

# HYDERABAD HEADLINES

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## Women's Reservation a Key 21st Century Reform: PM Modi



New Delhi, April 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday described the proposed women's reservation legislation as one of the most significant decisions of the 21st century, calling it a historic step dedicated to "Nari Shakti." Addressing the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Sammelan' at Vigyan Bhawan, he said the move would translate long-standing visions of social justice into reality and strengthen women's participation in governance.



### Critical Mineral Exploration to Drive Economic Growth: Vivek

Telangana Minister G. Vivek Venkatswamy said that exploration of critical minerals will significantly strengthen the economic growth of both the State and the country, citing their high value in global and domestic markets.

Speaking at a Ministry of Mines roadshow in Hyderabad, attended by Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy, he highlighted that Telangana, under Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, is allocating mineral resources through transparent auctions.

He added that this policy has boosted State revenues and attracted strong participation from private bidders in recent years.

HYDERABAD



### Bhubharati Act Ushers New Era in Land Rights: Ponguleti

Telangana Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said the Bhubharati Act marks the beginning of a new era in protecting land rights, as the government works to rebuild the revenue system under Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy.

Reviewing one year of the Act's implementation, the Minister said it has improved transparency, accountability, and accessibility in land administration, making services simpler and corruption-free.

He noted that the Bhubharati portal, launched on the birth anniversary of B. R. Ambedkar, has helped resolve long-pending land disputes and reduced hardships faced by citizens under earlier systems like Dharant.

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## CM Revanth Proposes Hybrid Model

### for Delimitation; Warns Against Southern Discrimination Vows to Unite States Against Seat Increase

- PM Modi is exploiting delimitation of constituencies
- women reservation bill as a 'political tool'
- CM Revanth Reddy demands a debate in Parliament and all Assemblies, constitute an Expert Committee and consultation with all parties on delimitation
- Of the 272 seats proposed to be increased, 136 seats should be redistributed based on the pro-rata and the remaining 136 seats based on GSDP.
- Numbers are important and not percentage in the delimitation



HYDERABAD, APRIL 13:

Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy took a strong dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for portraying the enactment of the women reservation bill and the delimitation of the constituencies as a single issue. Demanding the Union government for a debate in the Parliament and all Assemblies, constitute an Expert Committee and consultation with all parties on the delimitation, the Chief minister proposed a "Hybrid Model" in the reorganization of the constituen-

cies in the country. Addressing a press conference in the State Secretariat today, the CM wondered why the centre was creating a sense of urgency by summoning a special session of Parliament to address both the delimitation of constituencies and the Women's Reservation Bill. CM Revanth Reddy alleged that the center was strategically moving to project an impression that the opposition parties were not supporting the women reservation and delimitation.

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## The Invisible Lake: 18-Acre Kamayakunta Erased from Official Records



There is a pond in the village... The strange thing is it has disappeared from official records..?

Who is responsible for the encroachment of the 18-acre pond..?

If a pond disappears in the Mayor's own village, is there no concern?

Once a drinking water source, now turned into illegal layouts by land grabbers...

Despite the pond vanishing from records, officials remain indifferent...

BC Mahasabha Leader Mettukudi Srinivas demands immediate action from the government and officials...

HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

There is an old saying... a man once sat guarding the front so strictly that not even an ant could pass, while an elephant passed from behind unnoticed... This seems to reflect the current government's approach. While officials are actively focusing on drainage issues in cities, serious allegations are emerging that ponds and water bodies in villages are disappearing acre by acre without any attention. A clear example of this situation is the merged village of Appanpally in Mahabubnagar district. As per official records, the village has a total of 204 acres under survey numbers 109, 110, 111,

and 112. This includes Posani Kunta (145 acres), Shirponi Kunta (16 acres), Kamayakunta (18 acres), and Gangosu Kunta (25 acres). However, after the formation of Telangana state, surprisingly, the 18-acre Kamayakunta has completely vanished from records. It is neither listed as a pond nor as land in official documents.

- K VASUKUMAR MBA, SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT, HYDERABAD HEADLINES

In the past, attempts were made by real estate groups to create illegal layouts in the FTL and buffer zones of the pond, even trying to destroy

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### Seethakka issues legal notice to KCR over Anganwadi phone 'scam' claims

Hyderabad, April 13: Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Danasari Anasuya Seethakka on Monday issued a legal notice to former Chief Minister and BRS president K. Chandrasekhar Rao, seeking an unconditional public apology over alleged defamatory statements relating to the distribution of mobile phones to Anganwadi centres.

In the notice sent through her advocate Naguluri Krishna Kumar, the Minister termed the allegations of a Rs 30 crore scam as "false, baseless and made without verification of official records." She alleged that the claims were circulated through the BRS's official social media handles with "malafide intent" to damage her reputation. The notice called upon K. Chandrasekhar Rao to delete the posts on social media platforms and issue a public apology within 48 hours of receipt of the notice. It warned that failure to comply would compel her to initiate appropriate civil and criminal defamation proceedings. Refuting the allegations, Seethakka stated that she had no role in the procurement of smartphones. According to the notice, the tender process was handled by Telangana Technology Services Limited, which invited bids and awarded the contract through established procedures.

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### Union Minister Bandi Sanjay slams CM Revanth's remarks

HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Monday lashed out severely at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy over his remarks regarding delimitation (the redrawing of constituency boundaries) of Lok Sabha seats. He expressed strong indignation, asserting that Revanth Reddy's proposals were unconstitutional and detrimental to the interests of marginalized sections of society. Bandi Sanjay took strong exception to Revanth Reddy's argument that a higher number of seats should be allocated exclusively to regions that generate the highest revenue. "If that logic were to hold true, should all the seats then be allocated solely to Hyderabad? Is there no need to increase the seat count for your own birthplace—Palamuru—or for backward districts like Adilabad," he questioned.

He mocked the Chief Minister asking whether—after years of sending bundles of cash to the Congress High Command—he was now formulating political ideologies based entirely on monetary considerations. Sanjay criticized the Congress party by accusing it of attempting to dismantle the very foundations of the Constitution drafted by Babasaheb Ambedkar. He remarked that CM Revanth Reddy's comments appeared to be designed to undermine Ambedkar's ideals just ahead of his birth anniversary while adding that had Ambedkar

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## TRUMP VS. THE POPE WHITE HOUSE FIREPOWER COLLIDES WITH VATICAN MORAL AUTHORITY



President Donald Trump's direct attack on Pope Leo XIV has triggered a rare and explosive confrontation between political power and religious authority. The clash, rooted in the ongoing Iran conflict, exposes a deeper struggle over who defines legitimacy in global affairs, elected leadership or moral voice, with both sides holding firm and the fallout only beginning to unfold.

BY C SUBRAHMANYAM

This is not routine political noise. This is a sitting President of the United States publicly unloading on the spiritual head of over a billion Catholics across the world. And he has done it in his trademark style, raw, personal, and unapologetically aggressive. Late Sunday night, President Donald Trump took to Truth Social and delivered a blistering, unfiltered attack on

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## BJP Emerges as the True Alternative in TG: NRR



Hyderabad, Apr 13 : BJP State President N Ramchander Rao today emphasized that while victory in Khanapur Municipality may seem localized, it carries a "powerful political message" for the entire state. He was addressing media after reaching Khanapur to attend swearing-in-ceremony of Ankam Mounika as the Municipal Chairperson of Khanapur. Rao asserted that the residents of Khanapur have signaled a broader desire for change across Telangana. He stated that the electorate has grown disillusioned with both the previous BRS administration and the current Congress government. "The people of Telangana have witnessed the governance of both BRS and Congress and they have faced injustice," Rao said and asserted that "the only path to genuine development is the Bharatiya Janata Party.

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SHORT NEWS

### Steps towards women empowerment; Dr. Umar Alisha inaugurates PMO shop in Lal Bazaar



Hyderabad: On Monday evening, Dr. Umar Alisha, the ninth head of Sri Vishwa Vigyan Vidya Adhyathmika Peetham of Pithapuram town, inaugurated the PMO (Prakruthi Matru Organic) shop run by women at Lal Bazaar intersection in Secunderabad by cutting the ribbon. After completing the puja ritual at the shop, he addressed the women and said that women empowerment is very necessary for the society and providing the society with dishes cooked by the hands of natural and mother goddesses will bring great benefits. In the current situation, the Mathrumurthi initiated this program with the intention of bringing natural organic pastries closer to the urban residents of Telangana State, who are living a mechanical life far from the past. The Gurus blessed Rajyalakshmi, Uma, Sunitha and Chandu, who undertook this program, wishing them auspiciousness. The shop owner, Dr. Umar Alisha, distributed organic pastries free of cost to the city dignitaries who attended the inauguration ceremony. Members of the Hyderabad branch of Sri Vishwa Vigyan Vidya Adhyathmika Peetham, Peetham PRO Dr. Suneel Kumar Yandra, Senior Journalist, Film actor and writer Bathula Prakash Babu and others participated in this program.

## RTC Chief Gives Green Signal to Ramanujapuram Bus Halt Demand

\* Move brings fresh hope to commuters, students and workers from Ramanujapuram, Vemulapally and Donakonda after years of travel hardship

Samudrala Kiran, Correspondent

HYDERABAD

In a strong push for better rural connectivity and public convenience, Ramanujapuram Sarpanch Akkireddy Damodar Reddy met TSRTC Managing Director Y. Nagi Reddy at Bus Bhavan on Monday and urged the corporation to provide official halts for Express and Electric buses at the Ramanujapuram bus stop.

The demand, rooted in the daily struggles of villagers and students, has brought into focus the transport difficulties faced by people from Ramanujapuram, Vemulapally and Donakonda. For years, commuters from these villages have been forced to depend on limited and irregular transport options, as faster bus services either do not stop or remain inaccessible to the rural public. The result has been long delays, uncertainty in travel and mounting hardship for those commuting to colleges, workplaces and towns for essential needs.

During the meeting, Sarpanch Damodar Reddy submitted a formal petition to the TSRTC chief, explaining in detail how the absence of regular halts for key bus services has become a serious public issue. He reportedly stressed that students



are among the worst affected, often struggling to reach educational institutions on time, while employees, daily wage earners and other passengers are burdened by unreliable connectivity and additional travel costs. The Sarpanch made it clear that this is not merely a local request, but a genuine public service demand tied to education, employment and equal access to transportation for rural communities. His representation reflected growing public sentiment that villages should not be denied better transport facilities when thousands depend on RTC services every day.

In what has come as a major relief to the villagers, TSRTC Managing Director Y. Nagi Reddy responded positively to the appeal. Displaying administrative sensitivity and promptness, the MD immediately contacted the Warangal Regional

Manager and directed officials to examine the feasibility of the request and take necessary steps toward implementation.

The swift response from the TSRTC chief has been widely welcomed by residents, who see it as a hopeful sign that their long-pending demand may finally be addressed. Villagers said the provision of official halts for Express and Electric buses would significantly improve day-to-day mobility, particularly for students and employees who depend on timely and affordable public transport.

The development is also being viewed as an example of effective grassroots leadership. By directly taking up the issue with the highest RTC authorities, Sarpanch Akkireddy Damodar Reddy has underlined the role of local elected representatives in ensuring that public grievances are not ignored. His interven-

tion has resonated strongly with the people of the three villages, many of whom have long sought a practical solution to their commuting problems. With the TSRTC MD's positive assurance now on record, the focus shifts to administrative follow-up and speedy execution. If the proposal is cleared and implemented, it could bring meaningful relief to hundreds of rural commuters and stand as a notable step toward inclusive and people-centric transport governance.

For the residents of Ramanujapuram, Vemulapally and Donakonda, the issue goes far beyond a bus stop. It is about dignity in travel, access to opportunity and the right of rural citizens to receive the same level of public service as those in urban areas. Monday's meeting has, for now, turned a long-standing grievance into a growing hope.

## Seethakka issues legal notice to KCR over Anganwadi phone 'scam' claims

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"A Tender Evaluation Committee consisting of senior government officials evaluated the bids and finalised the contract. My client is not a member of this committee and has no role in awarding the tender," the notice said. Through the legal notice, the Minister questioned the basis of the allegations, pointing out that the total value of the tender was about Rs 44 crore.

"When the tender itself is for about Rs.44 crore, it is not understood as to how my client could have indulged in corruption to a tune of Rs.30 crore. Your allegation is prima facie false and absurd," the notice read.

The notice also alleged that the posts had gained significant traction on social media and were amplified by multiple accounts affiliated with the BRS, causing damage to her public image and credibility.

Later in the day, speaking to the media, Seethakka said she was compelled to initiate legal action as the BRS had been indulging in a sustained "false and malicious campaign" over the issue.

She demanded that KCR take responsibility for the alleged misinformation being circulated by the party's social media wings, while clarifying that she held no personal animosity against him.

The Minister recalled that she had issued similar legal notices in the past in response to what she described as repeated instances of false propaganda. Referring to the alleged irregularities, she termed the claim of a Rs 30 crore scam in a Rs 44 crore tender as "ridiculous."

Seethakka maintained that the tendering process was carried out transparently through Telangana Technology Services Limited, in accordance with established procedures. She further alleged that the BRS intensified its campaign against her after she categorically refuted similar allegations made by BRS MLA K.T. Rama Rao on the floor of the State Legislative Assembly. (NSS)

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## TRUMP VS. THE POPE

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Pope Leo XIV, the first American-born pontiff, accusing him of weakness, political bias, and even questioning his legitimacy in office. Trump wrote: "Pope Leo is WEAK on Crime, and terrible for Foreign Policy... I don't want a Pope who thinks it's OK for Iran to have a Nuclear Weapon... If I wasn't in the White House, Leo wouldn't be in the Vatican." He did not stop there. Speaking to reporters at Joint Base Andrews, Trump doubled down: "I'm not a big fan of Pope Leo... He's a very liberal person and he's a man who doesn't believe in stopping crime... We don't like a pope who says it's OK to have a nuclear weapon." This is not coded language. This is direct confrontation.

### THE POPE WHO REFUSED TO STAY QUIET

Pope Leo XIV, born Robert Francis Prevost in Chicago, is not a ceremonial figure. He is a missionary priest who spent decades in Peru, speaks multiple languages, and has carried forward the moral line established by Pope Francis.

But unlike his predecessor, Leo has sharpened the tone. On April 11, standing inside St. Peter's Basilica, he issued a stark warning during a global peace vigil: "Enough of the idolatry of self and money. Enough of the display of power.

Enough of war." Earlier, he had already called threats to destroy Iran "truly unacceptable" and went further on Palm Sunday, saying leaders with "hands full of blood" cannot expect divine approval. This is the trigger. The Pope is not commenting from the sidelines. He is directly challenging the

moral legitimacy of the war.

### THE MAKING OF POPE LEO XIV

Robert Francis Prevost was not expected to become Pope. Born in Chicago in 1955, with roots spanning French, Italian, Spanish, and Creole heritage, he built his life far from power corridors. His decades in Peru as a missionary shaped his worldview, grounding him in poverty, migration struggles, and grassroots realities. When he was elected on May 8, 2025, it surprised even seasoned Vatican watchers. What they saw as a compromise candidate has now emerged as a Pope willing to directly confront geopolitical power with moral language that is unfettered and uncompromising.

### WAR, POWER, AND THE BREAKING POINT

The backdrop is the escalating U.S.-led military confrontation with Iran, which intensified in February 2026. The flashpoints are clear. Strait of Hormuz tensions, U.S. and Israeli strikes, and fragile negotiations that have repeatedly collapsed.

Trump's doctrine is blunt. Force brings results. The Vatican's doctrine is equally blunt. War driven by power and money is a moral failure. This is not just disagreement. This is two world-views colliding head on. Trump frames the Pope as a political actor interfering in sovereign decisions. The Vatican frames its role as a moral compass obligated to speak when lives are at stake.

## Union Minister Bandi Sanjay slams CM Revanth's remarks

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been alive today, he would have expelled the Congress party from the country.

He affirmed that the BJP's core objective was to ensure that the fruits of development reach every individual irrespective of their financial status. He clarified that the credit for the decision to increase the number of the seats in every state by 50 percent—regardless of population size—belongs entirely to Prime Minister Modi.

Bandi Sanjay alleged that the Congress party was unequivocally opposed to the women's reservations. He questioned as to why the Congress party failed to implement the 33 percent reservation quota during its five decades of governance? He pointed out that the Congress party continues

to maintain close ties with parties like the RJD and the Samajwadi Party—the very parties that, in the past, tore up copies of the women's reservation bill within the Parliament. Bandi Sanjay alleged that Revanth Reddy's remarks had exposed the true nature of the Congress party and urged him to stop engaging in divisive politics and speak the truth.

## CM Revanth Proposes Hybrid Model

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The two important national issues should be seen as separate and discussed separately before finalizing the modalities.

Referring to the Women's Reservation Bill, the Chief minister emphasized that a law should be enacted only after the 2026 census. If the provisions were amended in accordance with the 2026 census, women's reservations could be implemented in the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, as well as in the assembly elections of various states, the CM pointed out that, in 2023, the Congress party extended its full support to the Women's Reservation Bill. There would have been an opportunity for 181 women to be elected out of the 543 seats had a 33 percent reservation been provided for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The CM made it clear that the Congress is committed to the women quota and ready to support the Women's Reservation Bill based on the 2026 census. The Chief minister recalled that the bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi during the Congress rule. However, the Women's Reservation Bill did not get approval because the BJP had not supported it.

CM Revanth Reddy noted that the BJP government failed to implement the law immediately upon its passage in the Lok Sabha by inserting some conditions. The CM questioned the centre for advancing the legislation based on the 2011 census instead of completing and implementing the 2026 census.

The CM highlighted the Congress role in the empowerment of women in politics in the country. Congress party has provided opportunities for women to hold numerous constitutional offices—including those of Prime Minister, President, Lok Sabha Speaker, Chief Minister, and Governor. Rajiv Gandhi introduced reservations for women in local bodies. Not a single woman has ever been appointed as the President of the BJP, the CM charged.

On the delimitation of the constituencies, the Chief minister proposed a "Hybrid Model". Of the 272 seats proposed to be increased, 136 seats should be allocated based on a pro-rata basis and the remaining 136 seats should be allocated based on Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

Priority should be given to those states that contribute the largest share to the national gross output.

Further, the Chief minister took strong objection to PM Modi's proposal of 50 percent increase in seats. This would be detrimental to the very survival of the nation. The CM explained that the disparity in seats between Kerala (which has 20 seats) and Uttar Pradesh (which has 80 seats) stands at just 60 seats. If the 50 percent increase is implemented, this gap would widen to 90 seats. The gap in seats between Telangana and Uttar Pradesh would widen to 94 seats. The Southern states collectively hold 130 seats (if increased by 50 percent) this total would rise to only 195 seats. The Northern states which currently hold 413 seats will have 621 MP seats.

CM Revanth Reddy also raised the issue of the declining population in the southern states due to the implementation of family planning and the significant increase of population in the Northern states. The Chief minister alleged that the centre was trying to relegate southern states to a politically secondary status. Even smaller states like Delhi and Punjab will lose their political relevance. "This would be an irreparable blow to both the Southern states and the smaller states alike".

The CM said that he would write a letter to all Southern State CMs and also small states like Punjab and Delhi seeking their cooperation in the fight against the discrimination against the fast developing states in the delimitation process. The Chief Minister also criticized the BJP government at the centre for not allocating key portfolios to the southern states including constitutional posts like the President. The Southern states were serving as the nation's economic capitals, while the Northern states were political capitals. We are opposed to a system where some states pay taxes and others dominate. "Southern India contributes significantly to the nation. We are generating income and creating employment and livelihood opportunities. How can the centre penalize us?". Issues such as the formation of Telangana state and the Naxalite movement arose because of discrimination. The BJP was attempting to further exacerbate this discrimination. "We will unite the southern states, as well

as the smaller states, on this issue. We will wait and see how they manage to get the bill passed in Parliament".

