resume the use of commercial maritime routes in the Strait of Hormuz. "India is pursuing its interests. We are very pleased with our bilateral relations, especially after the visit of PM Narendra Modi to Israel, which resulted in many good results including agreements in defence, finance, infrastructure, technology, AI, education and many more. We are encouraged by India's support for free maritime navigation. It is important that countries work together to uphold international law and prevent coercion in global waterways," Azar told IANS in an exclusive interview. On Wednesday, India welcomed the ceasefire reached between the United States and Iran, hoping that it will lead to a



lasting peace in West Asia. "As we have continuously advocated earlier, de-escalation, dialogue and diplomacy are essential to bring an early end to the ongoing conflict. The conflict has already caused immense suffering to people and disrupted global energy supply and trade networks. We expect that unimpeded freedom of navigation and global flow of commerce would prevail through the Strait of Hormuz," read a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). India has maintained that it has always been in favour of peace and welcomed all steps that lead to peace and stability while hoping that the latest development in West Asia will also encourage peace efforts in Ukraine.

Not just Lebanon, ceasefire plan covers Axis of Resistance, Iran reminds US

Iran has warned that any ceasefire violations, especially in Lebanon and across the Axis of Resistance, will trigger strong retaliation, with Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf stressing that these regions are integral to the truce framework.

Iran has sharpened its warning on ceasefire violations, asserting that any breach, particularly in Lebanon and across the "Axis of Resistance", will invite "explicit costs and strong responses." Lebanon was hit by fresh strikes despite a two-week US-Iran ceasefire with at least 254 people killed and over 800 injured in one of the heaviest waves of Israeli strikes on the country.

Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, outlined key positions in posts on X, saying that Lebanon and the entire Resistance Axis, as Iran's allies, form an inseparable part of the ceasefire



under a 10-point proposal framework. He stressed that any violation of these terms would be met with firm retaliation and called for an immediate halt to hostilities, saying the fire must be extinguished without delay. Qalibaf also referenced remarks by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, noting that the Lebanon issue has been publicly and clearly acknowledged, leaving "no room for denial and backtracking."

In a detailed statement shared on Wednesday, Qalibaf said three key clauses of Iran's 10-point proposal had already been violated before negotiations began. These in-

cluded non-compliance with the first clause on a ceasefire in Lebanon, described as an "immediate ceasefire everywhere, including Lebanon and other regions", the entry of an intruding drone into Iranian airspace in Fars Province, and the denial of Iran's right to enrichment under the framework. The statement added that repeated violations reflect a pattern of broken commitments, particularly pointing to longstanding distrust toward the United States. It warned that the "workable basis on which to negotiate" has been undermined even before talks could begin, making bilater-

al ceasefire efforts or negotiations unreasonable under current conditions.

IRAN WAS ON VERGE OF RESPONDING TO CEASEFIRE VIOLATION

Meanwhile, Saeed Khatibzadeh said Iran was on the verge of responding to ceasefire violations the previous night, but Pakistan intervened and conveyed messages regarding US efforts to restrain Israel. He added that an Iranian delegation is heading to Islamabad for peace negotiations. Khatibzadeh stressed that the United States, based on its commitments, must halt Israeli attacks on Lebanon. He underlined that any peace in the region must include Lebanon, warning that the coming hours are "extremely critical." Reiterating Iran's stance, officials emphasised that continued attacks risk derailing fragile truce efforts and escalating tensions across the region, reinforcing Tehran's hardened position on enforcing the ceasefire terms.

Markets End in Red as Oil, Banking Stocks Decline

NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

Indian equity markets came under significant selling pressure on Thursday, following a sharp rally in the previous session. Weak global cues and broad-based sectoral declines dragged the benchmarks lower.

The BSE Sensex tumbled 931.25 points, or 1.20%, to close at 76,631.65, while the NSE Nifty 50 fell 222.25 points, or 0.93%, to settle at 23,775.10.

Selling was pronounced across key sectors including Oil & Gas, Banking, Auto, Infrastructure, Consumer Durables, and Media. In contrast, Metal, Power, and Pharma stocks managed modest gains of 0.6–1%.

Broader markets showed mixed trends, with the Nifty Midcap index



rising 0.3%, while the Smallcap index ended flat.

Among Nifty constituents, top gainers included Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Hindalco Industries, Bajaj Auto,

Bharat Electronics Limited, and Max Healthcare Institute. On the losing side were Larsen & Toubro, InterGlobe Aviation, Shriram Finance, and Jio Financial Services.

Over 100 stocks touched their 52-week highs on the BSE, including Ather Energy, Hitachi Energy India, Honasa Consumer, Anand Rathi Wealth, Vardhman Textiles, and ABB India.

Financial stocks were among the worst hit, with the Nifty Bank index falling up to 2%. Key laggards included HDFC Bank, State Bank of India, Canara Bank, and Punjab National Bank, each declining up to 3%.

Shares of oil marketing companies also witnessed selling pressure. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited

fell nearly 1% to ₹362.5 per share on the NSE. Indian Oil Corporation declined 0.77% to ₹142.24, while Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited traded flat. Global markets remained cautious amid rising oil prices. Europe saw declines with Germany's DAX down 1.3%, France's CAC 40 slipping 0.8%, and the UK's FTSE 100 falling 0.3% in early trade.

Asian markets also ended lower, with South Korea's KOSPI down 1.6%, Japan's Nikkei 225 and China's Shanghai Composite declining 0.7% each, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index slipped 0.5%.

Market participants remained cautious amid global uncertainties and rising crude prices, which weighed on investor sentiment.

Reliance Retail Ranks 7th Globally, Crosses \$100 Billion Valuation

NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

Reliance Retail has emerged as the seventh most valuable private start-up company in the world, achieving a valuation of over \$100 billion, according to a report by Stanford Graduate School of Business. With this milestone, the company has entered the elite "hectacorn" category—reserved for start-ups valued above \$100 billion.

Reliance Retail is the highest-ranked Indian company on the global list and notably the only retail firm among the top seven. The ranking highlights India's growing footprint in the global business landscape.

The valuation is based

on investments from leading global financial institutions, including Qatar Investment Authority, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, KKR, Silver Lake, GIC, TPG, and Mubadala. The data has been compiled by the Venture Capital Initiative at Stanford Graduate School of Business, based on figures available up to January 2026.

The report underscores the dominance of technology-driven firms at the top of the list. The top three positions are occupied by OpenAI, SpaceX, and Anthropic, reflecting the increasing global investor focus on artificial intelligence and advanced technologies. Together, these three companies

account for nearly one-third of the total valuation of the top 100 start-ups.