The CM also highlighted the seats have not been allocated on population basis in the Northeastern states and Union Territories. The increase in seats has not been done 100 percent by population criteria. Rather, the MP seats were allocated to the Northeastern states and Union Territories specifically to ensure their representation.

CM Revanth Reddy demanded the issue of delimitation must be debated in Parliament and a committee comprising experts should be constituted. A decision should be reached only after the matter has been debated in all State Assemblies and subsequently approved by Parliament. This entire process should be completed by March 2028. The CM appealed to the centre not rush this process hastily, thereby widening the divide between the South and the North within the country.

The CM stressed that number is important and not percentage in the delimitation of the constituencies. The CM remembered that the Vajpayee government demitted office by a single vote. Without the numbers, no one in politics engages in negotiations with anyone else. CM Revanth Reddy objected to the union minister Bandi Sanjay's remarks which were detrimental to the interests of SCs, STs, and women in the southern states. If the delimitation of constituencies is implemented based on a 50 percent population ratio, Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay will be considered as peons and stand outside Modi's residence as their services will no longer be required.

The CM mentioned that the delimitation of constituencies has taken place on three occasions. In 1967, the number of seats was increased to 520. In 1976, it was raised to 542. Subsequently, with the addition of one seat from Sikkim, the total rose to 543. Indira Gandhi imposed a ban increasing the number of seats for a period of 25 years. In 2001, Vajpayee enacted a legislative amendment regarding the delimitation process. As a result of this, in 2009, Telangana was allocated 17 MP seats while Andhra received 25 MP seats. A statutory moratorium on the increase of seats has been imposed until 2026.

## The Invisible Lake: 18-Acre Kamayakunta Erased from Official Records

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the bund and overflow structures. These were stopped due to local protests and police cases. Despite all these controversies, there are allegations that some political leaders and officials from the previous regime colluded to erase this 18-acre pond. The fact that no trace of Kamayakunta is found in official records, even after verification, is raising serious suspicions. The disappearance of the pond from records poses a major threat to the environment, public resources, and especially the livelihoods of fishermen. While the government takes strict action in urban areas, people are now questioning why it remains silent when such critical resources vanish in villages.

BC Mahasabha National President Mettukadi Srinivas has strongly demanded immediate action from the government and officials. He expressed concern over the negligence of authorities in protecting Kamayakunta, which falls under the FCS limits of Appanpally in Mahabubnagar district. On Monday, he submitted a com-

plaint to the District Collector seeking protection of the pond. In his complaint, he highlighted suspicious details related to the pond. He also informed the Collector that the Irrigation Department had previously recognized Kamayakunta as having a water spread area of 204 acres. Despite issuing a certificate for FCS registration under the Fisheries Cooperative Societies Act, the authorities failed to provide pond details when information was sought under the RTI Act, which is surprising. He stated that this is not a simple administrative lapse but appears to be a deliberate conspiracy to remove the pond from official records to facilitate illegal encroachments. He urged the District Collector to take up this issue as a special case and investigate thoroughly.

### 18-acre pond missing in the Mayor's own village

After the formation of Mahabubnagar Municipal Corporation, Gummala Mamatha Srinivas Mudiraj was elected as a corporator and later unanimously elected as Mayor in February 2026. She

belongs to the merged village of Appanpally and has pledged to work for the development of Mahabubnagar town. She has been active in addressing civic issues like sanitation, roads, and drinking water. However, it raises serious concerns that despite being from the same village, she has not focused on the disappearance of the 18-acre pond.

### Villagers demand action against those responsible

As per Article 21, every citizen has the right to live in a clean environment. Article 48A states that protecting water resources is the responsibility of the state. Article 51A(g) emphasizes the duty of every citizen to protect natural resources. Villagers have warned that if the government and officials fail to act immediately, they will launch large-scale protests. They are demanding that Kamayakunta be restored in official records without delay, buffer zones be strictly protected, and civil as well as criminal cases be filed against those responsible. They also urged the authorities to safeguard the livelihoods of fishermen.

## BJP Emerges as the True Alternative in TG: NRR

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Development only accelerates under a 'Double-Engine' government."

Highlighting the role of the central government, Rao credited Prime Minister Modi's administration for the infrastructure and welfare progress currently visible in the state. He specifically cited central government's welfare schemes like National Highway expansions, PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (Free ration distribution) and AMRUT and Smart Cities initiatives.

Launched a scathing attack on the state Congress government, BJP state presi-

dent accused the current government of being "mired in corruption" while alleging that the BRS is currently paralyzed by internal infighting.

Rao accused opposition parties of forming a "secret unholy alliance" to stop the BJP's momentum. He alleged that Congress, BRS, and AIMIM worked together in areas like Kamareddy and Karimnagar specifically to defeat BJP candidates.

He clarified that the BJP has no political alliances and will continue to contest elections independently. "Local-level adjustments do not reflect party policy. The BJP stands alone and will come to power

alone," he asserted.

Regarding the future of Khanapur Municipality, Rao promised that the party would ensure central government schemes reach every citizen. He assured that as soon as development proposals are submitted, the party will utilize all available resources to transform the town.

The people of Telangana have given chance to Congress and BRS and now they have determined to give opportunity to BJP which would definitely form government in coming elections, BJP state chief expressed confidence.

## Dr. Peruka Raju Honoured with Veturi Sahiti Award-2026

HYDERABAD

Renowned national poet, lyricist, writer, and translator Dr. Peruka Raju has been conferred with the prestigious Veturi Sundararama Murthy Sahiti Award-2026 in recognition of his outstanding contributions to literature. The award acknowledges his powerful writings that reflect deep social consciousness and creative excellence.

The award was presented at a grand ceremony held at Ravindra Bharathi, Hyderabad, in the presence of distinguished personalities from literary, cultural, and public life. Among the eminent attendees were Dr. Sarojanamma, scholar Sri Daivagna Sharma, Telangana Legislative Council Deputy Chairman B. Prakash, noted actor Jabardasth Chittibabu, and film director-producer G. Vijay Kumar. A large number of youth, students, literature enthusiasts, and representatives of various organizations participated, making the event a grand success. The programme was organized by the Abhilasha Helping Hands Organization. A proud son of Telangana, Dr. Raju is currently serving as a Junior



Commissioned Officer in the Indian Army. As a national poet and multi-lingual writer, he has earned recognition for bridging cultures and ideas across various Indian languages. His upcoming 13th anthology, titled Saagu, is set for release soon. Beyond literature, Dr. Raju is actively involved in social service. He

founded the voluntary organization "My Gift" with a mission to support underprivileged communities, guided by his belief that "encouragement is the greatest gift."

Notably, Dr. Raju has received six prestigious literary awards this year alone, including honours such as the Swarna Kankana, Nandi Award, and National Best Poetry Award. He also contributes regularly to English newspapers through his daily columns, expanding literary discourse.

This recognition stands not only as a testament to Dr. Raju's literary brilliance but also as a symbol of his commitment to national values, social responsibility, and cultural unity. His thought-provoking speech at the ceremony deeply inspired the audience, while the cultural performances added vibrancy to the occasion.

## S K Srivastava Reviews Safety Precautions in View of Ensuing Summer Season

HYDERABAD



Shri Sanjay Kumar Srivastava, General Manager, South Central Railway held a detailed meeting on safety of train operations across the zone today i.e., 13th April, 2026 at Rail Nilayam, Secunderabad. Shri Satya Prakash, Additional General Manager, SCR participated in the meeting along with Principal Heads of Departments, Divisional Railway Managers (DRMs) of all the six divisions viz., Vijayawada, Guntakal, Guntur, Secunderabad, Hyderabad and Nanded Divisions joined the review meeting through video conference.

Shri Sanjay Kumar Srivastava, General Manager, emphasized the importance of proactive measures to ensure railway safety during the peak summer season.

He directed officials to intensify the use of Rail Thermometers and strengthen track infrastructure to withstand extreme heat, thereby ensuring uninterrupted train operations. General Manager instructed the Officials to conduct regular safety inspections, prioritizing ballast recouping and filling to maintain track stability. He further advised to conduct detailed analysis of fire risks and implement corrective actions to prevent fire incidents

in trains, highlighting the need for vigilance and preparedness during the challenging summer months. In addition, the General Manager reiterated the necessity of adhering to safety protocols at bridges and construction sites, advising the issuance of caution orders to field staff. He stressed the importance of tamper-proof locking of electric cables in trains to avoid hazards and called for routine checks to ensure compliance.

## CSD Conducted review meeting on LPG Supply

HYDERABAD

The Civil Supplies Department conducted a review meeting today at the Civil Supplies Bhavan regarding the supply and distribution of commercial LPG. The meeting was chaired by Sri M. Stephen Raveendra, IPS, Commissioner of Civil Supplies, in coordination with Sri Nikhil Chakravarthi, IA&AS, Director of Industries, alongside representatives from Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) and Hotel Associations.

During the review, officials observed that while the overall supply and distribution of commercial LPG from the depots have increased, there is a noticeable lag in delivery in some sectors. The department took serious note of these delivery delays and suspected illegal practices that are disrupting the supply chain.

To meet current market demands and ensure equitable distribution of the 70% commercial LPG allocation, the review covered the overall industrial sector, including Industrial Fabrication and foundries. OMCs are determining these allocations for individual hotels and industrial units based on their historical data and average sales records. Furthermore, if any additional allocations are received, they will be immediately pushed into the



market to ease the demand.

To curb artificial scarcity, Sri M. Stephen Raveendra announced a zero-tolerance policy against any illegal supply or black marketing of commercial LPG. A stern warning was issued that those found bypassing the official system and purchasing cylinders through illegal or unauthorized channels will face severe legal consequences.

Stringent action will be taken against distributors if they are found charging extra amounts above the stipulated price or deliberately causing delivery delays, including the immediate cancellation of their licenses. In addition to losing their

licenses, criminal cases will be booked against these errant distributors, with joint legal action being initiated by the Civil Supplies Department and the Police Department against anyone exploiting consumers.

In light of these ongoing logistical adjustments and enforcement measures, the Commissioner requested all stakeholders, including hotel management, industrial representatives, and distributor networks, to cooperate fully. The department appealed for their continued support in streamlining the supply chain and ensuring smooth operations until the situation fully stabilizes.

## ICMR-NARFBR Renamed as "National Institute for Pre-Clinical Research (NIPCR)"

HYDERABAD

In a significant move to promote indigenous development of drug discovery and medical technologies, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has taken a key decision. The National Animal Resource Facility for Biomedical Research (NARFBR), located in Genome Valley, Hyderabad, has been renamed as the National Institute for Pre-Clinical Research (NIPCR). This change came into effect from March 20, 2026.

Earlier, this ICMR research institute primarily functioned as a facility providing animals for research purposes. Now, it will play a crucial role in conducting pre-clinical studies required before drugs, vaccines, and medical devices are made available for human use. Reflecting its expanded role and core activities, ICMR has officially renamed NARFBR as NIPCR. Notably, this is the first government pre-clinical research institute of its kind in the country.



Central hub for pre-clinical research, NIPCR will serve as a crucial bridge in translating laboratory discoveries into human trials. The institute will provide a platform for the development of advanced medical treatments such as drugs, vaccines, medical devices, and cell and gene therapies.

Additionally, NIPCR will support academic institutions, research organizations, industries, and startups across India by providing necessary infrastructure and expert guidance. It will also assist in testing and validating new innovations. Functioning under the Department of Health Research (DHR) of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the institute is set to play a key role in strengthening India's biomedical research ecosystem.

### For pre-clinical research, NIPCR will employ two major research approaches

Studies on various animal models

Advanced research on cells and micro-organ models (organoids)

Having evolved into a cen-

### EASTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. ENGG-01/26-27 (OPEN), dated: 10.04.2026 (Capital Works), e-Tenders are invited by Chief Works Manager, C&W Workshop, Eastern Railway, Kanchrapara Workshop, Kanchrapara, Pin-743145, 24-Parganas (North), West Bengal through website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) from reputed Contractors with sufficient experience and financial capability who have executed similar nature of work in the past preferably with Railway/CPWD/PWD/MES/Irrigation or any other public Sector undertakings for the following works. **Sl. No. 1. Tender No.: WT-01-26-27. Description of works:** At Kanchrapara Workshop - Provision of Centre of Excellence at Shop No. 2 at Loco Complex, Kanchrapara Workshop. **Tender Value:** ₹ 72,50,174.86. **Earnest Money/Bid Security:** ₹ 1,14,100/-. **Completion period ending on & from the date of issuance of PO:** 09 months. **Sl. No. 3. Tender No.: WT-03-26-27. Description of works:** At Kanchrapara Workshop - Provision of new fire hydrant pipeline from newly constructed RCC Tank at Carriage Complex to Loco Complex. **Tender Value:** ₹ 96,30,390.38. **Earnest Money/Bid Security:** ₹ 1,92,600/-. **Completion period ending on & from the date of issuance of PO:** 12 months. **Cost of Tender Document (non-refundable):** NIL for each. The scope of work is indicative only. However, detail can be viewed at Indian Railway e-tendering site i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) Advertisement period: Time during which all information pertaining to tender shall be available but offers cannot be submitted. **Tender will be closed on 06.05.2026 at 14.00 hrs.** and tender will be opened on 06.05.2026 at any time after 14.30 hrs. as per availability of opening personnel and net accessibility. The Rly. Board vide L.No-2020/CE-4/37/CE/GCC/POLICY, DT-30.12.2020 had instructed not to take any EMD for any works tender upto 31.12.2021. But, as there is no such further instruction till date, hence, the EMD system is returned back. (MISC-11/2026-27) **Tender Notice is also available at websites:** [www.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.indianrailways.gov.in) / [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) **Follow us at:** @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

## VIBGYOR 2026 Celebrated with Enthusiasm at Geethanjali College

HYDERABAD

Geethanjali College of Engineering and Technology witnessed a vibrant and energetic atmosphere as it celebrated VIBGYOR 2026, on April 10, 2026 as part of its Annual day celebrations. The event brought together students, faculty, and guests for an evening filled with music, entertainment, and celebration.

The highlight of the evening was a live musical performance by popular singer Rahul Sipligunj, who captivated the audience with his energetic songs and engaging stage presence. S. Adding to the excitement, a DJ session by Pridhvi Sai kept the crowd energized. The music and vibrant beats created an electrifying atmosphere, with students thoroughly enjoying the performance and dancing to the tunes. The event was a grand success, leaving lasting memories for everyone present and showcasing the spirit and unity of the college community.



## Telangana seeks public input on new fire safety amendments

HYDERABAD: The Telangana government has developed proposed changes to the Fire Services Act of 1999 aimed at improving fire prevention and life safety measures.

These amendments seek to simplify Fire NOC processes, enhance regulatory and enforcement systems, and promote greater accountability, all in an effort to boost public safety in accordance with contemporary needs, emerging threats, and advancements in fire safety technology.

As part of a transparent and participatory approach, the draft amendments are hereby placed in the public domain for seeking views/suggestions from stakeholders and the general public.

The draft amendments along with the explanatory note are made available in public domain <https://www.fire.telangana.gov.in> and also in Telangana State Portal i.e. <https://www.telangana.gov.in>. The inputs shall be submitted section-wise with proposed suggestions and reasons, if any, on or before May 13 by 5 PM.

The inputs can also send either through email: [act-amend-fire@telangana.gov.in](mailto:act-amend-fire@telangana.gov.in) with the subject line "Amendment feedback" or in Physical mode title captioned "Suggestions on Amendment to Fire Services Act 1999" on the cover page to the following postal address.

The director general, Telangana fire, disaster response, emergency and civil defence, beside IRDAI complex, Nanakramguda, Gachibowli, Hyderabad.

## Make Displaced Residents Partners in Musi Development



### Consider Rehabilitation Proposals

HYDERABAD

Residents displaced from Madhu Park Ridge A Block submitted a representation to Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, requesting that they be made stakeholders in the Musi River

rejuvenation project. They stated that, as displaced persons, they seek justice and have submitted three proposals for consideration under the state government's prestigious Musi rejuvenation initiative.

On Monday afternoon, the Madhu Park Ridge A Block displaced residents met the Deputy CM at Praja Bhavan in Hyderabad. The residents expressed their support

for the Musi rejuvenation and development works, clarifying that they have no objections to the project itself.

However, they urged the government to include them as partners in the development process. Responding to their proposals, the Deputy CM assured them that all three proposals would be examined from a humanitarian perspective and that justice would be ensured. He also directed Musi Riverfront Development Corporation MD E.V. Narasimha Reddy and Rangareddy District Collector Narayana Reddy to review the proposals submitted by the residents and submit a report to the Musi Cabinet Sub-Committee.

Those who submitted the representation included Madhu Park Ridge A Block President Dr. K. Srisailem, Secretary Dr. Kareemulla, Advisor Sanjay Shukla, Legal Advisor Prapat Reddy, JAC member B.N. Reddy, Vice President Ramba-bu, and others.

**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH TIRUPATI**  
(An Autonomous Institution of National Importance under the Ministry of Education, Govt' of India)

**RECRUITMENT FOR FACULTY POSITIONS AT IISER TIRUPATI**

IISER Tirupati invites online applications from Indian nationals, including eligible Persons of Indian Origins (PIOs), Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs) and Non-Resident Indian (NRIs) having excellent academic record and relevant work experience for faculty positions on regular basis in various disciplines.

For detailed advertisement, please visit [www.iisertirupati.ac.in](http://www.iisertirupati.ac.in) >>> Careers >>> Faculty.

Date of commencement of online applications: **April 13, 2026**

The last date for submission of online applications is **17.00 Hrs. on May 28, 2026.**

Adv. No.22/2026/IISER/Tir.13.04.2026

Sd/-  
cbc 21377|12|0004|2627|

Registrar

**OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER - I/II DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT-1)**  
3rd Floor, Triveni Complex Abids, Hyderabad-500001

**DEMAND NOTICE**

**NOTICE UNDER SECTIONS 25 TO 28 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS & BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1993 AND RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961.**

RC/336/2025

State Bank of India  
Versus  
Sri Sheshatvam Ravi

To:  
(C1) Sri Sheshatvam Ravi S/o S Upender, R/o H.No.1-9-12/3/5, Azampura, Sangareddy, Telangana-502110.

This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal Hyderabad (DRT 1) in OA/138/2025 an amount of Rs.33,90,670/- (Rupees Thirty Three Lakhs Ninety Thousands Six Hundred Seventy Only) along with pendente lite and future interest @ 12.80% Simple Interest Yearly w.e.f. 07.04.2025 till realization and costs of Rs.99,610/- (Rupees Ninety Nine Thousands Six Hundred Ten Only) has become due against you (Jointly and severally/ Fully/ Limited).