In addition to Reliance Retail, two other Indian companies have featured in the rankings. The National Stock Exchange (NSE India) is placed at 27th position with a valuation of \$24 billion, while Tata EV Mobility ranks 93rd with a valuation of \$9 billion.

The United States leads the list with 65 companies, followed by China with 21. India and the United Kingdom have three companies each in the top 100. Reliance Retail's achievement marks a significant step for India's retail sector, reinforcing its position as a key player in the global market.

Sanjay Khanna appointed as chairman of BPCL

MUMBAI, APR 9

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), a Fortune Global 500 company and a Maharatna PSU, today announced that the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Sanjay Khanna, currently Director (Refineries), as the Chairman & Managing Director (C&MD) of the Company.

According to a press statement issued here, the appointment has been approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet based on the recommendation of the Search-cum-Selection Committee (SCSC), under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. Khanna will assume charge, effective from the date of assumption of office, and will hold the position till his superannuation on May 31, 2029, or until further orders.

With extensive experience in refinery operations and



project execution, Khanna is expected to further strengthen BPCL's strategic focus on value-added products, petrochemical integration, operational efficiency, and long-term energy security, while driving sustainable growth in an evolving energy landscape.

Khanna is a seasoned industry leader with over three decades of experience in refinery operations and technical services.

A Chemical Engineering graduate from National Institute of Technology Tiruchirappalli and a postgraduate in Finance Management from University of Mumbai, Khanna has played a pivotal role in strengthening BPCL's refining and petrochemical capabilities.

CM Revanth Reddy Unveils 3rd Edition of IGBC Green Property Show 2026

HYDERABAD, APRIL 9

Anumula Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister of Telangana, on Wednesday unveiled the third edition of the IGBC Green Property Show 2026, reaffirming the state's commitment to achieving a Net Zero future and promoting sustainable urban development.

The event is being organised by the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) under the aegis of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), with the Government of Telangana as the State Partner.

The Chief Minister unveiled the event brochure in the presence of several dignitaries, including Yogita Rana, Principal Secretary, Department of Education, Government of Telangana; Sudha Reddy, Director, Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Limited and Chairperson of Sudha Reddy Foundation; A. Dakshayani, Founder of Ramky Foundation and Managing Trustee of the CSR wing of the Ramky Group; and C. Shekhar Reddy, National Chairman, CII IGBC and Chairman & Managing



Director of CSR Estates Ltd.

Building on the success of its inaugural edition in 2023, the third IGBC Green Property Show will be held from May 22 to 24, 2026, at the HITEX Exhibition Centre in Hyderabad, under the theme "Better

Homes for You!"

The event will showcase IGBC-certified and pre-certified green residential and commercial projects that are contributing to Telangana's sustainability goals. These developments offer several benefits, in-

cluding improved indoor air quality, reduced energy and water consumption, lower utility costs, and enhanced occupant well-being.

In addition to property exhibitions, the show will feature a curated range of eco-friendly products,

technologies, and services aimed at making sustainable living more accessible and practical for the public.

The exhibition is expected to attract a wide range of visitors, including homebuyers, property owners, investors, and tenants, who will have the opportunity to explore innovative solutions that support environmentally responsible lifestyles. The showcased technologies are designed for easy adoption and deliver measurable environmental and health benefits.

Experts note that the adoption of green building practices can significantly optimise energy and water usage, reducing overall demand on infrastructure. This, in turn, positions Telangana as a frontrunner in sustainable development and a model for environmentally responsible urban growth in the country.

Speaking on the occasion, C. Shekhar Reddy, National Chairman of CII IGBC, emphasised the importance of scaling up green building initiatives to accelerate the transition towards a sustainable and resource-efficient future.

Adani Renewable Signs JV with UAE's Minerva To Develop Clean Energy Projects in India

MUMBAI, APRIL 9

Adani Green Energy Limited on Thursday announced that its wholly-owned step-down subsidiary, Adani Renewable Energy Middle East Ltd, has entered into a joint venture agreement with UAE-based Minerva Holding RSC to develop renewable energy projects in India.

According to a regulatory filing, Adani Renewable Energy Middle East Ltd will acquire up to a 20 per cent stake in Minerva Renewables Holding

RSC, the joint venture entity formed for this collaboration. The shareholding structure reflects a strategic minority participation by Adani Green Energy, with operational collaboration expected to be undertaken jointly.

Adani Renewable Energy Middle East Ltd, incorporated on February 25, 2026, in the UAE, has been established to tap into energy transition opportunities across the Middle East region. With full ownership of the subsidiary, Adani Green Energy retains complete strategic and operational

oversight as it evaluates renewable generation prospects in new geographies. Minerva Holding RSC, wholly owned by EPointZero, will serve as the joint venture platform through which renewable energy projects in India will be pursued. The partnership is expected to contribute to expanding India's clean energy capacity, aligning with broader sectoral growth and increasing investment momentum in the renewable energy space, the company said.

Backing the venture is International Holding Company PJSC, the parent of EPointZero and the largest listed company in the UAE, with a market capitalisation exceeding \$230 billion, underscoring the financial strength behind the collaboration.

As per the governance structure of the agreement, Minerva will have the right to appoint up to four directors to the board, while Adani Green Energy will nominate one director, indicating majority influence for the UAE-based partner along with Adani's participation in key decision-making.

CCI directs 17 firms to cease anti-competitive practices in Assam tenders

NEW DELHI: (Apr 9) Fair trade regulator CCI has directed 17 entities to cease and desist from anti-competitive practices in tenders floated by Assam Police Housing Corporation Ltd for electrification works in police station buildings across the state.

The regulator found that the firms, including M/s Purbanchal Enterprise and others, violated provisions of competition rules by indulging in bid rigging in tenders for "internal and external electrification works" under the Mission of Overall Improvement of Thana for Responsive Image Scheme of the Assam government. The proceedings originated from a complaint on August 10, 2020, by the Office of the Ac-



countant General (Audit), Assam, alleging bid rigging in tenders floated by the Assam Police Housing Corporation Ltd, according to a release by the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

Accessibility Can Unlock \$191 Billion Economic Potential: Svayam-KPMG Report

NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

Svayam, an accessibility advocacy organisation founded by industrialist Sminu Jindal, in collaboration with KPMG, has released a comprehensive whitepaper highlighting that India can unlock an estimated \$191 billion (Rs 16.08 lakh crore) in economic value by addressing accessibility gaps across key sectors.

Titled "Does Accessibility Make Economic Sense?", the report presents accessibility as a critical economic lever and examines how inclusive infrastructure and systems can drive growth in sectors such as tourism, sports, transport, and information and communication technology (ICT).