2. You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 and Rules there under.

3. You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of your assets on or before the next date of hearing.

4. You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on **19.06.2026 at 10:30 a.m.** for further proceedings.

5. In addition to the sum aforesaid, you will also be liable to pay:  
(a) Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate / execution proceedings.  
(b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processes and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, on this date: **08.04.2026**

Sd/- Recovery Officer  
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL HYDERABAD (DRT 1)

**यूनियन बैंक Union Bank** H.No.3, Alwal Mandal, 4-11-4, Near Bolarum Railway Crossing Road, Near Sada Shiva School, New Bolarum, Bolarum, Turkapally, Secunderabad, Telangana-500010

**TURKAPALLY BRANCH**

**E-AUCTION NOTICE FOR SALE OF VEHICLE HYPOTHECATED AS SECURITY TO BANK UNDER HYPOTHECATION DEED**

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s) that the below described Vehicle hypothecated/charged to the Bank/Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by Union Bank of India, Turkapally Branch, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" and "Without Recourse" basis on **16/05/2026** for recovery of the balance dues to Union Bank of India from the Borrower (s) / Guarantor(s) as mentioned in the table. Details of the Borrower (s) / Guarantor(s), Amount due, Short description of the vehicle, Possession type, Reserve price and the Earnest Money Deposit are also given as under-

Name of the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) / Branch	Dues for recovery	Brief details of the Vehicle	Reserve Price	Account Details for Submission of EMD
Mr. Loiam Naveen A/c. No.24831652000020 Guarantor : NIL	Total Dues: Rs.12.00 lakhs as on 31/03/2026 with further interest and expenses	Make And Model: HYUNDAI I20 ASTA (O) KAPPA IVT Regd No. TS 08 JH 3195 Regd Owner: Mr. Lolam Naveen Chassis No. MALBK512TN16XXXXX Engine No. G4LFNM2XXXXX Color: STARRY NIGHT Date Of Manf: 08/09/2022 Date Of Regn: 10/11/2022 Mileage: PETROL	Earnest Money Deposit: Rs. 4,00,000.00 Bid Increase Amount: Rs. 40,000.00 Reserve Price: Rs. 1,000.00	Union Bank of India Turkapally Branch A/c No: 24831980050000 IFSC: UBIN0824836

Date/Time of E Auction: 16/05/2026 from 12.00 PM to 4:00 PM  
Last Date of Submission of EMD: 15/05/2026 Before 4:00 PM  
Date & Time of Inspection of Properties: 14/05/2026 from 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM (For Inspection Please contact on : 9866114306)  
For Details Bank Official Contact No : 9866114306

- It shall be the responsibility of the interested bidders to inspect and satisfy themselves about the vehicle before submission of the bid.
- The intending bidder should submit the KYC Documents along with the bid application.
- Auction would commence at Reserve Price, as mentioned above.
- Bidders shall improve their offers in multiples of the bid increment.
- The bidder who submits the highest bid (above the Reserve price) on closure of e-auction shall be declared as successful bidder.
- Sale shall be confirmed in favour of the successful bidder, subject to confirmation of the same by the Secured creditor.
- Successful bidder has to remit the balance amount within 2 days from the date of e-Auction, otherwise the EMD amount will be forfeited.
- The successful bidder shall bear all the necessary expenses like applicable stamp duties/additional stamp duty/transfer charges, Registration expenses, fees etc. for transfer of the Vehicle in his/her name.
- The payment of all statutory/non statutory dues, taxes, rates, assessments, charges, fees etc. owing to anybody shall be the sole responsibility of the successful bidder only.
- Bank reserves the right to postpone/cancel or vary the terms and conditions of e-auction without assigning any reason therefor.
- For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please contact branch.

The interested bidders who require assistance in creating Login ID & Password, uploading Data, submitting Bid Documents, training/ Demonstration on Online Net e bidding etc., may contact <http://www.bankauctions.com> M/s. C1 India Pvt Ltd, Tel: Helpline No. 7291981124/25/26 Mob No:9948182222, Mr. Dharami Krishna Helpline Email Id:dharami.p@ctindia.com & support@bankauctions.com

Date: 13.04.2026, Place: Hyderabad

Branch Head, Union Bank of India

**यूनियन बैंक Union Bank** No.12-13, 483/33, Plot No.3, Survey No.175/1, Street No.1, Secunderabad-500017

**SECUNDERABAD-TARANAKA BRANCH**

**E-AUCTION NOTICE FOR SALE OF VEHICLE HYPOTHECATED AS SECURITY TO BANK UNDER HYPOTHECATION DEED**

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s) that the below described Vehicle hypothecated/charged to the Bank/Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by Union Bank of India, Secunderabad - Taranaka Branch, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" and "Without Recourse" basis on **16/05/2026** for recovery of the balance dues to Union Bank of India from the Borrower (s) / Guarantor(s) as mentioned in the table. Details of the Borrower (s) / Guarantor(s), Amount due, Short description of the vehicle, Possession type, Reserve price and the Earnest Money Deposit are also given as under-

Name of the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) / Branch	Dues for recovery	Brief details of the Vehicle	Reserve Price	Account Details for Submission of EMD
Mr. Kethavath Babu A/c. No.06232652000045 Guarantor : NIL	Total Dues: Rs. 14.50 lakhs as on 31/03/2026 with further interest and expenses	Make And Model: KIA CARENS D1.5 CRDI 6MT PRESTIGE Regd No. TS 07 JU 3192 Regd Owner: Kethavath Babu Chassis No. MZBGD813LPN07XXXX Engine No. DAFANM7XXXXX Color: AURORA BLACK PEARL Date Of Manf: 01/10/2023 Date Of Regn: 27/04/2023 Mileage: 58,563 KMS FUEL: DIESEL	Earnest Money Deposit: Rs. 8,50,000.00 Bid Increase Amount: Rs. 85,000.00 Reserve Price: Rs. 2,000.00	Union Bank of India Secunderabad - Taranaka Branch A/c No: 06232198050000 IFSC: UBIN0960239

Date/Time of E Auction: 16/05/2026 from 12.00 PM to 4:00 PM  
Last Date of Submission of EMD: 15/05/2026 Before 4:00 PM  
Date & Time of Inspection of Properties: 14/05/2026 from 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM (For Inspection Please contact on : 9885532942)  
For Details Bank Official Contact No : 9885532942

- It shall be the responsibility of the interested bidders to inspect and satisfy themselves about the vehicle before submission of the bid.
- The intending bidder should submit the KYC Documents along with the bid application.
- Auction would commence at Reserve Price, as mentioned above.
- Bidders shall improve their offers in multiples of the bid increment.
- The bidder who submits the highest bid (above the Reserve price) on closure of e-auction shall be declared as successful bidder.
- Sale shall be confirmed in favour of the successful bidder, subject to confirmation of the same by the Secured creditor.
- Successful bidder has to remit the balance amount within 2 days from the date of e-Auction, otherwise the EMD amount will be forfeited.
- The successful bidder shall bear all the necessary expenses like applicable stamp duties/additional stamp duty/transfer charges, Registration expenses, fees etc. for transfer of the Vehicle in his/her name.
- The payment of all statutory/non statutory dues, taxes, rates, assessments, charges, fees etc. owing to anybody shall be the sole responsibility of the successful bidder only.
- Bank reserves the right to postpone/cancel or vary the terms and conditions of e-auction without assigning any reason therefor.
- For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please contact branch.

The interested bidders who require assistance in creating Login ID & Password, uploading Data, submitting Bid Documents, training/ Demonstration on Online Net e bidding etc., may contact <http://www.bankauctions.com> M/s. C1 India Pvt Ltd, Tel: Helpline No. 7291981124/25/26 Mob No:9948182222, Mr. Dharami Krishna Helpline Email Id:dharami.p@ctindia.com & support@bankauctions.com

Date: 13.04.2026, Place: Hyderabad

Branch Head, Union Bank of India

## SHORT TAKES

### TCGHE announces DOST 2026 schedule for degree admissions

**HYDERABAD:** The Telangana Council of Higher Education (TCGHE) on Monday announced the schedule for the Degree Online Services Telangana (DOST) 2026, outlining the admission process for regular degree programs for the academic year 2026-27. According to TCGHE Chairman Prof. V Balakista Reddy, the admission process will take place in three phases. The first phase will begin with online registrations on the website <https://dost.cgg.gov.in/> from April 15 to May 7. Students will have the opportunity to select their courses and colleges from April 30 to May 8. Those students who have special category certificates (PH/CAP/NCC/Sports/Extracurricular activities) must have these documents verified on May 7 and 8. The seat allotment for the first phase is scheduled for May 14, and students who are allotted seats can confirm their acceptance online between May 15 and 23. For the second phase, registration will occur from May 15 to 25, with web options available from May 15 to 26.

# 'Arrive Alive' Road Safety Programme Launched

The 'Arrive Alive' road safety initiative was launched across the State in the form of a mass movement, with active participation from public representatives, Minister, Members of Parliament, MLA, Municipal Chairpersons, Sarpanches, Collectors, Superintendents of Police, and officials from various departments

### HYDERABAD

As part of the 99-day action plan under the 'prajapalana-Pragati pranalika,' aimed at drastically reducing road accidents and preventing loss of life, the 'Arrive Alive' programmes commenced statewide on Monday.

State Transport Minister Ponnambhakur formally released the programme poster at the Transport Department Office in Hyderabad. On the occasion, he stated that from April 13 to 18, intensive field-level reviews will be conducted jointly by the Police and Transport Departments to ensure strict enforcement of traffic regulations and promote environmental protection.

He further announced that individuals who assist accident victims during the critical 'Golden Hour' will be honoured with the 'Rahaveer Award' along with a cash incentive of ₹25,000. The Minister also highlighted that the Government is taking steps to provide free medical treatment up to ₹1.5 lakh for accident victims, including in private hospitals. Additionally, RTC drivers with 30 years of exemplary service will be felicitated, and awareness programmes on road safety will be conducted for school students.

Special Chief Secretary Vikas Raj, Transport Commissioner Ilambarthi, RTC Managing Director Nagi Reddy, and senior officials including JTCs Chandrasekhar Goud, Ramesh, and Shivalingaiah attended the programme.

Director General of Police, Telangana, B.



Shivdhar Reddy, who visited Adilabad district, participated extensively in multiple initiatives promoting road safety and community engagement. He inaugurated the closing ceremony of 'Operation Jwala' at the AR Headquarters, launched the 'Khaki Kids' batches, and inaugurated the State's first Traffic Park for students.

The DGP also participated in a counselling programme for 400 minor drivers and their parents, and initiated the distribution of QR codes and insurance facilities to 5,000 auto-rickshaws under 'Abhaya My Taxi 2.0'. Eye screening camps were conducted for

drivers, and spectacles were distributed.

As part of community outreach, the DGP interacted with tribal communities in Chinchughat village and inaugurated a library for competitive examinations. He also addressed a large gathering of Sarpanches and approximately 500 Road Safety Club members at the S Convention Hall in Gudihannoor mandal, Adilabad district.

Through the 'Arrive Alive' programme, citizens were urged to strictly adhere to traffic rules and prioritize safety. At the grassroots level, Sarpanches passed resolutions encouraging the use of helmets, adherence

to traffic norms, and avoidance of intoxicants while driving. A total of 36 Gram Panchayats in the district adopted resolutions committing to road safety and drug-free communities, and copies were submitted to the DGP.

The DGP emphasized the crucial role of Road Safety Club members in identifying accident-prone areas (black spots) and initiating preventive measures. First aid kits were distributed, and members were trained in first aid and CPR by medical experts to minimize fatalities in road accidents.

District Collector Rajarshi Shah, Superintend

tent of Police Akhil Mahajan, Additional SP B. Surender Rao, Additional SP (Administration) P. Mounika, and other officials participated in the programmes.

Similar initiatives were carried out across multiple districts. In Vikarabad, Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar participated, while in Rajanna Sircilla, Government Whip Srinivas attended the programme. Gram Sabhas were organized and Road Safety Committees were formed in districts including Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Khammam, Wanaparthy, Sangareddy, Nizamabad, Jagtial, Asifabad, Ramagundam, Gadwal, and Medak.

In Medak district, a 'No Helmet - No Entry' rule was enforced in Nandagokul village, with a penalty of ₹500 for violations. In Nizamabad, innovative awareness initiatives included offering free entry to watch IPL matches for individuals wearing helmets.

Officials have resolved to disseminate awareness through WhatsApp groups in every village, undertake rectification of black spots, and enforce stringent action against over-speeding and drunk driving.

Senior officials including IGP Gajrao Bhupal, Collectors Nitika Pant, Sneha Mehra, Satya Prasad, Garima Agrawal, Additional CP Traffic Joel Davis, and DCP Chandramohan participated in various programmes. In Bhuvanagiri, MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, MLA Beerla Hlayya, Additional DGP (Law & Order) Mahesh M. Bhagwat, and SP Akanksha Yadav also took part in the 'Arrive Alive' initiative.



## Political Drill Over Women's Bill ? BJP Targets Revanth

N V Subhash , BJP Chief Spokesperson & Media Incharge Telangana

### HYDERABAD

The Telangana unit of the BJP has strongly criticised Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, accusing him of displaying "loyalty beyond reason" to his party's central leadership at the cost of national interest and progressive reforms.

In an official statement, State BJP Chief Spokesperson and Media In-Charge N.V. Subash took serious exception to the Chief Minister's reported letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in which he alleged that the proposed amendments to the Women's Reservation (Nari Shakti Vandan) framework and the delimitation process were politically motivated and skewed against southern states. The BJP termed these claims as "misleading and opportunistic," stating that such arguments are being used as a smokescreen to oppose women's empowerment.

"Instead of openly admitting their discomfort with women's reservation, leaders like Revanth Reddy resort to baseless regional narratives," Subash said. He further pointed out the flawed comparison between northern and southern states, emphasizing that population-based representation is a constitutional and democratic

principle. "Can Telangana be equated with a state like Uttar Pradesh, which has a population several times larger? Even comparisons with Tamil Nadu, Kerala, or Andhra Pradesh must be viewed in proper demographic context," he added.

The BJP also described portions of the Chief Minister's letter as contradictory. While Revanth Reddy acknowledged that immediate implementation of women's reservation in state assemblies would be widely welcomed, he simultaneously raised concerns over its linkage with delimitation.

Quoting from the letter, Subash highlighted the Chief Minister's argument that population-based delimitation could weaken national unity. The BJP dismissed this as "selective reasoning," asserting that national interest must not be sacrificed for political convenience.

"The NDA government's initiatives aim to ensure fair representation and strengthen democratic institutions across India. Raising unfounded fears about regional imbalance only undermines these efforts," the statement read.

The BJP called upon the Congress leadership in Telangana to adopt a constructive approach and support reforms that promote inclusivity and empowerment, particularly for women, rather than politicising critical national issues.

## BRS Prepares for KCR's Public Meeting in Jagtial: KTR Announces Constituency-wise In-charges

### HYDERABAD

As per the instructions of Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) chief K. Chandrashekar Rao, the party's Working President KTR has announced in-charges for the massive public meeting scheduled to be held on the 20th of this month in Jagtial. Considering this meeting as highly prestigious, the party has assigned responsibilities to senior leaders to ensure its success.

Specifically, KTR has finalized special in-charges for five constituencies in Jagtial district.

### Constituency-wise In-charges:

- Jagtial: Palla Rajeshwar Reddy (MLA, Jangaon)
  - Koratla: Prashantha Reddy (MLA, Balkonda)
  - Dharmapuri: L. Ravinder Rao (MLC)
  - Vemulawada: Balka Suman (Former MLA)
  - Choppadandi: Peddhi Sudarshan Reddy (Former MLA)
- Senior party leaders Gadari Balamallu and Mareidi Srinivas Reddy will oversee crowd mobilization, venue arrangements, and overall management of the meeting.

## "We are committed to the overall development of Adivasis and tribal communities"

### HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy stated that the government will take all necessary measures for the comprehensive development of Adivasi, tribal, and agency areas. He said special focus will be placed on resolving issues that are hindering the development of basic infrastructure.

A delegation of tribal and Adivasi MLAs, led by Minister Seethakka, met Chief Minister Revanth Reddy at his Jubilee Hills residence and submitted a memorandum highlighting several issues related to development works in tribal and agency areas.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the government is committed to the welfare of Adivasi and tribal communities. He assured that special attention will be given to the construction of check dams in agency areas, which would help meet both drinking and irrigation water needs.

He also assured that steps will be taken to ensure there are no hurdles from the Forest Department in the construction of check



dams and roads, and that necessary permissions will be expedited. Responding positively to a request, the Chief Minister agreed to consider granting permissions for drilling borewells in lands being cultivated by Adivasi and tribal farmers.

The MLAs brought to his notice that road repairs are getting delayed due to objections from

the Forest Department and that in some places, permissions for new roads are not being granted. The Chief Minister directed forest officials to take decisions on these issues as soon as possible.

He also assured that the government will consider increasing the quota of Indiramma houses in tribal and agency areas. The Chief Minister stated

that ITDAs (Integrated Tribal Development Agencies) will be further strengthened and reiterated that the government will fully support Adivasi and tribal communities.

Among those who met the Chief Minister were Khanapur MLA Vedma Bojju, Pinapaka MLA Payam Venkateswarlu, and Mahabubabad MLA Dr. Murali Naik.

## Government Degree College for Women Marks Ambedkar

Phule Jayanti with Focus on Equality and Education.

Samudrala Kiran, Correspondent

### HYDERABAD

Government Degree College for Women, Hussainialam, on Saturday organized a commemorative programme to mark the birth anniversaries of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, highlighting their enduring contributions to social justice, equality and educational reform.

The event began with floral tributes to the portraits of the two iconic social reformers, followed by speeches and reflections on their role in shaping a more inclusive and democratic society. Faculty members and students participated actively, underscoring the continuing relevance of Ambedkar's and Phule's ideals in contemporary India.

Distinguished speakers Prof. Syed Najjuallah of Maulana Azad National Urdu University and Dr. Jeevan Kumar addressed the gathering and delivered thought-provoking lectures on the reformers' vision for an equitable society. Their speeches focused on the transformative role of education, constitutional values, and the need for social awareness among students.

Speaking on the occasion, the speakers urged students to draw inspiration from the lives of Dr. Ambedkar and Jyotirao Phule, both of whom dedicated themselves to fighting discrimination



and expanding access to education for the marginalized. They noted that the message of equality and human dignity championed by these leaders remains vital in present times.

The programme was initiated under the guidance of Dr. Mohd. Ghouse, who played a key role in organizing and coordinating the event. IQAC Coordinator Dr. Sreedevi welcomed the dignitaries and emphasized the significance of such academic programmes in nurturing intellectual growth and social consciousness among students.

The event received support from the Department of Political Science and the Department of Public Administration. NSS Programme Officers Dr. M. Pranitha, Dr. K. Shobha Rani and Jesse Lingam also contributed to the smooth conduct of the programme, along with

faculty members and student volunteers. A notable feature of the event was the pledge taken by faculty and students to uphold the values of equality, fraternity and justice, and to work towards building an inclusive and progressive nation. The pledge reflected the core ideals associated with both Ambedkar and Phule, whose contributions continue to inspire generations.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks, during which gratitude was expressed to the Principal, invited speakers, faculty members and students for making the event a success.

The celebration served as both a tribute and a reminder that the legacy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Jyotirao Phule continues to guide educational institutions in promoting critical awareness, social responsibility and democratic values.

## Uttam Kumar Reddy Campaigns in Tamil Nadu's Singanallur Constituency

Urges Voters to Reject BJP's Entry into the State

### COIMBATORE

Senior Congress leader and Telangana Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies, N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has appeal to Tamil Nadu voters to beat back the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) attempts to make inroads into the state. Flanked by local Congress and DMK workers, the minister addressed a packed public meeting in the Singanallur constituency near Coimbatore today.

Launching his campaign with warm traditional greetings — "Vanakkam" in Tamil and "Namaskaram" — he acknowledged the cultural warmth of the gathering and described Tamil Nadu as "a great state"

that shares deep historical and cultural bonds with Telugu heartland. He praised Tamil culture as "a great culture" and lauded Tamil politicians for their immense contributions to both Tamil Nadu and the nation. In a pointed attack on the BJP-AIADMK alliance, Reddy declared that the two parties were "competing to attack the secular fabric" of Tamil Nadu. "BJP should not be allowed into the state," he thundered while warning that any foothold gained by the saffron party would undermine the state's progressive ethos. Uttam Kumar Reddy said that he had travelled from Hyderabad to Tamil Nadu at the behest of the Congress party's "would-be Prime Minister" Rahul Gandhi specifically to campaign and bolster the prospects of Suryaprakash.