According to the whitepaper, nearly 34 per cent of India's population—over 486 million people—experience reduced mobility. This includes elderly individuals, caregivers, and those with temporary or situational limitations. At the household level, the impact extends to almost



half of the population, underscoring the widespread relevance of accessibility.

The report notes that the unrealised economic opportunity arises from persistent gaps in infrastructure, services, transport systems, and digital access, which currently limit participation, consumption, and productivity across sectors.

A sector-wise analysis reveals significant potential gains. In

tourism, around 191.8 million people face barriers to travel, translating into a potential additional revenue of \$16.6 billion (Rs 1.39 lakh crore) if accessibility is improved. The report stresses the need for structured inclusion of accessible rooms and standardised data on accessibility features across hotels, tourist attractions, and religious destinations.

In the sports sector, enhanced

accessibility to infrastructure and programmes could significantly boost participation and expand the market to \$50.79 billion by 2030–31.

Transport remains a key area of concern, with accessibility gaps restricting mobility and workforce participation. The report estimates that nearly \$125 billion (Rs 10.5 lakh crore) in annual economic value could be recovered through improved and

inclusive transport systems.

The whitepaper also highlights digital accessibility challenges, noting that over 262 million Indians face barriers in accessing digital platforms. Addressing these issues could unlock an estimated \$37 billion (Rs 3.11 lakh crore) in annual economic gains through more inclusive digital services.

Emphasising a broader perspective, the report states that accessibility should not be viewed solely as a disability-centric intervention but as a mainstream requirement, given that a significant portion of the population experiences reduced mobility at different stages of life.

Speaking on the findings, Sminu Jindal said that accessibility is often evaluated at the level of individual assets, and stressed the need to shift focus towards ensuring continuity across infrastructure, transport, and digital platforms so that individuals can move independently and with confidence.

Naveen Aggarwal, Partner at

KPMG, highlighted the economic dimension of accessibility, stating that it serves as a powerful enabler, allowing nearly 34 per cent of Indians to participate more fully in economic life. He emphasised that embedding accessibility into national planning is essential to achieving the vision of a developed India, or "Viksit Bharat," by 2047.

The report outlines key recommendations, including integrating accessibility into infrastructure design, strengthening implementation and monitoring mechanisms, improving workforce sensitisation, and embedding accessibility standards into digital ecosystems.

With India preparing to host major global sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games and aspiring to host the Olympics in 2036, the whitepaper underscores the growing importance of inclusive infrastructure in boosting tourism, enhancing regional connectivity, and driving overall economic growth.

RBI Plans 1-Hour Delay on Big Digital Payments

MUMBAI, APRIL 9

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed a one-hour delay for certain high-value digital transactions as part of new measures to combat rising financial frauds, which crossed ₹22,930 crore in 2025.

In a discussion paper released on Thursday, the central bank outlined four options aimed at strengthening safeguards in digital payments. The primary proposal suggests that account-to-account transfers exceeding ₹10,000 may be held for one hour before execution. During this period, customers would have the option to cancel the transaction.

Banks may also be required to seek reconfirmation if a transaction appears suspicious. However, merchant payments, e-mandates, NACH transactions, and cheque payments would be exempt. Customers could whitelist trusted beneficiaries to bypass the delay.

The RBI noted that transactions above ₹10,000 account for nearly 98.5% of fraud value, though they constitute only about 45% of total cases, making them a key target for intervention. Highlighting the nature of modern financial frauds, the central bank said most cases involve "Authorised Push Payment" (APP) fraud, where victims are manipulated into transferring money under pressure. Instant payment systems such as UPI and IMPS make recovery difficult once funds are transferred.

5 REASONS TO QUIT EATING HEAVY EVENING SNACKS

The primary purpose of snacking in the evening is to beat pre-mealtime hunger pangs without really filling your stomach. While the concept of snacking is meant to block constant hunger pangs with light food, as Indians, we tend to binge on fried foods for evening snack. Samosas, pakodas or even bread rolls are regular evening snacks for many of us, and as a result we end up skipping dinner or eating at odd hours. We also have a tendency to serve heavy snacks for our guests to ensure they don't go out feeling dissatisfied. A late evening snack may be an integral part of a daily diet due to hectic lifestyles, but eating a healthy, tasty and light snack is imperative. A healthy snack ensures that our hunger pangs are satisfied without hampering our dinner time. Even if you are foodie, and the sight of all the thelras serving delicious savoury snacks is hard to resist, there are several reasons you must check this daily habit. Unhealthy snacking brings with it many health issues, which are aggravated further if you lead a sedentary lifestyle.

Effects of unhealthy snacking in the evening



1. Delayed dinner

With heavy snacks like samosas, pakodas, chowmein, bread pakoras, etc. you tend to feel full till late at night, because of which you end up delaying dinnertime. Excessive consumption of oil, wheat flour, potatoes do take time to digest, hence making you feel full. This way, you either skip your dinner or have it quite late. Either way, this can lead to serious health problems. Sticking to proper meal timings is one of the cornerstones of healthy eating.



2. Health problems going ahead

Many of the widely consumed Indian snacks are high in carbohydrates, sugar and very low in nutritional value. This unhealthy habit of heavy snacking may lead to ill effects on your body further affecting the liver, heart and pancreas. Greasy foods typically contain one or more dietary fats that contribute to elevated blood levels leading to high cholesterol. And more often than not, these snacks are bought and consumed from a local vendor and not prepared at home. This makes it hard to ascertain the quality of ingredients used, especially the oil used for frying, and re-frying, these.



3. Weight gain

Constant consumption of these heavy snacks will eventually lead to obesity. Even if greasy foods are eaten in small quantities, they carry a large amount of calories, which lead to weight gain. Couple with a less active lifestyle, the excess weight can further lead to various health problems like high blood pressure, heart diseases, fatty liver, sleep apnea, degenerative arthritis and asthma.



4. Metabolic dysregulation

These high fat and high calorie comfort foods may also affect your metabolism. Fatty foods take more time to digest than any normal food, hence, slowing down the overall mechanism of the digestive system. This indigestion often leads to heartburn, fullness, upper abdominal pain and nausea.

5. Tooth decay

Teeth brushing is just a way to remove germs and keep the mouth clean, however, it is believed that eating frequently increases the risk of tooth decay. When your teeth come in contact with food often, the bacteria in plaque has more time to produce enamel damaging acids. This specifically goes for the foods that are high on carbohydrates that feed the plaque bacteria.



Khakhra vs Papad: Which Is The Better Low-Calorie Snack For Weight Loss?

If you are trying to lose weight, finding the right snack can feel like a constant balancing act. You want something light, satisfying and easy to keep at home without feeling guilty afterwards. Among the most common Indian options are khakhra and papad, two crunchy favourites with very different reputations. One is known for its whole-grain goodness, while the other is famous for adding flavour and aiding digestion. But when the aim is steady weight loss, does one clearly outperform the other? To understand that, it helps to look closely at how each is made and what nutrition experts say about them.

Khakhra: A Low-Fat, High-Fibre Snack

Nutritionist Rupali Datta describes khakhra as a smart choice for weight-loss diets because it is baked or roasted instead of deep-fried, which keeps the fat content low. This aligns with findings commonly highlighted by diet experts who emphasise the benefits of baked snacks over fried alternatives. Khakhra is typically made from whole wheat and mat beans, giving it a good amount of dietary fibre, which helps promote satiety and supports healthy digestion.

Snacks like khakhra are particularly useful for people trying to reduce mid-meal cravings because the combination of whole grains and light roasting provides slow-releasing energy and keeps you full for longer. This makes it a reliable everyday choice for those trying to manage weight without feeling deprived of crunch or flavour.

Papad: Light And Low-Calorie When Roasted

Papad, on the other hand, can also be

helpful for people watching their weight, as long as it is eaten the right way. Nutritionists often point out that roasted papad is naturally low in calories because it does not absorb extra oil. They also highlight that many traditional papads contain spices such as ajwain, black pepper and black salt, which can support digestion and reduce problems like gas, acidity and bloating. Research published by the National Institutes of Health suggests that digestive spices may improve gut comfort, which can help prevent unnecessary snacking by reducing discomfort. However, experts warn that these advantages disappear when papad is fried. Frying adds excess fat and significantly increases the calorie count, making it a far less suitable choice for anyone trying to maintain a calorie deficit.

Khakhra vs Papad: Which One Supports Weight Loss Better?

While both snacks can be part of a healthy routine, khakhra tends to have a more favourable nutritional profile for weight loss. The whole-grain base provides natural fibre, the roasted preparation keeps calories low and the slower digestion helps control appetite throughout the day. Papad is still a useful option if you prefer something very light and crisp, especially as an accompaniment to meals. But it works best only when roasted, and it may not keep you full for long because it is not high in fibre. Both khakhra and roasted papad can fit into a weight-loss diet, but they serve different needs. Choose khakhra when you want a filling, fibre-rich snack between meals. Choose roasted papad when you want a light addition to a meal without adding many calories.



WHY DOES YOUR BODY WANT WATERY FRUITS INSTEAD OF REGULAR MEALS IN SUMMER?

If you have ever found yourself reaching for watermelon, muskmelon or oranges instead of a proper meal during peak summer, you are not imagining things. Seasonal cravings are often your body's way of adapting to environmental changes, and in hot weather, hydration becomes just as important as energy intake. Watery fruits, which are naturally high in water content and easy to digest, start feeling more appealing than heavier, cooked meals. This shift is not just about taste or habit. It is closely linked to how the body regulates thirst, temperature and appetite. Here's a closer look at why your body leans towards juicy fruits when the heat rises.

In hot weather, the body loses more fluids through sweat, increasing the need for hydration. As per a 2019 research study, dehydration can influence food preferences, with people showing a higher desire for foods with high water content. Watery fruits like watermelon and cucumber help replenish fluids while also providing some energy. This is why heavy, dry meals may feel less appealing.

Thirst And Hunger Signals Can Overlap

The body regulates thirst and hunger

through closely linked mechanisms in the brain. While they are technically different signals, they can influence each other depending on the body's needs. In practical terms, this means you may feel like eating when your body is actually looking for fluids, as per nutritionist Rupali Datta. Watery fruits become a natural solution because they address both hydration and mild hunger at the same time.

Watery Foods Feel More Cooling And Comfortable

Beyond hydration, sensory science shows that foods which are juicy, light and water-rich feel more cooling and thirst-quenching in warm conditions. Research on refreshing perception suggests that texture, temperature and mouthfeel play a key role in how the body experiences comfort in heat. Foods with high moisture content mimic the sensory experience of drinking water, making options like chilled watermelon feel more appealing and satisfying than hot, oily meals.

Lower Appetite Is A Natural Response To Heat

Hot temperatures can reduce overall appetite as the body tries to minimise

internal heat production from digestion. As per a 2013 research paper, heavier meals require more energy to digest, which can increase body temperature slightly. Instead, lighter foods like fruits are easier to process and less taxing on the system. This is why you may naturally skip heavy meals and prefer smaller, water-rich options during the day.

Your Body Seeks Quick, Easily Available Energy

Watery fruits contain natural sugars that provide quick energy without making you feel heavy. At the same time, their high-water content keeps you refreshed. A research study on food and beverage cravings suggest that cravings can be triggered by physiological needs like hydration and energy balance, not just habit. This makes fruits a convenient option when the body wants both hydration and a light energy boost.

Craving watery fruits in summer is not random. It is your body's way of staying hydrated, regulating temperature and choosing foods that are easier to digest. Instead of resisting these cravings, it makes sense to balance them with light, nutrient-dense meals to ensure you are getting both hydration and adequate nutrition.





Billie Jean King Cup

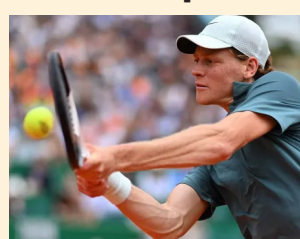
'Expectations are there because of capability': Vaishnavi



NEW DELHI: Vaishnavi Adkar underlined her growing self-belief despite a narrow defeat, stating that expectations arise from her capability and that she believes she can win after India went down to Indonesia on Day 3 of the Billie Jean King Cup Asia/Oceania Group I tie, following a hard-fought three-set loss to Priska Madelyn Nugroho. Adkar produced a spirited performance but fell short in a marathon three-set battle against Priska Madelyn Nugroho as India conceded an unassailable 0-2 lead to Indonesia in their third tie.

TENNIS

Jannik Sinner fights past Machac to reach Monte Carlo quarters



MONTE CARLO: World No.2 Jannik Sinner battled past Tomas Machac in a three-set contest to reach the quarterfinals of the Monte-Carlo Masters at Court Rainier III on Thursday. The second seed secured a 6-1, 6-7(3), 6-3 victory in just over two hours, though not without facing a strong challenge from the Czech player. Sinner began the match dominantly, taking the opening set 6-1 with controlled and aggressive play. However, the momentum shifted in the second set, where he struggled with consistency and fell behind 2-5. Despite recovering to push the set into a tie-break, Sinner lost it 3-7 as Machac forced a decider.