## Andhra minister Lokesh meets President Murmu, thanks her for approving Amaravati Bill

NEW DELHI, APRIL 13

Andhra Pradesh Minister for Human Resources Development Nara Lokesh, along with NDA MPs from the state called on President Droupadi Murmu here on Monday to thank for approving the Bill passed by the Parliament to give statutory recognition to Amaravati as the sole and permanent capital of the state. Minister Lokesh said on social media platform X that it was a privilege to meet President Murmu and convey the heartfelt gratitude of crores of people of Andhra Pradesh for approving the Bill that notifies Amaravati as the state capital.

## CM's stress on simplification of policies to ensure speedy setting up of industries

AMARAVATI :

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has directed officials to simplify policies to ensure speedy setting up of industries in the state. He emphasized the need to eliminate unnecessary laws and regulations to create a more business-friendly environment. A central delegation led by Secretary, Ministry of Steel Sandeep Poundrik visited Secretariat today and discussed on Government of India's Deregulation Phase-2 initiative with Chief Minister and officials. The discussions focused on accelerating industrial approvals, simplifying procedures and easing regulatory burdens. Officials made presentations outlining the reforms already implemented by the state, along with future action plans. The Chief Minister reviewed the progress of Phase-1 and current status of Phase-2. Officials informed that 23 priority items across 7 departments have been completed under Phase-1. Under

### Central delegation appreciates state's proactive reforms Secretary, Ministry of Steel discuss with CM on Government of India's Deregulation Phase-2 initiative



Phase-2, 28 priority areas have been identified. Out of 47 recommendations, 18 have already been implemented, with the target to complete all by May 31. The Chief Minister stressed the need to reduce complexities in the approval process and significantly improve speed. He called for the removal of outdated laws, including those dating back to the British era. He directed officials to reduce over 800 existing compliances to below 100 and bring down the number of licenses required for approvals to single digits. At

the same time, he emphasized that there should be no compromise on public safety and environmental protection. His suggestions include promoting third-party inspections to avoid unnecessary harassment, eliminating duplicate licensing systems, providing lifetime validity for business registrations. Introducing simplified, state-specific fire safety norms instead of the National Building Code. He also made it clear that the entire approval process should be made fully online. Post Phase-2 implementation, the

time required for setting up industries should be reduced by at least 40 percent. The Chief Minister directed officials to bring ordinances, if required, to implement Phase-2 reforms. Currently, businesses need around 82 different approvals. He instructed to reduce this to 57 in a phased manner. Similarly building plan approvals and occupancy certificates to be reduced from 30 to 18. The Chief Minister also emphasised on faster land allocation in industrial parks and clusters, single nodal agency for all approvals and simplification in sectors like fire safety, environment, power, tourism, education and health. He said platforms like Mee Seva, Single Desk Portal, and WhatsApp Governance (Mana Mitra) will be leveraged to deliver seamless services to citizens and businesses. Appreciating the state's proactive reforms, Secretary, Ministry of Steel Sandeep Poundrik

said that Andhra Pradesh is progressing ahead of central recommendations in deregulation. He expressed confidence that the state will successfully implement Phase-2 within the stipulated timeline. The Chief Minister reiterated the "Nation First" approach and said such reforms are crucial for nation-building. He noted that the state has moved from "Ease of Doing Business" to "Speed of Doing Business." He also urged the central team to simplify forest laws further. On Deregulation Phase-3, Poundrik stated that it will begin from June. The Chief Minister suggested prioritizing advanced technologies, especially Artificial Intelligence tools, in the next phase.

He also highlighted the state's use of digital systems such as Data Lake, Real-Time Data Governance, CFMS, AWARE 2.0 and WhatsApp Governance in driving reforms.

## Running of Summer Special Train between Hubballi - Alipur Duar

HUBBALLI, APRIL 13:

To facilitate passengers during the summer season, a one-trip special train will be operated between SSS Hubballi and Alipur Duar (West Bengal) via SMVT Bengaluru and Yelahanka. **Train No. 07323 SSS Hubballi-Alipur Duar Express Special** will leave Hubballi at 11:15 PM on Wednesday, 15th April 2026, and reach Alipur Duar at 01:50 PM on Saturday. On its return journey, **Train No. 07324 Alipur Duar-SSS Hubballi Express Special** will depart from Alipur Duar at 04:25 PM on Sunday, 19th April 2026, and arrive at Hubballi at 09:45 AM on Wednesday.

During its journey, the train will stop at Davanagere, Arsikere, Tumakuru, SMVT Bengaluru, Yelahanka, Dharmavaram, Dhane, Nandyal Jn., Guntur Jn., Vijayawada Jn., Rajahmundry, Kottavalasa, Vizianagaram Jn., Srikakulam Road, Palasa, Brahmapur, Khurda Road Jn., Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Bhadrak, Kharagpur, Andul, Dankuni, Bardhaman, Bolpur (Shantiniketan), Rampur Hat, New Farakka, Malda Town, Barsoi Jn., Kishanganj, New Jalpaiguri Jn., Siliguri Jn., Binnaguri and Hasimara stations in both directions. The train will consist of 20 LHB coaches comprising AC 2-Tier, AC 3-Tier, Sleeper Class, General Second Class, and Luggage-cum-Brake Vans. Summer Special Train

Service Between Yesvantpur and New Jalpaiguri to clear the extra passenger rush during the summer season, South Western Railway will operate two trips of express special train services between Yesvantpur and New Jalpaiguri (West Bengal), with return services to Bengaluru Cantt.

**Train No. 06567 Yesvantpur-New Jalpaiguri Express Special** will run on April 17 and 24, departing from Yesvantpur at 07:00 hrs and reaching New Jalpaiguri at 07:00 hrs on the third day. In the return direction, **Train No. 06568 New Jalpaiguri-Bengaluru Cantt. Express Special** will depart from New Jalpaiguri on April 20 and 27 at 08:30 hrs and arrive at Bengaluru Cantt. at 09:55 hrs on the third day.

En route, the train will stop at Yelahanka, Hindupur, Dharmavaram, Anantapur, Gooty, Dhane, Nandyal, Markapur Road, Narasaraopet, Guntur, Vijayawada, Rajahmundry, Kottavalasa, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam Road, Palasa, Brahmapur, Cuttack, Bhadrak, Kharagpur, Andul, Dankuni, Bardhaman, Bolpur (Shantiniketan), Rampur Hat, New Farakka, Malda Town and Kishanganj stations in both directions. The special train will consist of 21 coaches, including AC 2-Tier, AC 3-Tier, Sleeper Class, General Second Class and Luggage and Brake Vans.

## BDS student found dead in Kerala, family alleges caste discrimination

Twenty-two-year-old BDS student Nithin Raj R.L. was found dead after falling from a college building in Kannur on April 10. His family alleges caste-based harassment, skin tone bias and threats over internal marks by faculty. Police registered an unnatural death case, while Kerala's human rights panel sought a report promptly. His family, who work as daily wage labourers, alleged that Nithin had been facing sustained mental harassment from the head of the department and other teachers. A 22-year-

old first-year Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) student, Nithin Raj R.L., was found dead on April 10 after allegedly falling from a five-storey building on the campus of Anjarakandy Dental College in Kannur, Kerala, triggering serious allegations of faculty harassment, caste discrimination and skin tone bias. Nithin, a native of Nedumangad in Thiruvananthapuram district, was discovered critically injured on the college premises on Friday afternoon and was rushed to hospital, where he was later declared



dead. Chakkarakkal police have registered a case of unnatural death and launched a probe into the circumstances surrounding the incident. His family, who

work as daily wage labourers, alleged that Nithin had been facing sustained mental harassment from the head of the department and other teachers. They claimed

he was repeatedly targeted over his caste identity and skin tone. The family specifically accused the department head, Dr M K Ram, of threatening to cut his internal marks, an allegation that has intensified concern over the case. The incident has also drawn the attention of the Kerala State Human Rights Commission, which has registered a suo motu case and directed police to submit a detailed report into the matter. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor posted on X, "Deeply anguished to learn of the tragic

death of Nithin Raj, a young BDS student from Thiruvananthapuram, at Kannur Dental College, Anjarakandy. Audio recordings now reveal what his family has long alleged - relentless verbal abuse, casteist slurs, threats, and deliberate academic sabotage by faculty. A bright young life, extinguished by a toxic campus." Nithin Raj's body was later brought to his home in Thiruvananthapuram, where he was cremated in the presence of grieving relatives, friends and local residents.

## Andhra official remanded to police custody in disproportionate assets case

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 13

A city court has sent a suspended Assistant Commissioner in the Endowments Department to police custody for two days in a disproportionate assets case. The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) court allowed questioning of Kalingiri Shanti on April 15 and 16. Shanti, arrested on April 7 after simultaneous raids at premises linked to her, is currently lodged in Vijayawada district jail. She filed a petition seeking permission to meet her two-and-a-half-year-old son. After hearing arguments, the court posted the matter for orders on April 16. During the raids on April 7, the ACB found that she had amassed assets worth Rs 1.37 crore, disproportionate to her known sources of income. Officials conducted searches for 10 hours in different locations, including Tadepalli, Undavalli, and Visakhapatnam.

## Supreme Court denies interim voting rights to lakhs deleted from Bengal rolls

With over 34 lakh appeals pending and polling days away, the Supreme Court faces a high-stakes dilemma, can voter rights be protected without overwhelming the system or risking errors in the electoral process?

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to allow lakhs of voters, whose names were deleted from electoral rolls in West Bengal, to cast their ballots, warning against overburdening appellate tribunals ahead of polling. The state will vote in two phases on April 23 and 29. Names of 90.66 lakh voters were removed during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls. Hearing pleas linked to the revision of electoral rolls, the Chief Justice said, "We cannot create a situation where we burden the appellate tribunal judges. There is another plea with us today that stops the appeals." The court was



informed that 34,35,174 appeals had been filed in West Bengal against the rejection or deletion of names from the rolls as of April 11. Petitioners argued that voters should not be left without a remedy, especially with polling scheduled for April 23. Senior advocate Kalyan Banerjee told the bench, "People of Bengal are only looking towards this court 34 lakh persons are genuine voters people want to exercise their right to vote." He urged the court to ensure that

as many appeals as possible are decided before polling day and suggested issuing a supplementary voter list to enable affected voters to participate. **'IF NAMES ARE RESTORED, THEY WILL VOTE': COURT** Even as it declined immediate relief, the bench offered clarity on the legal position. It said those whose names are included after final adjudication would be eligible to vote. "Those names that were left out would be added to the

list for the April 23 elections. Don't worry - if their names are there, they will be voting," the court said, referring to adjudication already carried out by judicial officers till April 9. The bench indicated that any spillover in a handful of constituencies would be addressed through additions to the rolls once decisions are made.

**COURT SEEKS BALANCE BETWEEN RIGHTS AND PROCESS**

The judges signalled the need to strike a middle ground. "We will try to create a via media between your right and the need for verification," the bench said. Justice Joydip Bagchi pointed out that existing rules already provide for corrections once appeals are decided, with electoral registration officers required to amend rolls accordingly.

**'WHAT SHOULD THE COURT DO?': BENCH QUESTIONS PETITIONERS** With petitioners claiming that even adjudicating 16 lakh

appeals would be difficult before polling, the bench pushed back. "If that's the scenario then what should the court do?" the Chief Justice asked, even remarking, "Those who have been allowed, should we even stay the names included," indicating concerns that continuous objections could disrupt the election process itself.

**EC FLAGS LEGAL FRAMEWORK, CONCERNS OVER LAW AND ORDER**

The Election Commission maintained that finalisation of electoral rolls for elections follows a different legal framework from revision exercises, limiting last-minute changes. Separately, senior advocate V Giri urged close monitoring of vulnerable areas flagged by the poll body to prevent any post-poll violence. With polling approaching, the court now faces the task of balancing voter rights with procedural integrity in one of the largest electoral disputes in recent times.

## Drunk Odisha man kills wife, dumps body in septic tank; 4-year-old son reveals horror

A drunk man killed his wife after an argument stemming from suspicions about her character and later disposed of her body in a septic tank at their home in Odisha's Nabarangpur district. The crime was exposed when the couple's four-year-old son, who witnessed the incident, informed neighbours.



A man, who was allegedly drunk, killed his wife following an argument over suspicions about her character and later dumped her body in a septic tank at their home in Odisha's Nabarangpur district. The case came to light after the couple's four-year-old son, who witnessed the incident, alerted neighbours. The incident occurred on Sunday in Bargaon village when the accused, identified as Subas Gond, killed his wife, Manai Gond, following a heated argument on April 11 after the couple returned from a wedding function with their children. According to preliminary information, the

argument escalated over suspicion regarding the woman's character, leading to a violent altercation in which Subas allegedly assaulted her, resulting in her death on the spot. The victim's family has claimed he was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident. The accused then disposed of the body in the septic tank of their house. The case came to light when their four-year-old son, who witnessed the incident, informed neighbours and relatives, prompting locals to confront the accused.

Although he initially tried to mislead them, Subas later confessed under pressure. Police reached the spot after locals informed them, recovered the body and detained the accused for questioning.

# Southern Railway: A Legacy on Track

CHENNAI, APRIL 13:

Southern Railway, one of the earliest zones of Indian Railways, marks its 75th Formation Day on 14th April 2026, celebrating a remarkable journey of growth, innovation and public service. Formed on 14th April 1951, Southern Railway emerged through the amalgamation of three erstwhile railway systems, the Madras and Southern Maharashtra Railway, the South Indian Railway and the Mysore State Railway. This consolidation was part of the post-Independence effort to create administratively efficient and unified railway zones across the country.

**The Genesis**  
The origins of railways in South India date back to 1856, when the first train ran from Royapuram to Arcot (Walajah Road), marking a defining moment in the region's

transport history. Over the decades, railway expansion connected key regions across present-day Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

**Significant early milestones included:**

- Expansion to the west coast with connectivity to Beypore and Calicut during 1860s
- Linking of Madras with Bombay during 1870s and later with Howrah in 1900, creating a national grid
- Introduction of engineering marvels like the Nilgiri Mountain Railway during 1899
- Development of strategic trade and port connectivity including Cochin and Tuticorin in 1902 and 1905 respectively
- The coming together of these networks laid the foundation for a robust railway system in South India.

**Post-Formation Evolution**

## 75 Years of Service and Progress of the lifeline of the South

Since its formation, Southern Railway has continuously evolved to meet the growing needs of passengers and freight movement.

**Key structural changes include:**

- Formation of South Central Railway in 1966, with transfer of certain routes
- Creation of South Western Railway in 2003, with reorganisation of divisions
- Southern Railway is presently serving Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry and parts of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh
- Today, Southern Railway operates over 5100 route kilometres, with six major divisions at Chennai, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Salem, Palakkad and Thiruvananthapuram.
- Heritage and Identity



**Southern Railway is also custodian to some of India's most iconic railway heritage structures:**

- Dr MGR Chennai Central - a landmark in Romanesque architectural style
- Chennai Egmore - known for its Indo-Saracenic design

- Southern Railway Headquarters - a majestic century-old administrative building
- Royapuram Station - the oldest surviving railway station in India
- Nilgiri Mountain Railway, the UNESCO listed Mountain Railway

The Pamban Bridge - The old Scherzer span Pamban Bridge that served for over a century, was closed and the New Pamban Bridge, India's first vertical life Railway sea bridge, was inaugurated in April 2025

These structures stand as enduring symbols of engineering excellence and architectural grandeur. Milestones in the Modern Era

**In the decades following its formation, Southern Railway has achieved significant milestones:**

**Gauge Conversion:** Transformation from metre gauge to broad gauge across the network, enhancing capacity and connectivity and during 1990 to 2010, major lines were converted

**Electrification:** Rapid elec-

trification of routes, improving efficiency and sustainability. Presently, the zone is marching towards Mission 100% Electrification with over 97% of its routes electrified

**Doubling and Capacity Enhancement:** Strengthening infrastructure to support increasing traffic

**Introduction of Modern Trains:** From the modern semi-high speed Vande Bharat trains to the passenger-friendly, affordable Amrit Bharat Express trains to the Expansion Mail/Express services for improved passenger convenience Station Redevelopment: Upgradation of stations under flagship programmes such as Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

**Digital Initiatives:** Adoption of e-ticketing, real-time train information systems and passenger-friendly mobile applications

**Safety Improvements:** De-

ployment of advanced signalling systems including Electronic Interlocking

**A Forward-Looking Railway**

Southern Railway today stands at the forefront of modernization, balancing heritage with innovation. With continued investments in infrastructure, passenger amenities, sustainability initiatives and technology-driven operations, it remains committed to providing safe, efficient and customer-centric services. As Southern Railway celebrates 75 years of its formation, it reflects not just on its rich past but also on a future driven by progress and transformation. From the first steam-hauled journey in 1856 to today's modern rail network, Southern Railway continues to be a lifeline of the region, connecting people, powering economies and shaping journeys across generations.

EDITORIAL

Open Forum

THE GNI MASTER PLAN:  
BALANCING GLOBAL TRADE  
AMBITIONS WITH TRIBAL RIGHTS

The Union government's ₹92,000 crore mega-infrastructure project for the holistic development of the Great Nicobar Island (GNI) by building it up as a port and tourism-led economy has gathered speed in the last six months, even as concerns remain about its impact on the Island's ecology and the rights of local populations, the Nicobarese and the Shompen — two indigenous tribal groups. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands administration has notified a draft master plan for the project. Apart from the International Container Transshipment Port (ICTP), the airport, and power plants, the draft master plan envisions developing the GNI as a "seaside destination in a pristine, unspoiled, protected environment", outlining plans for business, adventure, biodiversity tourism, family entertainment, amusement parks, etc., along with adequate social infrastructure for healthcare, education, and livelihood. The draft is planned for a projected population of over 3.36 lakh by 2055, by which time the expected tourist inflow will be a million a year. Over 70% of the direct employment the government hopes to create will be in tourism and allied sectors. The current population of the GNI is a little less than 10,000. This transformation of the GNI, aided by the ICTP, is crucial to leverage the "strategic importance" of the Island's location at the western entrance to the Malacca Strait. The draft plan has said the port will help India achieve its "aims to capture a significant share in global sea trade".

But while the administration has sought public suggestions and objections for 30 days, it remains unclear till when this window will remain open, given that the draft does not mention when it was notified. This draft plan follows another draft plan to relocate local Nicobarese communities to make way for the project. The two plans seemingly contradict each other with regard to where existing populations may be relocated, which has renewed fears among these groups. These communities have been opposing the project's clearance since 2022, alleging that their forest rights had not been settled. While the National Green Tribunal has set aside concerns about the project's impact on the GNI's biodiversity by citing its "strategic importance", a challenge to the project's clearances remains in the Calcutta High Court. Some have also questioned the project's commercial and naval merits. Considering that the project aims to irreversibly alter the demography, and ecology of the GNI, the most prudent path for the government is to take the time needed to build a more holistic consensus over it.

India's much-celebrated economic growth story is coming under renewed scrutiny as slowing demand, rising energy prices and geopolitical tensions cast a shadow over future prospects. Concerns over possible GDP overestimation, coupled with weak consumption trends and sluggish manufacturing growth, have raised questions about the strength and sustainability of the country's economic momentum. A recent study by economists including Arvind Subramanian has added to the debate, suggesting that India's growth may have been overstated in recent years. At the same time, escalating tensions in West Asia, volatile crude prices and global supply disruptions are intensifying macroeconomic pressures, leaving policymakers with limited room to manoeuvre.