Mukul's unbeaten 54 guides LSG to thrilling three-wicket win over KKR



KOLKATA

Mukul Choudhary stood against all the odds and remained unbeaten at 54 off just 27 balls as Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) chased down the target of 182 runs on the final ball of the match and registered a three-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Thursday.

Earlier, captain Ajinkya Rahane and young batter Angkrish Raghuvanshi played key knocks, while Rovman Powell provided a late boost as Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) posted 181/4 in 20 overs.

Chasing a challenging total on a slow surface, LSG got off to a strong start with Aiden Markram and Mitchell Marsh scoring freely at over 10 runs per over. The pair took the team to 41 in just four overs.

However, KKR bounced back in the fifth over through Vaibhav Arora, who dismissed Markram for 22 and Marsh for 15 in the same over.

Captain Rishabh Pant tried to stabilise the innings alongside Ayush Badoni, but struggled for rhythm and was dismissed by Cameron Green for 10. Nicholas Pooran also failed to make an impact, scoring 13 before getting out in the 12th over, while Abdul Samad departed cheaply.

With wickets falling at the other end, Badoni held the innings together and scored a well-made 54 off 34 balls, hitting seven fours and two sixes. However, he was dismissed soon after reaching his half-century.

After Badoni's departure, Mukul took charge of the chase. He played aggressively, hitting multiple sixes and keeping LSG in the hunt. In the final over, LSG needed 14 runs, and Mukul held his nerve, smashing



two sixes before completing the winning run on the last ball. He brought up his fifty in just 26 balls and remained unbeaten on 54. Earlier, after being asked to bat first, Kolkata Knight Riders had a steady but cautious start, with Mohammed Shami conceding just six runs in the opening over. The early breakthrough came when Finn Allen was dismissed for nine, caught off Prince Yadav.

Following the setback, Ajinkya Rahane and Angkrish Raghuvanshi rebuilt the innings with a composed partnership. They started carefully before accelerating late in the power play, taking the team to 52/1 in six overs. The pair continued to rotate strike effectively and punished loose deliveries, guiding KKR to 98/1 at the halfway mark.

Their 84-run stand ended in the 11th over when Digvesh Rathi dismissed Rahane for a brisk 41. Soon after, Maniwaran

Siddharth removed Raghuvanshi for 45, leaving KKR just short of a strong platform.

The middle overs saw a slowdown, with Rinku Singh falling cheaply and boundaries drying up. However, Rovman Powell revived the innings with aggressive hitting in the death overs, scoring an unbeaten 39. Cameron Green also chipped in with an unbeaten 32 as KKR finished at 181/4.

For Lucknow Super Giants, Prince Yadav, Avesh Khan, Digvesh Rathi, and Maniwaran Siddharth took one wicket each.

Brief scores

Kolkata Knight Riders 181/4 in 20 overs (Angkrish Raghuvanshi 45, Ajinkya Rahane 41, Rovman Powell 39; Digvesh Rathi 1-25, Maniwaran Siddharth 1-34) lost to Lucknow Super Giants 182/7 in 20 overs (Mukul Choudhary 54*, Ayush Badoni 54; Anukul Roy 3-32, Vaibhav Arora 2-38) by 3 wickets.



Asian Wrestling C'ships: Meenakshi storms into 53kg final; Hansika, Neha bag bronze

NEW DELHI

Two-time national champion Meenakshi Goyat staged a stunning comeback to defeat South Korea's Seoyoung Park and enter the women's 53kg final, while Hansika Lamba (55kg) and Neha (59kg) secured bronze medals for India at the Senior Asian Wrestling Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Thursday.

Meenakshi, who earned her place in the Indian squad by defeating two-time World Championships bronze medalist Antim Panghal, was trailing 0-2 until the closing 30 seconds of her semifinal bout. The 25-year-old turned the contest on its head with a decisive four-point throw and held on to her advantage to book a place in the final.

The former Asian U-23 champion will now face China's Jin Zhang, who advanced after defeating Japan's Moe Kiyooka by fall. Later, Hansika Lamba and Neha added two more bronze medals to India's tally, following a strong showing by the men's Greco-Roman wrestlers, who had already secured two silver and three bronze medals in the opening three days of competition.

In the women's 55kg bronze medal bout, Hansika showed patience early on

against Kyrgyzstan's Aruuke Kadyrbek Kzy before taking control in the second round. The 19-year-old executed a successful leg attack to register a takedown and went on to dominate the bout, sealing a 6-1 victory.

Neha then claimed India's seventh medal of the competition with a commanding 10-4 win over Mongolia's Bolortuya Khurelkhuu in the women's 59kg bronze medal playoff.

Meanwhile, Harshita (72kg) and Monika (65kg) will look to secure bronze medals on Friday. Harshita lost her semifinal 2-7 to Japan's Mahiro Yoshitake, the 2024 Asian Championships gold medalist, and will now face Uzbekistan's Sevinchoy Polvonova in the bronze medal bout.

In the 65kg category, Monika suffered a quarterfinal defeat to eventual finalist Nana Ikehata of Japan and will now take on South Korea's Hanbit Lee in the bronze medal match.

Minakshi (57kg) and Mansi (62kg) also remain in contention after advancing to the repechage rounds, following losses to finalists in their respective categories. Minakshi will face Kyrgyzstan's Tancholpon Kybalbekova, while Mansi will take on Mongolia's Tserenchimed Sukhee on Friday.

MCA unveils Stands, Gates at Wankhede Stadium to honour former cricketers

MUMBAI

In a moment etched in Mumbai cricket's history, the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) on Thursday inscribed the names of cricketing stalwarts, Ravi Shastri, Dilip Sardesai, Eknath Solkar, and Diana Edulji, at the iconic Wankhede Stadium, recognising their contributions to Mumbai and Indian cricket by naming stands and gates after them.

The honours were unveiled by the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnavis, as a stand was named after Ravi Shastri and stadium gates were dedicated to Dilip Sardesai, Eknath Solkar, and Diana Edulji. The ceremony was also attended by Cabinet Minister Ashish Shelar, MCA President Ajinkya Naik, former India captains Sunil Gavaskar and Dilip Vengsarkar, along with MCA Apex Council members, office-bearers, and members of the cricketing fraternity.

On the occasion, the MCA also felici-

tated Suryakumar Yadav, the 2026 ICC Men's T20 World Cup-winning captain.

The Level 1 stand below the Press Box is now named the Ravi Shastri Stand, honouring a prominent figure in Indian cricket. A member of India's 1983 World Cup-winning team, Shastri's contribution spans generations as a player, captain, coach, and commentator.

Gate No. 3, Gate No. 6, and Gate No. 5 will now be named the Dilip Sardesai Gate, Eknath Solkar Gate, and Diana Edulji Gate, respectively, marking the contributions of three legends from Mumbai. Sardesai, widely regarded as India's 'crisis man', made significant contributions to the game with his consistency and dependability. Solkar, regarded among the finest close-in fielders, played a key role in India's success with his all-round skills and fearless approach. Edulji, a pioneer of women's cricket, led the national side and later contributed significantly to the growth of the game as an administrator.

Sarthak Goloui header rescues a point for Jamshedpur against Mumbai City

JAMSHEDPUR

A dramatic late equaliser from substitute Sarthak Goloui cancelled out Brandon Fernandes' first-half strike as Jamshedpur FC held Mumbai City FC to a 1-1 draw in a top-of-the-table clash in Indian Super League 2025-26 at the JRD Tata Sports Complex on Thursday.

The result keeps Mumbai City FC at the top of the standings with 18 points, while Jamshedpur FC move to second with 15 points after a hard-fought contest at the Furnace. Brandon Fernandes was adjudged Player of the Match.

The match began at a high tempo, with both sides showing attacking intent early on. Mumbai City had the first attempt in the fourth minute through right winger Vikram Partap Singh, while Jamshedpur responded with a series of forward moves led by left winger Mohammed Sanan, striker Raphael Messi Bouli, and Ritwik Kumar Das.

As the half progressed, Mumbai began to assert control in the final third. Hmingthanmawia Ralte's effort took a deflection and went just wide, while Lalnuntluanga Bawitlung forced a sharp save from keeper Albino Gomes. The visitors continued to threaten from set-pieces, with Akash Mishra and Captain Lallianzuala Chhangte both going close with headers.

Jamshedpur, however, remained dangerous on the counter. Bouli came close with a header, while Lalhriatpuia Chawngthu and Nikola Stojanovic combined well but failed to find the finishing touch. Bouli produced a moment of brilliance in the 31st minute, controlling a long ball on his chest before unleashing a powerful strike that was parried away by the Islanders' keeper Phurba Lachenpa.



Despite Jamshedpur's sustained pressure, it was Mumbai City who struck on the brink of half-time with a well-worked move. Joni Kauko initiated the attack on the left flank before finding Noufal PN, who squared the ball into the box for Brandon Fernandes. The midfielder showed great composure, turning swiftly before firing a shot that took a heavy deflection off Jamshedpur skipper Stephen Eze, wrong-footing Albino Gomes and rolling into the far corner to give the Islanders the lead at the interval.

Jamshedpur thought they had equalised early in the second half when Bouli found the net, but the effort was ruled out for offside. The hosts continued to push forward with intent, with Sanan and Ritwik combining to create space for Stojanovic, whose effort sailed narrowly over the bar. The Men of Steel maintained relentless pressure, dominating possession and pinning Mumbai City deep inside their own half. Eze came close when Lachenpa ventured off his line, while Vinny Barretto saw his effort blocked by Nuno Reis in a crucial defensive intervention.

La Liga: 'Players want to give fans a win', says Arbeloa as he backs Real Madrid squad ahead of Girona clash

MADRID

Real Madrid head coach Alvaro Arbeloa has defended his players and stressed the importance of consistency ahead of their La Liga clash against Girona on Friday. Madrid head into the match after back-to-back 2-1 defeats against Bayern Munich in the Champions League and Mallorca in the league, leaving them seven points behind Barcelona with eight matches remaining.

Asked about the impact of another loss on their title chances, Arbeloa said, "The players know that every game is vital and there is less margin for error." Despite an important European fixture coming up next week, the coach insisted his side is fully focused on the immediate challenge. "The players are the first who want to play, because they know Tuesday's result wasn't what we expected. I have spoken to most of them, and they want to play and offer a win to the fans," he said as quoted by Xinhua.

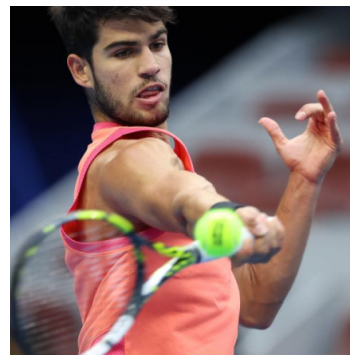
Alcaraz survives Etcheverry test to reach Monte-Carlo quarters

MONTE CARLO

World No.1 Carlos Alcaraz overcame a tough challenge from Tomás Martín Etcheverry to reach the quarter-finals of the Monte-Carlo Masters on Thursday. The Spaniard started strongly but was pushed into a three-set battle before winning 6-1, 4-6, 6-3 in the Round of 16 clash on Court Rainier III.

Alcaraz dominated the opening set, winning the first eight points of the match and finishing the set comfortably. However, his level dropped in the second set as he made 23 unforced errors, allowing Etcheverry to bounce back. The Argentine raised his game and won four straight games to take the set 6-4.

In the deciding set, Alcaraz re-



gained control. He improved his shot selection and hit 13 winners to close out the match and keep his title defence alive.

"I was playing really well in the first set. I was feeling the ball 10/10. Then I started pretty well in the sec-

ond set as well and had a chance to break his serve in the second game, but I didn't take it. When you don't take the opportunities at this level, you have to run back. He played more aggressively after that, but I would say it was a great fight in the end," Alcaraz said on the court after winning the match.

Alcaraz served 5 aces compared to Etcheverry's 1 and won 98 total points against 83. The Spaniard also won 56 service points and 42 receiving points, both higher than his opponent. Alcaraz converted 5 of 12 break points, while Etcheverry managed 2 of 6. The top seed also won 67 per cent of points on his first serve and 62 per cent on his second serve, compared to 61 and 50 per cent respectively for the Argentine.

Billie Jean King Cup: Indonesia outplay India; Korea maintain perfect run

NEW DELHI

India went down to Indonesia in their third match in the Billie Jean King Cup Group I - Asia/Oceania at the DLTA Complex in New Delhi on Thursday, with the visitors clinching both singles rubbers to take an unassailable lead. Indonesia's win keeps them firmly in the race to finish on top of the standings, while the Republic also continued their unbeaten run with a victory over New Zealand. Thailand, meanwhile, bounced back strongly with a clean sweep against Mongolia.