India's Economic Strength  
IS IT TURNING FRAGILE?

The much-touted economic strength of India has come into question. Not just because of reports of GDP overestimation but the future trend of growth, hampered by geopolitical conditions and the rising prices of oil and gas. Stagnant real wages and somewhat static manufacturing growth data revealed that consumption as well as every macro-economic indicator has been growing more slowly over time.

It would thus not be wrong to say that if real growth was over-estimated over the last decade or so, then total GDP is smaller than what has been revealed. In this connection, one may refer to a recently published document on overestimation of the GDP. In March 2026, the paper titled 'India's 20 Years of GDP Misestimation: New Evidence' by three well-known

GDP. Meanwhile Prof. Deepanshu Mohan an economist at the O.P. Jindal University in an interview stated that India may have to course correct in its geopolitical alignments to strengthen food and energy security for sustained economic growth. If there is over inter-dependence on the US, specially led by President Donald Trump, it could harm the Indian economy. Painting rosy pictures of the Indian economy in the long-term may be a strategy but what will happen in the coming two years is a big challenge before us.

At present, the RBI faces a delicate balancing act between supporting economic growth and containing inflation as external shocks from the West Asian conflict disrupt macro-economic stability. With crude prices surging and supply chains under strain, the RBI decided to adopt a 'wait and watch'

oscillating around \$100 a barrel and chances are that it may stay at that level for weeks, even months to come. There is no justification of India's capability withstanding such shocks, specially gas and this has led to sectors like pharma and fertilizers suffering. It goes without saying that unless true energy supplies are reduced rates from whatever sources, it would indeed be difficult for the Indian economy to face stiff challenges and withstand competition.

There are reports that crude oil sustaining over \$100 per barrel is expected to push inflation above 6 percent and trigger rate hikes. Economists at HSBC stated that we are at a crossroads as Brent has averaged \$100 in March and this is likely to more or less continue this month though there are apprehensions of some reduction in price.

months. Exports have declined and gas supply may be affected in the long term.

There is no doubt that the economy is becoming fragile and recovery in the short-term appears quite unlikely. Analysts are of the opinion that with oil prices touching ranging above \$110 a few days ago the ceasefire brought it down to \$90 presently. Even then, there are expectations that petrol and diesel prices may rise after the recent state elections.

Meanwhile, the government has cut special additional excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 10 per litre each to limit OMC under-recoveries, reimposed windfall taxes on exports and granted customs duty relief on select petrochemical inputs until June 2026. Government officials are considering austerity measures, including spending curbs in ministries with installed capacity to use allotted funds though spending on roads, railways and airports is expected may not be affected to sustain the growth momentum.

Meanwhile, as some analysts predicted, the much-awaited truce has not materialized as demands of both Washington and Tehran remained poles apart and may be difficult to reconcile, even in the near future. In such a situation, the Hormuz blockade will have serious consequences for the Indian economy. Though he RBI recently stated that crude oil prices may average \$85 per barrel, this may not happen in the first quarter of this fiscal, which is expected to be challenging in view of the global situation. As the RBI governor rightly observed it would be prudent to watch the changing circumstances and the evolving growth-inflation outlook.



economists, including Arvind Subramanian, showed that growth was estimated over the past 12 years.

Thus, it would not be prudent to say that we are the 4th largest economy, as claimed. Going by government statistics, the average real growth rate over the last decade, excluding the Covid fall and spike has been just 6 percent. But taking into consideration the decline in consumption, private investment and sales over the past decade, it is especially clear that India's growth story faces a demand problem. Moreover, in the present geopolitical situation, it is doubtful if the 6 percent figure would be reached in the current fiscal.

Economists expect the government may not be able to meet its fiscal goals with Standard Chartered expecting a slippage of 0.7-0.9 percentage points of

policy and kept the repo rate unchanged at 5.25 percent while maintaining its neutral stance.

Meanwhile, portfolio investors recorded outflows of \$16.6 billion in FY26 with March alone accounting for \$13.6 billion — the highest since March 2020. Added to this, the rupee exhibited significant volatility, weakening past the Rs-90 mark earlier this year and touching a low of Rs 98 before recovering to around Rs 93 following RBI's intervention to curb speculative positions against the domestic currency. India's balance of payments is also expected to slip into a deficit of 431 billion in FY27, adding to macro-economic pressures.

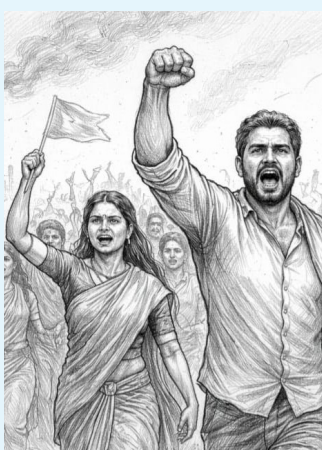
A country like ours that depends on imports for almost 90 percent of its oil cannot be an oasis of industrial progress and security at a time crude price is

Meanwhile, what is needed at this juncture is strengthening the manufacturing base for which all types of support, specially high levels of infrastructure are necessary coupled with induction of cost-effective modern technology. Though India is not lagging, manufacturing has to be geared up in a big way for which research has to be encouraged to innovate and help accelerate the process. It needs to be once again reiterated that the private sector in the country is profit-oriented and does not want to spend on R&D and this attitude must change.

Whatever strategy India adopts, the challenge on the economic front remains due to geopolitical conditions. The US-India deal is yet to be signed while the West Asian conflict has not stopped, and its effects are expected to continue for several

THE SOVEREIGN ROAR OF  
THE MARGINALIZED

Come not to scatter the ash of anguish as residue, but to consecrate it as seed for a radiant dawn. Let us unmake the timbered cages of time and recast existence in the fire of our becoming. Sweat—not water, but a stellar flame in history's hidden womb; each drop—an epoch speaking, each drop—a civilization naming itself. The hand—no mere instrument, but the first syllable of creation when the loom breathes—culture remembers, when the forge burns—time turns to song. Yet—when time conspires in shadow, the worker's light fractures into grief; amid the iron hymns of machines, the human spirit recedes into silence. The hand that builds a home yet owns none—no accident, but design; the fingers that weave beauty yet hunger—no fate, but decree. We are not behind—those who cast us back stand indicted in the court of history; our silence is not weakness, but the ocean before its rising. Therefore—let speech become invocation, let writing become awakening let the heart learn thunder, let the voice become sky. Sweat is our scripture, the hand our emblem; labor our living truth—existence our unending epic. "Change is my verdict"—not a cry, but a law of becoming when silence awakens, the many rise as one horizon. The farmer—



the earth's own pulse; if that rhythm falters, kingdoms turn to dust. Not a king—the farmer is the kingdom. The soil that has tasted blood asks not for jewels, but for justice; its cry ripens within us as a yet-unwritten epic. The strength of the marginalized—not ash, but origin; their story—not wound, but horizon-breaking song. Let hardship stand as mountain—we shall answer with ascent; let struggle rage as storm—we shall answer with meaning. Silence gathers as cloud, and rain remembers the language of change. Come—let tears become light, struggle become music; let silence turn sacred, pain turn power, life turn inevitable. Though cast down—rise; though silenced—resound. The consciousness of the marginalized—not a voice, not a number—but a force a sovereign becoming that rewrites, reorders, and renews the grammar of the world.

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

Babasaheb's Statues:  
Symbols of Inspiration and Equality

BY VIVEK SHUKLA

Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar's statues stand in every corner of the country. They inspire millions of people with his ideals of equality, freedom, and justice. These statues remind every citizen of constitutional values and give them courage to continue the fight for social justice. Babasaheb Ambedkar is remembered as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, a symbol of social justice, a great champion of education, and the liberator of Dalits and backward classes. His statues not only keep his memory alive but also continuously inspire people to fight against inequality, untouchability, and injustice in society.

The very first statue of Babasaheb was installed on 14 April 1957 — just four months after his death — at Ambedkar Bhavan on Rani Jhansi Road in Delhi. It was a small but emotional statue that expressed the feelings of his followers. After that, many more statues were installed across the country. Today, you can find his statues in big cities, small towns, and even villages. Some are small and simple, while others are grand and huge. But a few statues are truly special because they beautifully combine art and powerful symbol-

ism.

One of the most impressive is the world's tallest Ambedkar statue in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. It is called the Statue of Social Justice. This 125-foot tall bronze statue stands on an 81-foot high base, making the total height 206 feet (about 63 meters). It is the fourth tallest statue in India and among the top 40 tallest statues in the world. It is made of steel, bronze, brass, and concrete. Its base is designed like the Buddhist Kalchakra Mahamandala, which reflects the Buddhist values of peace, compassion, and equality.

This statue is a living symbol of the long struggle for social justice and equality. It inspires thousands of people every day. The pose of Babasaheb shows strong determination and the spirit of moving forward. It proves how art and technology can powerfully spread the message of social change.

Another important statue is in Hyderabad, the capital of Telangana. It stands near the State Secretariat on the bank of Hussain Sagar Lake. This is the second tallest Ambedkar statue in the country. The 125-foot bronze statue stands on a 50-foot circular base, making the total height 175 feet. It is considered the fifth tallest statue in India. The monument spreads over 11.8 acres and is

made of 791 tons of stainless steel and 9 tons of brass. In this statue, Babasaheb is shown holding the Constitution book in his hand, highlighting his contribution to the Constitution. It was designed by the famous sculptor Ram Sutar. Every day, this statue reminds both government officers and common citizens of constitutional values. Because it is located by the lake, the view is very beautiful, especially at night when it is lit up with lights. The place has become a popular spot for tourists and locals, where people discuss Babasaheb's life and struggle.

In Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, there is the Ambedkar Memorial Park in Gomti Nagar. It spreads over 107 acres (some sources say 108 acres). It is also known as Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Social Change Site. In the centre of the park is a stupa-shaped building that houses a grand bronze statue of Babasaheb. Below the statue is his famous quote: "My life's struggle is my message." The park has many murals showing different phases of Babasaheb's life. There is also a series of 124 monument elephants, which symbolize strength and stability. This memorial is not only dedicated to Dr. Ambedkar but also remembers other great social reformers like Kanshi Ram.

In Nagpur, Maharashtra, Deekshabhoomi is one of the most sacred places related to Babasaheb's life. It was here on 14 October 1956 that Babasaheb, along with lakhs of followers, embraced Buddhism. This was a historic step to free people from the caste system of Hindu society. The grand statue here shows Babasaheb in the "Deeksha Mudra" (posture of initiation), symbolizing social revolution and religious conversion. The entire complex includes a huge stupa (one of the largest Buddhist stupas in India), meditation halls, a Buddhist vihara, and a museum. Lakhs of devotees visit every year to remember Babasaheb's message of social and religious change. His ashes are also kept here, which makes the place even more sacred. Deekshabhoomi is like a pilgrimage site for Buddhists and supporters of social justice.

In the national capital Delhi, the statue at the Ambedkar National Memorial (26, Alipur Road) is one of the most important statues in the city. It reminds people of the Constituent Assembly and constitutional values. The memorial includes a museum, library, exhibition hall, meditation room, and a replica of the Ashoka Pillar. There is a 12-foot high bronze statue along with a robotic statue that repeats Ba-

basaheb's speeches to the Constituent Assembly. Made by the famous sculptor Ram Sutar, this statue inspires the country's leaders and administrators because it is located in the political and administrative centre. The memorial uses modern technology to show Babasaheb's life and work, helping young people understand his multi-dimensional personality.

These five grand statues keep Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar's dreams alive. Apart from these, there are thousands of other statues across the country. For example, the 450-foot Statue of Equality is under construction in Mumbai. There are also statues abroad, such as the 19-foot Statue of Equality in America. These statues teach the younger generation that through education, struggle, and strong willpower, society can be changed.

Babasaheb's statues are not just structures made of stone or metal. They are symbols of an ideology. They empower millions of people and help in building an inclusive and just India. We should draw inspiration from them and continue the struggle, because Babasaheb's message is still relevant today:

"I dream of a society where a person is judged not by his caste, religion, or gender, but by his qualities."



DHURJATI MUKHERJEE

## Living Standards as the True Measure

Although India is progressing rapidly on the path of development, deep inequalities are still clearly visible within society. The root cause of these disparities lies not only in the caste system but also significantly in economic inequality. To achieve true social justice, welfare policies must shift their focus from caste-based criteria to poverty-based frameworks, as emphasized by eminent educationist and environmentalist Dr. Komatreddy Gopal Reddy.

Traditionally, welfare schemes in India have been implemented along caste lines. While this approach has helped address historical injustices to some extent, poverty today cuts across all sections of society. There are economically strong individuals within traditionally disadvantaged groups, just as there are severely poor families among so-called upper castes. In such a scenario, relying solely on caste as a criterion often results in the exclusion of genuinely needy individuals from essential support.

For a person to live a happy and dignified life, basic needs must be fulfilled. Education, healthcare, housing, employment, and a clean environment are not luxuries—they are fundamental rights of every citizen. Only when these are equitably accessible can society achieve true peace and well-being. Welfare policies must be designed with these essentials at their core.

Caste is a social identity, but poverty is a lived reality. It directly affects daily survival. Hunger, illness, and unemployment do not discriminate based on caste. Therefore, identifying and eliminating poverty should be the primary objective of governance.

In this context, innovative ideas such as "poverty-based bonds" deserve serious consideration. Such mechanisms can ensure that public resources are distributed transparently and reach the truly deserving beneficiaries, thereby strengthening social justice.

Another crucial dimension is environmental protection. Human well-being is inseparable from a clean and sustainable environment. Pollution, resource depletion, and climate change directly impact quality of life. Hence, development should not be measured solely in economic terms but must also include ecological balance. Equality does not mean distributing identical resources to everyone; it means providing support based on individual needs. This is the essence of true social justice. What a poor family requires is fundamentally different from what a wealthy family needs, and public policy must reflect this reality. For India to truly emerge as a developed nation, it must ensure that every citizen can live with dignity and happiness. This cannot be achieved through economic growth alone. It requires equal opportunities, fair distribution of resources, and a strong commitment to environmental sustainability.

"A truly developed society is one where every individual can live with dignity and happiness."



## New Bihar CM's oath on April 15, Nitish Kumar's son out of race

Months before, Nishant formally joined the Janata Dal United (JDU), after staying away from the political arena for a long time. During his induction, it was speculated that he might be elevated to the Deputy Chief Minister's position, with senior JD(U) leaders recommending his name.

Nishant Kumar, son of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, is unlikely to be included in the new cabinet expected to be formed in the coming days. The cabinet reshuffle follows Nitish Kumar's election as a Rajya Sabha MP, a tran-



sition that marks the end of his tenure as a 10-time Chief Minister. He is expected to tender his resignation tomorrow, April 14. Months before, Nishant formally joined the Janata Dal United (JDU), after staying away from the political arena for a long time. During his induction, it was speculated that he might be elevated to the Deputy Chief Minister's position, with senior JD(U) leaders recommending his name. However, party sources confirmed to India Today that Nishant has dismissed the possibilities, saying that he wants to focus on the organisational responsibilities, something he mentioned during his time of induction. "I will try to take care of

the party as an active party member," Kumar said right after joining.

### PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY FOR NEW CABINET

Meanwhile, preparations have intensified for the new cabinet in the state. BJP leader Samrat Chowdhury, who is likely to succeed Nitish Kumar as the next Bihar CM, is supervising all the preparations. As sources from the Lok Bhanu (the official residence and office of the Governor of Bihar) confirmed, the new cabinet will take oath on April 15, around 11 am. Before the swearing-in ceremony, Shrawan Kumar, a Bihar minister and a close aide of Nitish Kumar, met Samrat Chowdhury at the latter's residence. The two had a 20-minute-long conversation.



## NFR Develops 'Zubeen Garg' Railway Bihutoli at Maligaon

MALIGAON, 13 APRIL, 2026:

Northeast Frontier Railway has developed a new 'Bihutoli' a cultural ground for celebrating Bihu and other important cultural events at Maligaon. In a heartfelt tribute to celebrate Assamese singer Zubeen Garg, it has been named as "Zubeen Garg Railway Bihutoli," reflecting the deep cultural connect and admiration for the artist across Assam. The Bihutoli has been developed with various modern facilities, including a permanent stage area, dining hall, toilet complex, community space, boundary wall and an all-weather ground. The newly developed ground is all set to play host to the annual Rongali Bihu celebrations being hosted by Pandu Bihu Sammilani, Maligaon from 14th to 17th April, 2026. In connection with the same a Pre-Bihu opening event was held at the newly

developed ground recently. The occasion was graced by Shri Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager of Northeast Frontier Railway amidst traditional Bihu celebrations. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from railway officials, local residents and cultural enthusiasts. Adding grace to the occasion, Palmee Borthakur, sister of Zubeen Garg, was also present during the event. She expressed gratitude on behalf of the family for the honour bestowed upon the legendary artist. The initiative underscores Northeast Frontier Railway's commitment to celebrating regional culture and honoring icons who have made significant contributions to society. The naming of the Bihutoli stands as a symbol of Zubeen Garg's enduring legacy, especially during the vibrant festival of Bihu, which holds a special place in the hearts of the people of Assam.

## CM Inspects Airport Terminal Project, Stresses Timely Completion

IMPHAL, APRIL 13:

Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand today inspected the ongoing construction of the New Integrated Terminal Building (NITB) and cargo terminal at Bir Tikendrajit International Airport, emphasizing the need for timely completion and strict adherence to quality standards. The Chief Minister was accompanied by Chief Secretary Dr. Puneet Kumar Goel, Additional Chief Secretary (Transport) Anurag Bajpai, Commissioner to the Chief Minister N. Ashok Kumar, Director (Transport) Kh. Diana Devi, Chief Engineer of the Public Works Department



Ch. Biswachandra Singh, and officials from the Airports Authority of India. Reviewing the progress, the Chief Minister directed all concerned agencies to ensure that the NITB is completed within the stipulated timeline. He also instructed that the already constructed cargo terminal be made opera-

tional at the earliest. Highlighting the strategic importance of the project, he noted that the new infrastructure would significantly enhance connectivity and contribute to economic growth in the region. In a statement shared on social media, the Chief Minister said that encouraging progress, certain shortcomings in workmanship were observed. He added that necessary instructions have been issued for immediate rectification to maintain quality standards. During the visit, he also reviewed facilities at the air cargo terminal and reiterated the government's commitment to strengthening airport infrastructure, improving passenger convenience, and enhancing service delivery. Earlier in the day, the Chief Minister inspected ongoing road and drainage construction works at Paona Bazaar, urging the concerned authorities to expedite the projects for early completion.

## India Resumes Iranian Oil Imports After 7 Years

Two Iranian oil tankers have reached India, marking the first such shipments in nearly seven years. The development came hours after the US announced to block all Iranian vessels entering or leaving the Strait of Hormuz following the failed US-Iran ceasefire talks in Islamabad.

Two very large crude carriers (VLCCs) carrying Iranian oil have reached India, marking the first such shipments in nearly seven years, according to ship tracking data from LSEG.