In the opening singles rubber, Vaishnavi Adkar was edged out in a hard-fought three-set battle by Priska Madelyn Nu-



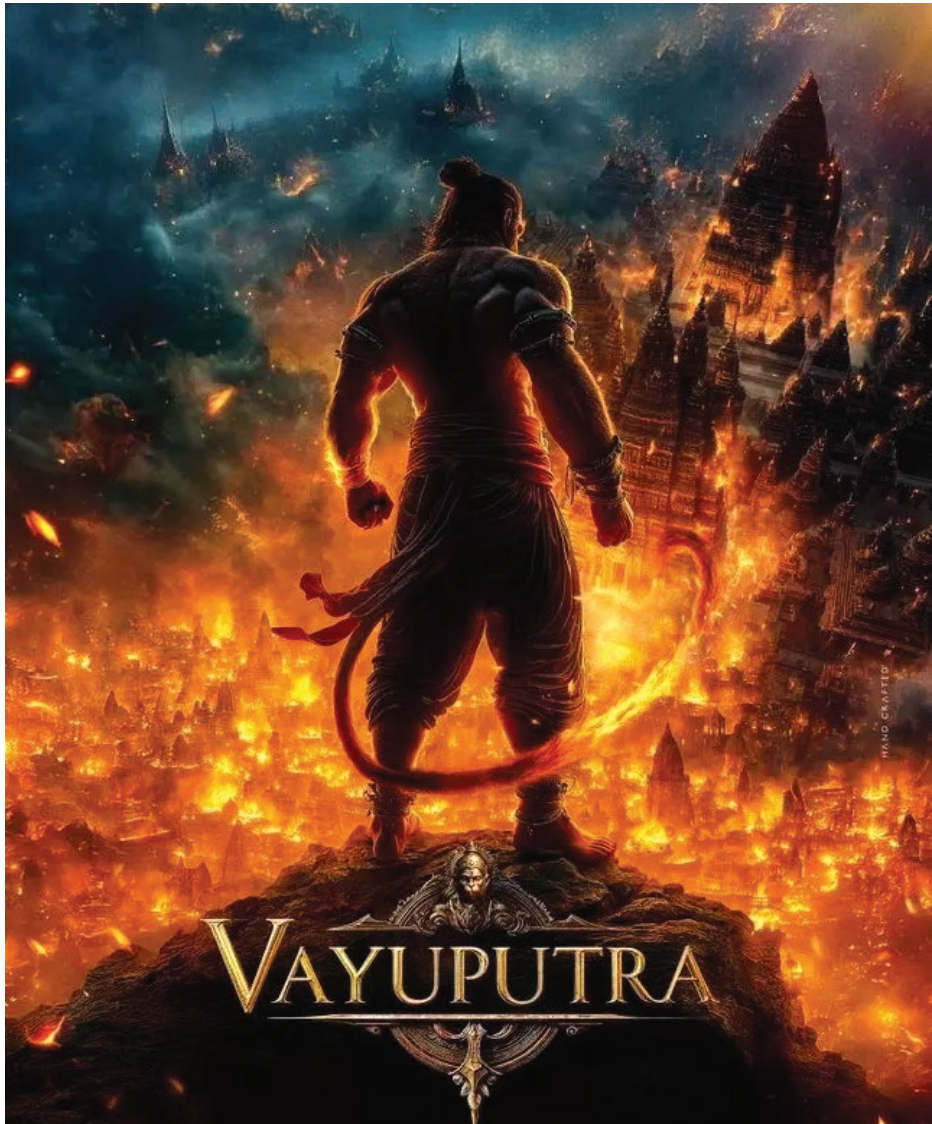
groho, going down 7-6(3), 6-7(3), 6-3. The contest swung both ways, with Adkar showing resilience to force a decider after dropping the first set in a tiebreak, but the Indonesian held her nerve in the third to seal the win.

Sahaja Yamalapalli found the going tough against Janice Tjen in the second singles rubber, with the Indonesian delivering a clinical performance to secure a 6-2, 6-1 victory and seal the tie for her team. Rutuja Bhosale and Ankita Raina were in doubles action at the time of writing against the Indonesian pair of Aldila Sutjiadi and Janice Tjen.

Elsewhere, Korea Republic extended their perfect start with a solid win over

New Zealand. Dayeon Back overcame Valentina Ivanov 7-5, 6-3, while Sohyun Park dominated her match against Monique Barry, cruising to a 6-0, 6-1 victory to seal the tie. Korea top the table alongside Indonesia, with both teams winning all of their matches so far.

Thailand also returned to winning ways in emphatic fashion, sweeping Mongolia 3-0 without dropping a set. Thasaporn Naklo opened the tie with a 6-1, 6-0 win over Anu-Vjin Gantor, before Patcharin Cheapchandej mirrored that scoreline against Khongorzul Aldarkhishig. Peangtarn Plipuech and Kamonwan Yodpetch then completed the rout, defeating the Mongolian doubles pair 6-0, 6-0.



Uncertainty Around Ambitious Animated Telugu Film Vayuputra?

Close on the heels of the success of Mahavatar Narasimha, producer Naga Vamsi had announced 'Vayuputra', an ambitious animated film to be directed by Chandoo Mondeti. However, the latest buzz suggests that the project has now been put on hold. The film reportedly had an exciting script, and pre-production work had already begun. The makers were planning to mount the project on a grand scale, incorporating advanced technologies like animatronics and motion capture to bring the story to life with global standards.

But the financial side seems to have become a major hurdle. Sources indicate that the technology alone would cost around ₹32 crore. When additional expenses such as cast remunerations, music, and production are included, the total budget could exceed ₹45 crore. While Sithara Entertainments enjoys a strong track

record with Netflix—with several of their films performing well digitally—the OTT giant was reportedly willing to offer only ₹15–20 crore for the project. This created a significant gap, leaving the makers heavily dependent on theatrical revenue.

Given the current uncertain theatrical market conditions, Naga Vamsi is said to be cautious about taking such a big financial risk. As a result, the project has seemingly been paused for now. That said, there is no official confirmation yet from either Naga Vamsi or Chandoo Mondeti about the film being shelved. For the moment, 'Vayuputra' remains in limbo, and clarity is expected in the coming days. Interestingly, the film was envisioned as a devotional animated spectacle centered on Lord Hanuman, with Chandoo Mondeti keen on expressing his admiration for Hindu mythology after the success of films like Karthikeya 2

MANASA VARANASI FOR A SPECIAL SONG IN PEDDI?

Speculation is rife in Tollywood that young actress Manasa Varanasi might be stepping into a glamorous space with a special dance number in Peddi. The actress, who recently scored a decent success with Couple Friendly, is said to be considering this bold transition early in her career. If the buzz turns out to be true, this would mark a significant shift for Manasa—from her girl-next-door image to a full-fledged glamour avatar. Industry insiders believe such a move, though risky, could prove highly rewarding.

"These days, special songs bring enormous mileage," says a filmmaker.



press with her screen presence, dance moves, and glamour quotient, it could push her career several notches higher.

Tollywood has a strong track record of actresses gaining massive attention through special numbers. Performances by Pooja Hegde in Rangasthalam, Samantha Ruth Prabhu in Pushpa: The Rise, Tamannaah Bhatia in Jailer, and Kajal Aggarwal in Janatha Garage, along with Shruti Haasan in Aagadu, have set high benchmarks for such appearances. However, it's important to note that there has been no official confirmation yet. For now, the reports remain speculative, and clarity is expected only after an announcement from the makers.

"Working alongside a star like Ram Charan and being part of a big production house can instantly elevate her visibility," he adds. Given that Peddi is being mounted as a pan-Indian project, the opportunity could open new doors for Manasa across industries. If she manages to im-



"Who Is Hero?" Mammooty's Simple Answer Is Wow

Malayalam Superstar Mammooty's latest film Patriot promotions are getting interesting. As the film features a plethora of stars, including the likes of Mohan Lal, Fahad Fasil, Nayantara, Darshan Rajendra, and veteran actress Revathi, many wonder who the hero of the film is. In one of the interactions, Mammooty was asked this very typical question. "Who is the hero of this film?". The context itself is fun. Even in the recent promo of director Nelson's KHxRK, both the Superstars, Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan, ask the director the same thing. Similarly, Mammooty was also asked the same question now, by the Bollywood media, and his answer is stunning. He said there is no ego between them. Both of them know that the story is the real hero, but not the individuals. He even mentioned how they keep working across films. Mohanlal acted in other films, and Mammooty did cameos with younger actors, and it's all normal for them.



If you look at Malayalam cinema, this is not new. Films like Lucifer or Bheeshma Parvam are driven more by writing than by hero elevation moments and a combination of heroes. Looks like from what we hear, the film Patriot mainly revolves around two central characters played by Mammooty and Mohanlal, but the narrative is said to include multiple key roles. That means it is more of a content-driven setup than a regular hero vs hero space. Many are expecting even Telugu heroes to do the same, but somehow, here, heroes are more inclined towards single-hero-driven movies. Patriot is expected to hit screens on May 1st, 2026.



Borrowing From Golden Oldies

One of the big star attractions of Dhurandhar is its "music composer" Shashwat Sachdev, since a majority of the songs in the film are remixed versions of old songs. In the first part of Dhurandhar, the biggest song attraction was 'Move Yeh Ishq Ishq', a hyped-up hysterical remix of the old Qawwali 'Yeh Ishq Ishq Hai' from the 1960 film Barsaat Ki Raat composed by the late Roshan. The other Dhurandhar ear-pleaser was 'Ramba ho ho', a Bappi Lahiri chartbuster from the 1977 film Armaan. Again Shashwat Sachdev is credited for the songs in Dhurandhar 2. However 'Rang De Lal' is a recreated version of the song 'Tirchi Topivale', whose rights are owned by the Rajiv Rai's Tri-

murti Films. Other derivative dynamos from Sachdev in Dhurandhar Part 2 include Algerian singer Khaled's 1992 hit 'Didi', Kishore Kumar's 'Bekasi' composed by R D Burman and Bappi Lahiri's 'Tamma Tamma'. Interestingly almost every track and its partner film is a recreation of vintage favourites. Exactly how Sachdev is being hailed as a pioneering music composer is something that needs to be explained by those hailing him as the audio messiah of the decade. Rajiv Rai sues Dhurandhar director for copyright infringement Trimurti Films, owned by filmmaker Rajiv Rai, has sued the Dhurandhar producers for copyright infringement. Trimurti Films on Wednesday filed a suit against filmmaker Aditya Dhar's production house B62 Studios for using the song 'Rang De Lal' in Dhurandhar 2 without legal authorisation.



IGNORED BY WAMIQA GABBI? RAJPAL YADAV SAYS VIRAL CLIP ISN'T WHAT IT SEEMS

The latest social media storm swirling around Wamiqa Gabbi and Rajpal Yadav is quite the tamasha! Recently, some clips went viral, with netizens claiming Wamiqa had totally ignored Rajpal. The clips sent the online crowd into a tizzy, dragging Wamiqa into the hot seat.

But hold your horses! Rajpal Yadav himself has stepped up to clear the fog, calling it a classic case of camera angles playing tricks and viewers jumping to conclusions. He explained, "Ye kaise hota hai ki jaisa apka angle camera hota hai, main vahan kisi doosre ko kar raha hu, wo bechari kisi doosre ko kar rahi hai, lekin wo camera angle esa laga (It happens that from one camera angle it looks like I'm doing something with someone else, and that poor girl is doing something with someone else, but the camera makes it look completely different)." Basically, what looks like drama is just a visual illusion.

Adding more spice, Rajpal broke down one particular clip with Akshay Kumar. "In a video with Akki paaji, there are three girls standing there and hum log jaise scene nahi banate? You stand there, I'll stand here, and the girls will stand in between." So, it's all choreographed, no catfights here!

He also threw in some cheeky humour, "But if people find entertainment in that

too, then there's no problem. We've honestly laughed enough over Wamiqa, Akki paaji, and all of this."

Emphasising the camaraderie among the cast, Rajpal said there is a strong sense of comfort and ease between them, which leaves little room for awkwardness. He added that while things may appear different on screen, his personal experience over a 25-year career has never included feeling sidelined or ignored.

Rajpal's candidness aims to shut down the unnecessary drama sparked by these clips, reminding everyone how easy it is to misread scenes when cameras are involved. The actor's insight sheds light on how crowded promos and multiple angles can cook up confusion.

The controversy erupted after a clip featuring Rajpal, Akshay Kumar, Ektaa Kapoor and Wamiqa went viral. In the video, Wamiqa walks past Rajpal towards Ektaa while he adjusts his hair, prompting some viewers to assume an awkward moment.

Another video involving Mithila Palkar showed Wamiqa hesitating briefly before standing next to Rajpal for a photo, after which he jokingly stepped away - only for her to follow him back, turning it into a light-hearted exchange that was later misread online.

Helmed by Priyadarshan, Bhooth Bangla is a horror-comedy led by Akshay Kumar, with a cast that includes Paresh Rawal, Wamiqa Gabbi, Tabu, Rajpal Yadav, Jisshu Sengupta and Mithila Palkar. Backed by Balaji Motion Pictures in association with Cape of Good Films, the film is produced by Akshay Kumar, Shobha Kapoor and Ektaa R Kapoor.