The development came hours ahead of the US's move to block all Iranian ships trying to enter or leave the Strait of Hormuz following failed US-Iran ceasefire talks in Islamabad. The Iran-flagged VLCC Felicity has docked at Sikka port in Gujarat, while the Curacao-flagged tanker Jaya has arrived near Paradip port in Odisha. Each VLCC typically carries around two million barrels of crude oil. India's receiving of Iranian oil shipments came after a temporary US waiver allowed refiners to resume purchases of Iranian crude for a limited period, aimed at easing global oil prices amid the Iran war. The waiver, however, is set to expire on April 19, adding uncertain-



ty to future imports. India, the world's third-largest oil importer and consumer, had halted Iranian crude imports in May 2019 following US sanctions pressure. The recent shipments mark the first known deliveries since

then. Indian Oil Corporation has purchased Iranian crude carried on the Jaya, despite the vessel being under US sanctions. Reliance Industries Ltd, operator of the world's largest refining complex, has also been per-

mitted to source Iranian oil transported on several sanctioned and ageing tankers, including Felicity and others. The Felicity, operated by the National Iranian Tanker Company, reportedly loaded crude at Kharg Island in mid-March before anchoring off Sikka late Sunday. The Jaya is said to have lifted oil in late February, before geopolitical tensions escalated following strikes and counterstrikes involving Iran. Historically, Iran was a major supplier to India, with imports peaking at over 5 lakh barrels per day in 2018, accounting for more than 11 per cent of total crude imports. However, shipments stopped after US sanctions tightened in 2018, with India switching

to alternative suppliers from the Middle East, the US and elsewhere. The current one-month exemption allows the sale of Iranian oil already in transit, intended to stabilise global energy markets. However, the situation remains uncertain as the US is set to enforce a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz from Monday 10 am ET (7:30 pm IST). The US military said the blockade would be enforced "impartially against vessels of all nations", accessing Iranian ports and coastal areas, including facilities in the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. However, it said that the blockade will not impede neutral transit passage through the strait to or from non-Iranian destinations.

## CM: State to Promote Sikh Gurus' Teachings, Preserve Heritage

CHANDIGARH, APRIL 13

Haryana Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that both the Central and State Governments are continuously working to take the principles and teachings of the Sikh Gurus to every section of society. He said these efforts are further strengthening the preservation and promotion of the Guru tradition and the country's rich cultural heritage. The Chief Minister was addressing a gathering as Chief Guest at the state-level Baisakhi Mahotsav 2026, organized by the Art and Cultural Affairs Department in collaboration with the district administration at KDB Mela Ground, Kurukshetra on Monday. Extending greetings on the auspicious occasion of Baisakhi, the Chief Minister paid obeisance to the revered Gurus on the foundation day of the Khalsa Panth. On the occasion, the Chief Minister and Gita Manishi Swami Gyananand Maharaj, were presented with a kirpan, siropa by the Sikh Sangat as a token of

respect. Later, the Chief Minister inaugurated an exhibition based on Sikh history as well as the achievements and schemes of the State Government. He also flagged off wrestling competitions for men and women and inaugurated the international kite competition by flying a kite. He further inspected the Haryana Heritage Pavilion showcasing the rich Haryanvi culture. Highlighting the significance of the festival, the Chief Minister said that Baisakhi symbolizes prosperity, respect for labour and harmony with nature. He expressed happiness at being present on the sacred land of Kurukshetra, known as the land of Dharma and Karma, and said that the festival inspires people to remain connected with nature and celebrate the joy of a bountiful harvest. The Chief Minister said that India is progressing towards a new era under the leadership of Prime Minister, Sh. Narendra Modi and is moving rapidly towards the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047. He emphasized that the teachings of the

Sikh Gurus—unity, dedication, service and hard work—must be adopted in daily life to build an inclusive society where all citizens have equal opportunities, there is no discrimination and every individual can live with dignity. He added that development must go hand in hand with staying connected to our roots, preserving culture and acquainting future generations with the nation's glorious history. Recalling the historical importance of the day, he said that on this day in 1699, at Sri Anandpur Sahib, the Tenth Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, established the Khalsa Panth at a time when injustice and oppression were at their peak, giving a new direction to society based on courage, equality, self-respect and patriotism. He added that the selection of the Panj Pyare (Five Beloved Ones) from different castes and religions conveyed a powerful message of social equality and brotherhood, reinforcing that unity in diversity is the nation's greatest strength. The Chief Minister also recalled the Jalli-



anwala Bagh massacre of April 13, 1919, stating that the brutal killing of innocent people by the British marked a painful chapter in India's history. He said the sacrifice of the martyrs gave new momentum to the freedom struggle and strengthened the spirit of independence among the people. **Train to Depart for Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded, Maharashtra on May 5** The Chief Minister informed that under the Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana, a special train will depart from Kurukshetra on May 5 to facilitate devotees' visit to Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded, Maharashtra. He added that earlier, on March 28, a train carrying more than 700 devotees was flagged off from Ambala for darshan of Ayodhya Dham. **Haryana Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee Formed in December 2022** Reiterating the State Government's commitment to the welfare of the Sikh community, the Chief Minister said that the Haryana Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee was constituted in December 2022, fulfilling a long-pending demand and ensuring greater autonomy for the community in the state. He further said that the State Government has celebrated the 550th Prakash Parv of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the 350th Prakash Parv of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji and the 400th Prakash Parv of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji at the state level in a grand manner. He added that in November last, several programmes were organized across the state to mark the 350th Shaheedi Diwas of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji. A state-level function was also organized at Jyotisar on November 25 in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, which was attended by Prime Minister, Sh. Narendra Modi, who released commemorative coins, a postage stamp and a coffee table book dedicated to Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji. **Jobs provided to 1984 riot-affected families** The Chief Minister said that the State Government has made a provision to provide employment to one member each of 121 families who lost

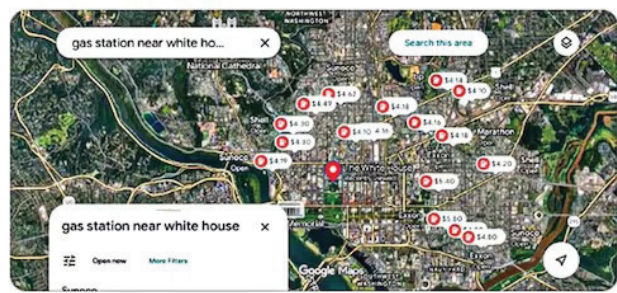
their kin during the 1984 riots. He added that appointment letters were distributed by Union Home Minister, Sh. Amit Shah during a programme held in Panchkula on December 24 on the occasion of Veer Bal Divas. He further informed that a forest is being developed in the name of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji at Kalesar in Yamunanagar district, along with the construction of a memorial gate in his honour. An agricultural college has also been announced in his name at Kishanpura in Yamunanagar. Additionally, Government Polytechnic College, Ambala has been renamed after Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, the Tohana-Jind-Dhamtan Sahib road has been named Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Marg, and the upcoming medical college in Yamunanagar will also be named after him. **Rs. 124 Crore Tender Issued for Sikh Museum in Kurukshetra** The Chief Minister said that a Sikh Museum will soon be developed in Umri, Kurukshetra, which will showcase

Sikh history, culture and the contributions of the Gurus. The museum will be constructed on five acres of land provided by the Kurukshetra Development Board. He informed that a tender worth Rs. 124 crore has already been issued by the Haryana Shabri Vikas Pradhikaran and work on the project will commence shortly. Speaking on the occasion, Gita Manishi Swami Gyananand Maharaj said that Baisakhi represents a celebration of glorious heritage, seasonal change and the message of Khalsa discipline. He added that the Chief Minister's vision and resolve are emerging as a source of inspiration for society. He also highlighted that Kurukshetra has witnessed the successful organization of International Gita Jayanti, with participation of more than 40 lakh people. Former Minister of State Sh. Subhash Sudha, OSD to Chief Minister Dr. Prabhleen Singh, Chairman Dharamvir Dagar and Dharamvir Mirzapur, and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

## What does Iran's mathematical warning to US over Hormuz mean?

In a post on X, Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf mocked the US's warning of a naval blockade on ships linked to Iranian ports, suggesting the move could ultimately rebound on American consumers by driving up fuel costs.

$\Delta O_{BSOH} > 0 \Rightarrow f(f(O)) > f(O)$



As tensions escalate over the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf has turned to an unusual weapon — mathematics — to deliver a pointed warning to US President Donald Trump over his new threat to choke off the Islamic Republic's maritime access. Following the collapse of the US-Iran ceasefire talks, Trump on Sunday announced that the US will move ahead with a sweeping naval blockade targeting Iranian-linked maritime traffic. Acting on his directive, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) said it would begin enforcing the blockade from 10 am ET today (7:30 pm IST). In response to the latest US threat, Ghalibaf

shared a mathematical formula on X suggesting that even a small disruption in oil flows could trigger disproportionately large economic consequences. Social media users have interpreted the formula — “O\_BSOH > 0 f(f(O)) > f(O)” — as an engineering-style taunt, reflecting the Speaker's technical background.

While “BSOH” refers to a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, “O\_BSOH > 0” suggests any increase in the blockade's impact on oil supply and prices. The equation essentially argues that any increase in pressure on the Strait of Hormuz would not just raise oil prices, but amplify them through cascading market reactions. At its core, the idea is

simple: an initial shock to oil supply leads to a price spike, but that spike then triggers secondary effects — panic buying, supply chain disruptions, speculative trading — which push prices even higher. In effect, the economic impact compounds on itself. Ghalibaf's equation came alongside a broader taunt aimed at Washington's latest move. In his post, he mocked the decision by pointing to petrol prices near the White House — warning Americans they may soon look back at current rates with nostalgia. “Enjoy the current pump figures,” he wrote, cautioning that Americans could soon grow “nostalgic” for \$4–\$5 per gallon fuel if tensions escalate.

## Don't care if they come back or not: Trump shrugs off Iran after talks collapse

President Donald Trump's remarks came a day after the US and Iran sat for a permanent peace agreement in Islamabad which failed to yield any result.



President Donald Trump on Monday said that he is unconcerned about whether Iran returns to negotiations with the United States after ceasefire talks in Pakistan failed to yield a deal.

“I don't care if they come back or not. If they don't come back, I am fine,” Trump told reporters at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland after returning from Florida.

Furthermore, the US President said that during the weekend ceasefire talks in Islamabad, led by Vice President JD Vance, Iran indicated it was seeking a nuclear weapon. “They still want it, and they made that clear the other night. Iran will not have a nuclear weapon,” he asserted. Even when the US delegation was holding ceasefire talks with the Iranian team in Islamabad, Trump

had said that it will make “no difference” to him whether a deal is reached with Tehran. “Regardless of what happens, we win,” he told reporters outside the White House on Saturday. “Maybe they make a deal, maybe they don't, it doesn't matter. From the standpoint of America, we win,” he added. The United States and Iran wrapped up 21 hours of face-to-face talks in Islamabad without a deal, leaving the future of the fragile two-week ceasefire uncertain. “The simple fact is that we need to see an affirmative commitment that they will not seek a nuclear weapon, and they will not seek the tools that would enable them to quickly achieve a nuclear

weapon,” Vice President JD Vance told reporters yesterday. The US delegation led by Vance and the Iranian team headed by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf discussed ways to move forward on a ceasefire already under strain from deep differences and ongoing Israeli strikes on Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Iran's president also said that his country is prepared to reach a “balanced and fair” agreement. The collapse of talks has weakened hopes of reopening the Strait of Hormuz to stabilise global energy markets, while uncertainty remains over whether the US will restart its military offensive against Iran.



## Have untapped leverage to counter: Iran warns Trump on naval blockade move

The Iranian official's warning came shortly after Trump announced that the US Navy would move to blockade ships entering or exiting the Strait of Hormuz, following the collapse of ceasefire talks between Washington and Tehran.

An Iranian official has warned that Tehran holds “untapped leverage” to counter a proposed US naval blockade, dismissing the move as bound to fail amid rising tensions in the Middle East. Citing what he described as a prior American setback in efforts linked to the Strait of Hormuz, Mohsen Rezaee, a member of Iran's Expediency Council, argued that Washington would face a similar outcome again. “Just as America suffered a historic defeat against Iran in opening the Strait of Hormuz, it is also doomed to defeat in a naval blockade,” he was quoted as saying by the IRIB state broadcaster. Furthermore, Rezaee warned that any attempt by the United States to impose a blockade would meet firm resistance from Iran's armed forces. “Iran's armed forces will not allow America to do so. We have great untapped leverage to counter it. Iran is not a place to be surrounded by tweets and imaginary plans,” he added. The remarks came shortly after US President Donald Trump announced that the US Navy would move to blockade ships entering or exiting the Strait of Hormuz, following the collapse of ceasefire talks between Washington and Tehran in Pakistan. The US Central Command said the blockade would begin on Monday at 10 am EDT (7:30 pm India time) and would apply to all Iranian ports. It added that

enforcement would be ‘impartial’ and extend to vessels of all nationalities, though ships transiting between non-Iranian ports would still be allowed passage through the strait. The development followed a 21-hour of marathon talks between US and Iranian delegations in Islamabad that ended without an agreement, leaving the already fragile two-week ceasefire in doubt. Meanwhile, three leading Hebrew television networks reported on Sunday that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is preparing for a possible escalation with Iran, following the collapse of ceasefire talks between the United States and Tehran. The reports appeared to stem from a coordinated leak by defence officials, according to a report by The Times of Israel. The developments came days after a Pakistan-brokered, two-week ceasefire took effect, and within hours of talks in Islamabad ending without an agreement to permanently halt the conflict. The Middle East conflict, now in its seventh week, has claimed thousands of lives and triggered sharp volatility in global markets. Shipping data reflected the immediate impact of the announcement. According to Lloyd's List Intelligence, vessel movement through the Strait of Hormuz briefly halted after Trump's recent statement, with at least two ships reversing course. Traffic had only recently begun to recover after a temporary pause in hostilities. Oil markets remain highly sensitive to the escalation. Brent crude, which was trading near USD 70 per barrel before the conflict intensified in late February, has surged to highs above USD 119. Prices later eased, with Brent for June delivery settling at USD 95.20 per barrel on Friday, down 0.8 per cent.

## Pakistan vessels allowed through Hormuz after brief denial

KARACHI: (APR 13)

Two merchant ships from Pakistan were allowed to cross the Strait of Hormuz and sail to Kuwait and the UAE on Monday after initially being denied permission to pass. Two merchant ships, Shalimar and Khaipur, of the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) are the first Pakistani ships to go into the Persian Gulf since the war broke out between Iran, the US and Israel. Initially, the two ships were stopped by Iranian authorities and told to go back from the Strait of Hormuz on Sunday, a PNSC official said.

## Two ships from Pakistan arrive in Sri Lanka for bilateral naval exercise

COLOMBO: (APR 13)

Two ships from Pakistan have arrived in Colombo to take part in a bilateral naval exercise, the Sri Lankan Navy said on Monday. Two Pakistani naval ships, Taimur and Aslat, reached the port of Colombo on Sunday and will remain in the island nation until April 26, Commander Buddhika Sampath, a spokesman for the Sri Lanka Navy, said. Sampath said that the training ships from Pakistan are on a “goodwill visit” to the country and will “take part in a bilateral naval exercise themed Lion Star V with the Sri Lanka Navy.”

# Trump warns China of 50% tariffs for aiding Iran. Then offers cheaper oil deal

The threat follows intelligence assessments reportedly claiming Beijing could be preparing shipments of air defence systems to Iran, possibly routed through third countries to avoid detection. The US President is scheduled to visit Beijing next month for talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping.



US President Donald Trump has opened a new front in the Iran crisis — targeting China. The US President said Beijing could face staggering 50 per cent tariffs if it is found supplying weapons to Iran, even as he simultaneously pitched an offer: buy cheaper oil from the United States instead. The remarks, delivered during a Fox News interview, come at a

moment when tensions are already running high after failed US-Iran talks and Washington's decision to move towards a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. Responding to reports that China may be preparing to supply military equipment to Iran, he said the consequences would be immediate and severe. “I doubt they would do that... If we catch them doing

that, they get a 50 percent tariff, which is a staggering — that's a staggering amount,” Trump said. The threat follows intelligence assessments reportedly claiming Beijing could be preparing shipments of air defence systems to Iran, possibly routed through third countries to avoid detection. The US President is scheduled to visit Beijing next month for talks with

Chinese President Xi Jinping. He has previously used tariffs as a geopolitical tool, targeting both rivals and allies. However, linking trade penalties directly to military support in an active conflict marks a notable escalation in how economic leverage is being deployed.

### TRUMP'S TARIFF THREAT COMES WITH CHEAPER OIL PITCH

Even as he issued a warning, he also made an unexpected pitch to China by offering to supply oil at competitive rates. “China can send their ships to us to Venezuela... we have a lot of overcapacity, and we'll probably sell (oil) for even less money (than Iran),” he said. The developments come in the wake of marathon talks between the United States and Iran in Islamabad, which ended without a deal despite progress

on several issues. US Vice President JD Vance, who led the American delegation, said the negotiations failed to produce agreement on key demands, including restrictions on Iran's nuclear programme. Trump, meanwhile, said Iran had been “unyielding” on its nuclear ambitions and had failed to meet conditions tied to the ceasefire, including reopening the Strait of Hormuz. Following the collapse of talks, Trump ordered a naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical oil routes. “Effective immediately, the United States Navy, the Finest in the World, will begin the process of BLOCKADING any and all Ships trying to enter, or leave, the Strait of Hormuz,” he said. “Any Iranian who fires at us, or at peaceful vessels, will be BLOWN TO HELL!” he said.

## UK won't back Trump on Hormuz, NATO rift widens

Speaking amid rising tensions after the US announced a maritime blockade targeting Iranian-linked traffic, Starmer said Britain would not be drawn into the conflict without a clear legal basis and a well-defined plan.



British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Monday that whatever the pressure, Britain would not be dragged into the Iran war nor be involved in a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. “We're not supporting the blockade,” he told BBC Radio 5 Live, add-

ing that it was vital to get the Strait reopened. “It is, in my view, vital that we get the Strait open and fully open, and that's where we've put all of our efforts in the last few weeks and we'll continue to do so,” Starmer said. Britain had

minesweepers in the region, he said, and while he could not discuss operational matters, the military capability was “focused from our point of view on getting the Strait fully open”. Starmer said Britain was facing pressure to join

the war, but he would not do so unless there was a “clear lawful basis” and a “clear thought-through plan”. “My decision has been very clearly that whatever the pressure, and there's been some considerable pressure, we're not getting dragged into the war,” he said. The US military said it would begin a blockade of all maritime traffic entering and exiting Iranian ports and coastal areas on Monday, after weekend talks failed to reach a deal to end the war with Iran. The US Central Command said that the US blockade, starting at 10 am ET on Monday (1400 GMT), would be “enforced im-

partially against vessels of all nations entering or departing Iranian ports and coastal areas, including all Iranian ports on the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman.” Vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz to and from non-Iranian ports will not be impeded, the US military said. President Donald Trump said on Sunday US forces would also intercept every vessel in international waters that had paid a toll to Iran. “No one who pays an illegal toll will have safe passage on the high seas,” Trump wrote on social media, adding: “Any Iranian who fires at us, or at peaceful vessels, will be BLOWN TO HELL!”

## Pakistan: Policeman killed, four injured in attack on polio team in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 13

A police constable was killed and four others injured after law enforcement party heading to provide security for polio teams in Hangu district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday, local media reported. Social media trends The incident happened in Thall tehsil of Hangu on the first day of vaccination campaign scheduled for April 13-19. In a statement, the Hangu District police said that unidentified assailants opened fire on a police

party, killing a police personnel and injuring four others, Pakistan's leading daily Dawn reported. The injured police personnel were rushed to the hospital for the treatment. Following the incident, a search operation was initiated in the area to find the attackers. Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two countries in the world where Wild Poliovirus remains endemic. Polio workers in Pakistan have been frequently targeted in attacks, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

# Iran doesn't need nukes — it has oil choke points

Iran did not win this war with a nuclear bomb. It won it with a door. And it still has the key.

There is a ceasefire now. A fragile, shaky, two-week pause between the United States and Iran, announced on 8 April, brokered by Pakistan, celebrated on Truth Social by a president who had warned just hours earlier that “a whole civilisation will die tonight.” The deadline passed. Trump blinked. And Iran got what it wanted, not because of its missiles, not because of its drones, and not because of the nuclear programme that Washington spent the last decade trying to dismantle. Iran got what it wanted because it controls something far more powerful than a warhead. It controls the plumbing of the global economy.

When the United States and Israel launched Operation Epic

Fury on 28 February, nearly 900 strikes in 12 hours, Iran did not try to match American firepower. It did not launch a suicidal conventional war. It did something more elegant, more devastating, and far more difficult to reverse. It closed a door. The Strait of Hormuz is 33 miles wide at its narrowest point and it is the only maritime exit from the Persian Gulf. Twenty million barrels of oil pass through it every single day. That is one fifth of everything the world consumes. Saudi Arabia's oil. Iraq's oil. The UAE's oil. Qatar's gas. All of it squeezes through this single strip of water between Iran and Oman. Iran closed it, and within days Dubai crude hit 166 dollars a barrel, the highest price ever recorded. California's petrol prices crossed five dollars a gallon. The International Energy Agency called it the worst disruption in the history of the oil market. Thirty-two

nations released emergency reserves. The global economy did not just shiver. It convulsed. All of that from closing a door. No nuclear weapon required. Former Israeli Deputy National Security Adviser Professor Chuck Freilich put it plainly in an exclusive interview. The stated objectives of this war, regime change, ending Iran's nuclear capability, reducing its missile arsenal, none of them have been achieved. Not one. “There is no doubt that Iran's military capabilities have been substantially degraded, and that is the military success,” he said. “The problem is that the objectives when the war began were regime change, ending their nuclear capability, and if not ending it, at least significantly reducing their missile capability. None of those objectives have been achieved. Iran has even ended the war, at least for now, with the ability to close off the Gulf



to shipping, creating an international financial and oil crisis.” A military success. A strategic failure. Those are not the words of an Iran sympathiser. They are the words of a man who helped build Israel's national security architecture. The ceasefire terms tell the full story of who actually won. Under the arrangement, the United States has agreed to halt strikes. Iran retains control of the Strait of Hormuz. According to the Associated Press, citing a

regional official directly involved in the negotiations, the deal allows Iran and Oman to charge tolls for ships passing through, a revenue stream Tehran could use to rebuild its own military. Iran's 10-point peace plan, which Iranian state media describes as including continued Iranian control over the Strait, acceptance of uranium enrichment, the lifting of all primary and secondary sanctions, and the withdrawal of US combat forces from the

demonstrated during the Gaza war that they can reduce Red Sea traffic by 70 per cent without physically blocking the strait. A senior adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader said it plainly on social media: “The unified command of the Resistance front views Bab el-Mandeb as it does Hormuz. If the White House dares to repeat its foolish mistakes, it will soon realise that the flow of global energy and trade can be disrupted with a single move.” Hormuz plus Bab el-Mandeb plus the Suez Canal that depends on Bab el-Mandeb. A nuclear weapon destroys a city. These two straits can destabilise the entire global economy without a single warhead leaving the ground. The ceasefire is already under strain. Within hours of it being announced, Israel launched Operation Eternal Darkness, what its own military called the largest coordinated strike on Leba-

non since the war began, hitting more than 100 targets within ten minutes across Beirut, southern Lebanon and the Bekaa valley. At least 303 people were killed and more than 1,150 wounded, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. Lebanon called it Black Wednesday. Iran accused Israel of violating the ceasefire and the IRGC warned of consequences. As of today, Iran is still using its Larak Island as a toll booth, with 426 tankers, 34 LPG carriers and 19 LNG vessels stranded in the region and around 20,000 seafarers trapped on ships waiting to be evacuated. That is not a victory. That is a standoff in which Iran is charging rent on a waterway it does not legally own, and America, for now, is paying. When asked directly whether Iran's control over Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb gives it leverage comparable to nuclear power, Professor Freilich did not disagree.

## India-Oman CEPA to unlock new trade, investment opportunities: Piyush Goyal

NEW DELHI, APRIL 13



The minister shared details of his telephonic conversation with Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Anwar bin Hilal bin Hamdoun Al Jabri, stating that both sides explored ways to deepen economic engagement between the two countries.

In a post on social media platform X, Goyal said the discussions focused on leveraging the India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to enhance trade flows and investment opportunities.

The agreement, signed in Muscat in December 2025, is yet to be imple-

mented but is expected to significantly strengthen economic ties once it comes into force.

"Held a telecall with H.E. Anwar bin Hilal bin Hamdoun Al Jabri, Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion," Goyal said.

"Discussed unlocking opportunities under the India-Oman CEPA to boost bilateral trade and investment ties for the mutual growth of both nations," he added. Under the proposed CEPA, about 98 per cent of India's exports -- including textiles, agricultural products and leather goods -- are set to receive duty-free access to the Oman market. In return, India will reduce tariffs on key Omani exports such

as dates, marble and petrochemical products, paving the way for more balanced trade. The latest engagement is part of a series of high-level interactions by Goyal with key partners in the Gulf region.

In recent days, he has held discussions with trade ministers from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Kuwait to expand India's economic footprint in West Asia.

India and Oman share a strong and longstanding trade relationship, with bilateral trade reaching about \$10.5 billion in 2024-25.

Of this, India's exports stood at around \$4 billion, while imports were valued at \$6.54 billion.

## Nifty, Sensex trim losses amid last leg buying; defence stocks shine

MUMBAI, APRIL 13

Indian equity benchmarks recovered sharply from their intra-day lows on Monday, helped by buying in defence stocks, even as broader sentiment remained cautious due to ongoing geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

The Nifty closed 0.86 per cent, or 207.95 points, lower at 23,842.65, while the Sensex ended the session down 0.91 per cent, or 702.68 points, at 76,847.57.

Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, experts said that going ahead, 23,900 is likely to continue acting as immediate resistance, followed by the key psychological level of 24,000.

"On the downside, the 23,500-23,600 band remains a crucial support area, where strong buying interest has been observed," an analyst stated.

"A break below this zone could expose the index to further downside toward 23,300 and 23,000, both supported by open interest build-up and prior price structure," a market expert

added. Both indices had slipped deeper into the red earlier in the day but managed to pare losses in the second half of trade.

Market participants remained on edge as they tracked developments in West Asia, which continued to influence investor sentiment and risk appetite.

Among individual stocks on the Nifty, HDFC Life Insurance Company, ICICI Bank, and Adani Enterprises emerged as the top gainers, lending some support to the benchmark index.

Among Sensex stocks, Axis Bank, NTPC and ICICI Bank was the three shares that managed to stay in green.

On the other side, Maruti Suzuki India, IndiGo, Bajaj Finance and TCS was among most laggards by dropping up to 4.6 per cent.

The broader markets also mirrored the recovery seen in frontline indices, although they still ended in negative territory.

The Nifty MidCap index declined 0.54 per cent, while

the Nifty SmallCap index slipped 0.38 per cent, both closing off their respective day's lows.

On the sectoral front, selling pressure was most pronounced in the auto and oil and gas stocks, with the Nifty Auto and Nifty Oil and Gas indices registering the sharpest declines.

The FMCG and IT sectors also remained under pressure, contributing to the overall weakness in the market.

In contrast, the Nifty Metal index showed relative resilience, posting the least decline among sectoral peers.

Notably, the Nifty India Defence index stood out, outperforming most thematic indices during the session, as investors showed renewed interest in defence stocks amid the uncertain geopolitical backdrop.

Analysts said that while the late-session recovery provided some relief, the markets ended lower, reflecting continued caution among investors in a volatile global environment.

# Manufacturing, Exports Face Double Blow

NEW DELHI

India's manufacturing sector is facing mounting pressure from labour shortages and rising input costs, triggered by global supply chain disruptions linked to the ongoing West Asia conflict, industry representatives have said. Gaurav Munjal, Managing Director of Hero Ecotech Ltd, said input costs rose by 10-15% in March compared to the previous month. The company, a major exporter of bicycles to the US and Europe, is also grappling with the impact of higher US tariffs on trade.

The Federation of Indian Export Organisations estimated that merchandise exports declined by 7-10% in March due to supply chain disruptions. FIEO President S C Ralhan said goods exports could fall by 2-3% in the full financial year 2025-26. However, he noted that combined exports of goods and services may still grow by 5-6%, supported by resilient services exports. According to official data, merchandise exports stood at \$402.93 billion during the first 11 months of FY26, while total exports reached \$790.86 billion. In FY25, overall exports were recorded at \$825.3 billion, including \$437.7 billion from merchandise shipments.



The Union Commerce Ministry is expected to release March and full FY26 trade data later this week.

Manufacturers are also reporting a shortage of workers. Sanjoo Tandon, Vice President at Eastman Auto and Power Ltd, said many workers who left for their hometowns during the Holi festival in late February and early March have not returned. Industry leaders indicated that uncertainty and economic pressures have discouraged labourers, prompting

them to remain in their villages.

Exporters are also struggling with logistics challenges, including rising freight costs and limited availability of shipping containers. Amit Marwaha of DRRK Foods Pvt Ltd said rice exports have been impacted by logistical bottlenecks and payment settlement issues.

Shipments of basmati rice to key West Asia markets such as Iran, Iraq and GCC nations have been disrupted since early March due to the on-

going geopolitical tensions involving the US, Israel and Iran. Although recent ceasefire signals and diplomatic engagements have offered some relief, exporters remain cautious as uncertainty persists in the region.

Industry representatives believe that it could take several months for conditions to stabilise, as supply chains, labour availability and export demand continue to be affected by the evolving geopolitical situation.

## BoB, Reliance Jio launch 'bob World Lite' for feature phones

Mumbai, April 13: Bank of Baroda and Reliance Jio have announced a strategic partnership to launch bob World Lite, a mobile banking application designed specifically for feature phone users, marking a major step toward digital inclusion in India.

The application will debut on the JioPhone Prima 4G and aims to deliver a comprehensive suite of banking services to users without smartphones. The initiative aligns with the Government of India and Reserve Bank of India's vision to expand digital payments among underserved populations, particu-

larly in semi-urban and rural areas. Unlike conventional apps, bob World Lite features a lightweight, low-bandwidth design with keypad navigation, ensuring ease of use on feature phones. It enables essential services such as UPI-enabled Scan & Pay, fund transfers, bill payments, mobile recharges, and profile management, with additional features expected in future updates.

The app will come pre-installed on JioPhone Prima 4G devices and will also be available for download via JioStore. It supports a simple self-onboarding process, allowing not only Bank of

Baroda customers but also users from other banks to access its services. Commenting on the launch, Debajyoti Chand, Managing Director and CEO of Bank of Baroda, said the initiative underscores the bank's commitment to expanding digital banking beyond smartphones and bridging the digital divide.

Sunil Dutt, President of Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited, said the partnership advances Jio's mission of making digital services affordable and accessible, enabling millions to access seamless banking.



## Vijay Sales Launches 'Apple Days 2026' Sale with Major Discounts Across Apple Products

HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

Vijay Sales has announced the return of its much-anticipated "Apple Days" sale, offering a wide range of deals on Apple products across its retail stores and online platform. The sale, which began on April 11, will continue until April 16, 2026. The limited-period event features discounts and exchange offers on the latest Apple devices, including the newly launched iPhone 17 series, MacBooks, iPads, AirPods, and more. Customers can avail instant discounts of up to ₹7,000 on select bank cards, along with exchange bonuses of up to ₹10,000 on eligible products.

Among the highlights, the iPhone 17 is available starting



at ₹78,790, while the iPhone 17e begins at ₹60,490. The premium iPhone 17 Pro and Pro Max models are priced from ₹1,24,190 and ₹1,38,390 respectively, inclusive of bank discounts. The newly introduced iPhone Air is also part of the lineup, starting at ₹90,990.

Previous-generation models are also being offered at attractive prices, with the iPhone 16 starting at ₹66,490, the iPhone 16e at ₹53,690, and the iPhone 15 available

from ₹56,900. In the computing segment, the newly launched MacBook Neo starts at ₹60,290, while the MacBook Air lineup begins at ₹1,03,290. The MacBook Pro series, powered by advanced processors, is available from ₹1,75,390. Discounts on these devices include instant savings of up to ₹7,000, depending on the bank card used.

The sale also extends to iPads, with the 11th-generation model starting at ₹30,490. The

benefit from Vijay Sales' MyVS loyalty program, earning reward points equivalent to 0.75% of their purchase value, redeemable in-store. The retailer is also offering up to 20% off on Apple Care+ and Protect+ plans, along with special pricing on select open-box and display units, available in limited quantities.

Speaking on the occasion, Nilesch Gupta, Director of Vijay Sales, stated that the initiative aims to combine cutting-edge technology with greater accessibility through competitive pricing and added benefits.

With over 160 outlets nationwide, Vijay Sales continues to strengthen its position in the electronics retail sector by offering value-driven deals and a wide product range during its flagship sales events.

## Crisis Impact: Asia Growth Seen at 5.1%

New Delhi, April 13:

Economic growth across Asia is expected to slow to 5.1% in 2026, down from 5.4% in 2025, amid escalating tensions in West Asia, according to the Asian Development Outlook report by the Asian Development Bank. The report, prepared during the ongoing Iran conflict, assumes oil prices will gradually stabilise by the end of the year, though volatility remains high due to evolving geopolitical developments. India's growth is projected to ease to 6.9% in 2026 from 7.6% last year, while China is expected to see growth moderate to 4.6% from 5%, with subdued private consumption weighing on its economy. Inflation across the region is likely to rise to 3.6% this year from 3% in 2025, largely driven by higher energy prices. Crude oil markets have already reacted sharply, with US crude rising to \$104.24 per barrel.

## RXIL Becomes First TReDS Platform to Cross Rs. 3 Lakh Crore Invoice Financing Milestone

HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

Receivables Exchange of India Ltd (RXIL), an RBI-regulated Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS), has crossed a landmark ₹3,00,000 crore in cumulative invoice financing, becoming the first platform in India to achieve the milestone. The platform recorded a total throughput of ₹1,21,105 crore in FY26, marking a robust 51% growth, reflecting rising adoption and increased participation from MSMEs, corporates, and financiers.

RXIL has emerged as a key pillar in strengthening India's MSME financing ecosystem, onboarding over 72,000 MSMEs and 3,400 corporate buyers, while facilitating financing for more than 1.2 crore invoices since inception. The platform enables MSMEs to convert approved receiva-

bles into cash within 24 hours without collateral through a transparent bidding system, significantly improving liquidity and credit access.

Notably, after reaching ₹2,00,000 crore in July 2025, RXIL added another ₹1,00,000 crore in just eight months, underscoring its rapid growth trajectory.

Commenting on the achievement, Manoj Mittal, Chairman of RXIL and CMD of Small Industries Development Bank of India, said the growing relevance of the TReDS ecosystem highlights its role in addressing MSME working capital needs through efficient and transparent digital mechanisms. He stressed that broader participation from buyers and financiers will be crucial to unlocking its full potential.

The milestone reflects the combined efforts of the Government of India, the Re-

serve Bank of India, and RXIL's promoter institutions, including SIDBI, National Stock Exchange of India, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, and Yes Bank.

Over the years, RXIL has played a significant role in transforming the TReDS landscape by connecting buyers, sellers, and financiers on a unified digital platform, streamlining payment cycles and enhancing working capital efficiency. With the Union Budget 2026 placing renewed emphasis on expanding the TReDS ecosystem, the platform is expected to see further growth and deeper credit penetration among MSMEs. As India moves towards its 'Viksit Bharat' vision, RXIL aims to further expand access to formal credit and strengthen the trade finance ecosystem for enterprises across the country.

# Haa Valley, Bhutan

## The Hidden Himalayan Gem That Most Travellers Miss

Most Indians who visit Bhutan come back talking about Tiger's Nest, Punakha Dzong, and the charming streets of Thimphu. All of it is completely worth it. But there is a corner of this Kingdom of Happiness that barely makes it onto itineraries, despite sitting just two and a half hours from Paro airport. It is called Haa Valley, and it is the kind of place that makes you feel like you

have stumbled onto something you were not supposed to find. No large tour groups, no crowded viewpoints, no Instagram queues. Just a wide, green, unhurried valley flanked by the Himalayas, with a small town that looks like it has been quietly going about its business for centuries. If you have been to Bhutan and not seen Haa, you have a very good reason to go back.



### The Haa Summer Festival

Being home to a number of nomadic herders, Haa hosts an annual summer festival showcasing their unique lifestyle and culture. This is one of the more authentic Bhutanese festivals you can attend, precisely because it has not been packaged for tourism. The energy is local, the rituals are real, and the experience of watching nomadic traditions play out in a mountain valley is not something you forget easily. The festival typically takes place in July or August.

### Flora, Fauna, and the Landscape

The Haa Valley has been blessed with rich natural biodiversity. The altitude ranges from 2,000 to 5,000 metres, and over 250 species of plants, including the blue poppy (the national flower of Bhutan) and white poppy, which is endemic to Haa, thrive here. Many endangered animals like the Bengal tiger, the elusive snow leopard, the Himalayan black bear, the Himalayan musk deer, and the Himalayan marmot call the Haa valley home. Of the 45 different bird species identified here, the most significant ones include the Himalayan Monal and Satyr Tragopan. If you are a birder or a wildlife enthusiast, this

valley should already be at the top of your Bhutan list.

A Practical Travel Guide for Indians Getting There The only way to get to Haa Valley is by road, via Chele La Pass. You need to hire a taxi or car from Paro for the same. The place is just two and a half hours from Paro Airport. You can also get here from Thimphu, but you will still have to cross through Paro.

For Indian travellers, the nearest Indian airport for flying into Bhutan is Bagdogra. From there, you cross into Bhutan at Phuentsholing and travel overland, or you fly directly into Paro on Druk Air. The direct Paro flight is available from Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore, and Mumbai.

### Permits

Visiting Haa Valley requires a route permit in addition to the standard Bhutan visa. Ask your registered Bhutanese tour operator to arrange this in advance. You cannot enter Haa without it, so sort this out before you arrive. The process is straightforward as long as your operator knows what they are doing.

As of 2024, Indian citizens entering Bhutan through designated land ports like Phuentsholing do not require a visa but do need a valid Indi-

### What to See: The Landmarks Worth Your Time

Lhakhang Karpo and Lhakhang Nagpo In Haa, two landmarks are steeped in legend. Songtsen Gampo, a Dharma king, released a white and a black dove near Miri Punsum. The white dove settled at a mountain base, leading to the construction of Lhakhang Karpo (White temple), while the black dove stopped near a lake, resulting in Lhakhang Nagpo (Black temple). These temples, near Haa's Royal headquarters, house Buddhist monks and a monk school. Lhakhang Karpo is serene, contrasting with Bhutan's bustling temples. Lhakhang Nagpo, with its black walls, hosts the deity Da Do Chen and has a floor opening to a lake with the mermaid spirit Tshomen.

### Haa Dzong

Haa Dzong, formerly known as Wangchuk Lo Dzong, was built in 1915 to replace an earlier structure from the late 19th century. Compared to some of the grand dzongs seen elsewhere in Bhutan, this one feels modest and more intimate. It does not have towering walls or imposing courtyards, but its simplicity gives it a quiet dignity. It is the kind of place where you can sit in the courtyard without another tourist in sight, watch monks go about their day, and feel genuinely peaceful.

an passport or Voter ID card, along with a permit issued at the border. Flying into Paro requires an e-visa. Always check the current requirements at the Royal Bhutan Government's official channels before you travel, as these rules have been updated in recent years.

### Where to Stay

It is advisable to book ahead at a homestay if you want to stay in the valley. There is no

large resort or hotel in Haa. This is actually a feature, not a limitation. Staying with a local Haap family in a traditional farmhouse is one of those travel experiences that you cannot get in Phuket or Bali. Risum Resort, a highly regarded homestay in the valley, books up quickly during peak season.

### What to Pack

It can get quite chilly even in April, so a down jacket is

required for comfort. Add warm layers, solid walking shoes, and sunscreen for the high-altitude sun. It is advisable to carry sufficient drinking water and food from Paro, as there are limited eating-out options in the valley.

### The Food

You will want to eat ema datshi, the national dish of Bhutan, made with chillies and Bhutanese cheese, which is spicy, creamy, and exactly what you want after a mountain day. A dried variety of yak cheese called "Habi Ruto" is a speciality of this region. Red rice is served with almost every meal and has a slightly nutty, earthy flavour that grows on you fast.

### Why Indian Travellers in Particular Should Come Here

There is something specific about Haa that resonates with Indian travellers. The India-Bhutan friendship is visible and tangible here in a way it is not elsewhere. On the outskirts of Haa town stands a large Indian military base. Indian forces train the Bhutanese army here as part of a long-standing agreement between the two nations. There is even a golf course built and maintained with the help of the Indian army. You are not a stranger here. The relation-

### The Valley That Stayed Hidden

Haa Valley was a well-kept secret of the country and was off the tourist map until 2002. Think about that for a moment. While the rest of Bhutan was carefully opening itself up to visitors, this particular valley remained entirely closed. That enforced seclusion, as it turns out, is one of the best things that ever happened to it. Located in the southwestern zone of Paro, it is the smallest district of

Bhutan. Once the main commercial gateway to Sikkim, India, and Chumbi in Tibet, Haa held such historical importance that India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, explored this region on horseback through this route in 1958. The name "Haa" connotes a hidden quality, which is why it is also referred to as the Land of Hidden Rice Valleys. The green stretch of land with

the mighty Haa Chu River flowing from the surrounding Himalayan mountains is one of the smallest dzongs or district areas of Bhutan. The place is the ancestral home of the Queen Grandmother and the Dorji family and has quite a history when it comes to Buddhism. That connection to Bhutanese royalty gives it a quiet distinction that you can feel even if you do not know the history.

### The Drive In: Chele La Pass

You cannot reach Haa without crossing Chele La Pass, and this is not a hardship. It is one of the great drives of the Himalayas. After about an hour and a half of steady climbing, the Himalayan range stretches across the horizon. Among the peaks stands Liang Gangkangri, Bhutan's second-highest mountain at 7,535 metres. A few minutes further brings you to Chele La Pass, the highest motorable road in Bhutan at 3,988 metres. Despite its height and beauty, the pass remains surprisingly undeveloped. Prayer flags flap wildly in the wind, their colours vivid against the snow-dusted peaks. The sheer number of prayer flags strung across the mountain is mesmerising, covering every available surface, a living patchwork of red, blue, green, white, and yellow, sending their blessings out into the vast open air. As you climb higher on those winding roads, the apple farms turn into pleasing stretches of purple primulas and colourful rhododendrons and finally, tall alpine forests. In spring, this drive is almost embarrassingly beautiful.

### The Valley Itself: What Waits on the Other Side

From the high pass, the road snakes downwards into the Haa Valley, one of Bhutan's least developed and most traditional regions. The descent is spectacular. The landscape softens as altitude drops, the stark mountain slopes giving way to terraced farms and small clusters of traditional houses. The air feels warmer, and farmers can be seen working in their fields below. The valley floor is a patchwork of gold and green, dotted with barns and stone walls.

Everything here seems slower, simpler, and deeply rooted in the land. The livelihood of the people of the Haa Valley mainly depends on agriculture. In its fertile valleys, people grow mostly high-altitude crops like wheat, potatoes, barley, and millet. The yak is considered a significant contributor to the economy of this region. People of the Haa valley are commonly known as "Haap." A set of unique cultural practices of this valley sets it apart from the rest of Bhutan. The Haap, unlike the rest of the world, celebrate the New Year much earlier. They celebrate New Year on the 29th day of the 10th month of the Bhutanese calendar, which falls in early November. The Haap New Year is known as "Lomba," meaning "To carry the year." For Indian travellers who love culture, this kind of detail is gold. You are not just visiting a pretty valley; you are stepping into a community that has its own distinct calendar, its own distinct rhythms, and a warmth that is genuinely disarming.

ship between the two countries is embedded in the landscape.

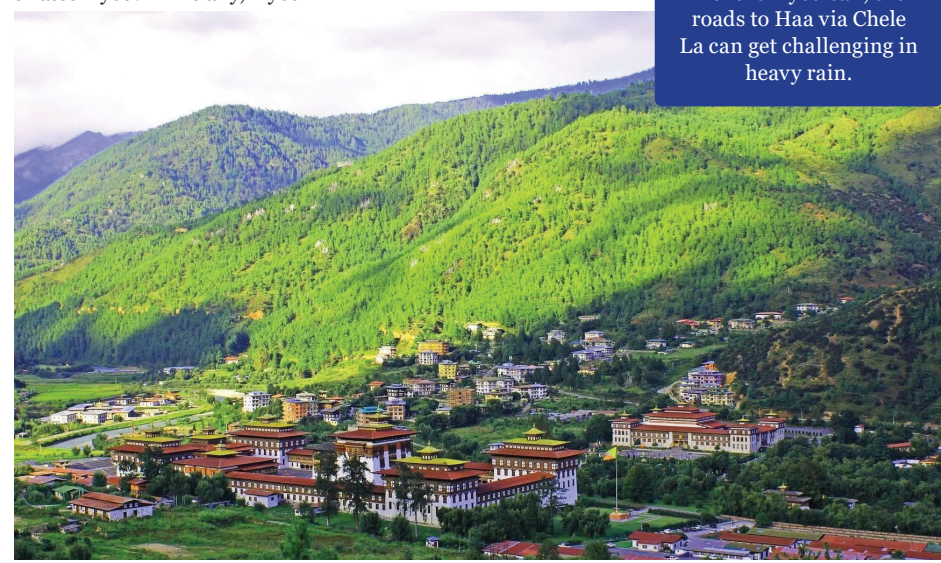
And then there is the simple matter of proximity. Bhutan is one of the most accessible international destinations for Indians. No jet lag, no culture shock, no dramatic cuisine adjustment (the spice levels will remind you of home). What you do get is a profound slowdown, a valley that seems untouched, and an experience of mountain life that feels genuine rather than staged.

A Place That Stays With You Haa Valley gradually captivates you. Initially, you

might question its offerings, but amidst the prayer wheels, yak herders, and morning mist, its charm unfolds. The air's stillness and the locals' joy envelop you, contrasting with the mechanical life elsewhere. Bhutan, known as the Kingdom of Happiness, showcases this in its popular spots, but Haa Valley offers a rarer, quieter happiness, unaware of being observed. Spend at least one night if possible. Visit in spring for flowers or autumn for clear skies, or anytime to remember the world's capacity for stillness.

### Best Time to Visit

Spring (March to May) is spectacular, with rhododendrons blooming along the Chele La Pass road and pleasant temperatures in the valley. Autumn (September to November) is considered the most rewarding time to visit Bhutan overall, with crisp, clear skies and cool temperatures ranging from 10°C to 20°C, ideal for mountain photography and trekking. Avoid the monsoon months if you can; the roads to Haa via Chele La can get challenging in heavy rain.



## 6 Things You Should Never Do On A Night Safari..

There's something wild and thrilling about heading into the dark heart of the wilderness after sunset. Night safaris are unforgettable — shadowy hyenas on the prowl, owls swooping overhead, the rustle of something unseen in the tall grass. Whether you're deep in the African bush or tucked into the tropical forests of Southeast Asia, the rules of the game change once the sun goes down. But before you hop on that 4x4 or sign up for a guided walk under the stars, there are a few important things you really shouldn't do. These aren't just little slip-ups — they could ruin your experience or, worse, put you (and the wildlife) in danger.

### 1. Use Flash Photography

Here Are 6 Things You Must Avoid Doing During A Night Safari:

Let's start with the biggie: Never, ever use flash when taking photos. While that glowing-eyed lion or prowling civet cat might be begging for an Instagram moment, a camera flash can completely disorient animals, disturb their natural behaviour, and in some cases even cause retinal damage — especially for creatures with sensitive night vision. Most reputable guides will warn you about this in front, but it's astonishing how many people ignore it for the 'perfect shot'. Stick to low-light settings or invest in a proper night photography setup if you're serious. Otherwise, just enjoy the view with your eyes — it's honestly better that way.

### 2. Wear Bright Or Reflective Clothing

Think neon jackets are fine because it's dark out? Think again. Bright colours and reflective materials can startle animals, draw unnecessary attention, or even spook your fellow safari-goers. Wildlife have evolved to operate in low light, and your hi-vis vest might throw everything off. Stick to neutral tones like olive, brown, grey, or black — these blend in with the surroundings and help minimise disturbance. Oh, and skip the cologne or perfume while you're at it — strong scents are just as off-putting to animals.

### 3. Make A Lot Of Noise

It might be tempting to crack jokes with your travel buddy or ask your guide a million questions, but silence is golden on a night safari. Loud chatter can scare away wildlife long before you see them — and you'll mostly end up watching the bush instead of the animals in it. Many creatures rely on sound to hunt, hide, or communicate, so your noise doesn't just affect your experience — it affects theirs, too. Save the commentary for after the drive, and soak in the sounds of the night while you're out there. It's honestly one of the best parts.

### 4. Wander Off From The Group

This should go without saying, but don't be that person who thinks it's fine to sneak a few steps into the undergrowth for a better view. Night safaris are carefully managed for a reason. Visibility is limited, terrain is unfamiliar, and predators are far more active once it's dark. Even if you're on foot with a guide, wandering off is not only reckless — it can be dangerous. Many animals rely on stealth and surprise, and you're not going to win a game of hide-and-seek with a leopard.

### 5. Use A Torch Without Asking

Some night safaris provide red-filtered torches, which are much gentler on wildlife eyes and help keep the natural view

intact. But pulling out your own blinding LED torch? Major faux pas. Sudden bursts of light can scare off animals or even provoke a defensive reaction. If you're dying to use your torch to spot something, ask your guide first. They know how to light up the night safely and responsibly.

### 6. Ignore Your Guide's Instructions

It doesn't matter how many nature documentaries you've seen — your guide is the expert here. They know the land, the animals, and how to stay safe. If they tell you to stay seated, stay seated. If they ask for quiet, zip it. Too many people think they can wing it or that the rules are optional. They're not. Night safaris operate under strict conservation protocols, and ignoring them isn't just rude — it can lead to dangerous situations or even fines in certain national parks.





# IPL 2026: Debutant Hinge picks scintillating four-fer as SRH end RR's winning run

## WOMEN'S CRICKET

### Macheke receives maiden call-up for SA's T20Is against India, Marx earns recall



**JOHANNESBURG:** South Africa have wicketkeeper batter Tebogo Macheke her first international call up while recalling all rounder Eliz Mari Marx in the 15 member squad to face India in a five match T20I series happening from April 17 to 27. The series against India is the Proteas' final assignment before the 2026 Women's T20 World Cup takes place in England in June. The first two games will be played in Durban on April 17 and 19, before the next two matches happen in Johannesburg on April 22 and 25. The series will conclude on April 27 in Benoni, coinciding with the Freedom Day in South Africa. Tebogo replaces Karabo Meso, who is sidelined with a wrist injury, while Eliz-Mari, who has nine ODI and ten T20I appearances for the Proteas, comes in for seamer Masabata Klaas in the side captained by Laura Wolvaardt.

## HYDERABAD

Debutant pacers Praful Hinge and Sakib Hussain announced themselves on the grand stage by picking eight wickets collectively as Sunrisers Hyderabad ended IPL 2026 table topper Rajasthan Royals winning juggernaut with a thumping 53-run win at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on Monday.

On a pitch where the odd ball was stopping, captain Ishan Kishan hammered eight fours and six sixes in his blistering 44-ball 91 as SRH posted a towering 216/6. Anything full and wide was crashed through the off side via Kishan's lightning hands, while short balls were dealt with authoritative pulls and whips for the SRH captain to bring up his 19th IPL fifty.

But that effort was overshadowed by a scintillating spell from Hinge, who was named to debut against Punjab Kings last week, but was later pipped by Jaydev Unadkat as the impact player. In a script that felt like a fairytale coming true, Nagpur-based Hinge became the first bowler in IPL history to claim a three-wicket haul in the opening over.

He broke the back of RR's mighty top order, including dismissing Vaibhav Sooryavanshi for a duck, to end up with 4-34. Hussain, hailing from Gopalganj in Bihar, provided the clinical finish and remained unflappable to pick 4-24, as RR were bowled out for 159 in 19 overs.

SRH's gamble of bleeding two debutants coming in place of experienced campaigners Unadkat and Harshal Patel proved to be a masterstroke. The victory is SRH's second in five games and catapults them to fourth spot on the points table. On the very first ball of his spell, Hinge did what the likes of Jasprit Bumrah and Josh Hazlewood hadn't managed to do this season: dismiss Sooryavanshi



cheaply. Sooryavanshi's eyes lit up on seeing the short ball and went for an expansive pull, but the top-edge was caught by keeper Salil Arora, leaving Hinge and SRH jubilant.

It was the start of a sensational spell for Hinge - on the very next ball, he had Dhruv Jurel chopping on to his stumps, before Lhuan-dre Pretorius flicked straight to long leg. From the other end, fellow debutant pacer Sakib Hussain got his first IPL scalp as Yashasvi Jaiswal upper-cut a short ball with extra bounce to deep backward point.

The nightmare continued for RR, as Hinge removed skipper Riyan Parag with a lovely outswinger, which he edged to

slip, as the inaugural champions lost five scalps even before the third over was completed. With the game's result rendered a foregone conclusion, Ravindra Jadeja and Donovan Ferreira steadied RR's ship with an aim to avoid having a huge dent on the net run rate. With the pair taking RR past 49, it meant they avoided the ignominy of the lowest score in the IPL.

The duo brought up the fifty of their stand off 35 balls, with Ferreira being lighting quick to pounce on anything loose from spinners Shivang Kumar and Harsh Dubey and sent them over the boundary ropes to bring up his maiden IPL half-century off just 31 deliveries.

But the 118-run stand, the highest for

a sixth wicket for RR, was broken when Sakib castled Ferreira with a slower ball, while Jadeja nicked behind off Eshan Malinga. More delight came for Sakib when he dismissed Jofra Archer and Ravi Bishnoi with consecutive slower while Malinga had Tushar Deshpande holing out to extra-cover and close a thumping win for SRH.

Long before the two debutants unleashed carnage, Archer silenced the sell-out Uppal crowd by dismissing Abhishek Sharma on the very first delivery, as he gave a thick edge to third man. It was Archer's fourth first-ball wicket in the IPL, while Abhishek bagged his seventh duck in T20s this year.

But Archer's second over burst his bubble as Kishan whipped him for four, before pulling a bouncer for six and launching Sandeep Sharma down the ground. Nandre Burger nearly dismissed Travis Head twice in the fourth over - a nip-backer took an inside edge for four, while a mistimed loft just evaded Archer.

But a rusty Head holed out to long-on off Riyan Parag just after SRH's fifty was raised in the power-play. Kishan marched forward to bring his fifty in 30 balls with a monstrous slog sweep off Ravi Bishnoi and brought up SRH's hundred by smacking Tushar Deshpande for six.

Kishan then smashed three boundaries off Deshpande via a wristy flick and a brace of slices, as 21 runs came off the 11th over and the fifty of his partnership with Heinrich Klaassen arrived in just 26 deliveries. Kishan continued to tear into Archer, carving him through backward point, long-on, and deep mid-wicket for three fours.

Following a floodlight failure break, Kishan fell nine runs short of his century, miscuing a pull off Sandeep to Jurel, who survived a collision with the pacer, while Klaassen chipped to extra cover off Archer for 40.

Nitish Reddy continued the boundary-hitting spree, pulling Deshpande for six before launching Sandeep for three maximums in his cameo of 28. Four boundaries from Arora, including a six over long-off to go past 200, ensured the hosts finished with a strong total before Hinge and Hussain stole the show with their brilliance.

**Brief Scores:** Sunrisers Hyderabad 216/6 in 20 overs (Ishan Kishan 91, Heinrich Klaassen 40; Jofra Archer 2-37, Riyan Parag 1-5) beat Rajasthan Royals 159 in 19 overs (Donovan Ferreira 69, Ravindra Jadeja 45; Sakib Hussain 4-24, Praful Hinge 4-34) by 57 runs

## IPL 2026: Preparation has been good and hopefully it's around the corner, says Allen

### NEW DELHI

Reflecting on his starts and overall approach, Finn Allen admitted that while he has made promising contributions in the powerplay for Kolkata Knight Riders, converting them into bigger scores remains a work in progress, stressing the importance of balancing aggression with consistency in T20 cricket.

KKR have had a tough start to their campaign this season. They went down by six wickets to the Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium and, upon returning home, suffered a crushing 65-run defeat against Sunrisers Hyderabad. Their third match against the Punjab Kings was abandoned due to rain, which gave them a solidarity point. They suffered a shocking defeat at the hands of Lucknow Super Giants in their last match. Leaving them with just



one point in four matches. "It's the nature of T20 cricket, trying to take the game on. It's only been a couple of games, so you can't judge too much. Personally, I've had good starts in the first two games, but I would have liked to kick on more. Preparation has been good and hopefully it's around the corner," said Allen.

"It's easy to get caught up in thinking you need to go harder, especially with an extra batter in the side. But for me, I know I can score quickly when I'm going well. It's about not getting carried away and finding the balance between giving yourself a chance to get set and playing positively."

The team has been losing the bowlers even before the start of the tournament. KKR lost Bangladeshi fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman after the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) asked the franchise to release him from the squad, and their prime pacer Harshit Rana was also ruled out due to injury. The Kolkata Knight Riders batter also credited Shane Watson for his calming influence and guidance, adding that the team's preparation has been solid as they look to execute better and get their campaign back on track in the upcoming clash against Chennai.

## Abrahams, Ndaba, Webster exit Proteas coaching staff ahead of Women's T20 WC

### JOHANNESBURG

Cricket South Africa (CSA) has announced the departure of batting coach Baakier Abrahams, fielding coach Bongani Ndaba and strength and conditioning coach Zane Webster from the Proteas women's setup ahead of the 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup, to be held in England from June 12 to July 5.

While announcing the 15-member squad for the upcoming five-match T20I series against India, to be played from April 17-27, Cricket South Africa (CSA) said the imminent conclusion of the current contracts of Abrahams, Ndaba, and Webster comes as they are not going



to be extended beyond the 2025/26 season as part of a 'planned transition within the national setup.'

"As a team, we are always looking to evolve, and the introduction of new voices brings fresh perspective and renewed energy to the group. We are grateful to Baakier, Bongani

and Zane for the strong foundation they have helped build, and this next phase gives us an opportunity to challenge ourselves further as we continue our preparations towards the World Cup," said head coach Mandla Mashimbyi.

The trio had been in the Proteas coaching staff when South Africa finished as runners-up in 2023 and 2024 Women's T20 World Cups and 2025 Women's ODI World Cup. They will be replaced on an interim basis by former Western Province batter Andrew Puttick (batting coach), ex-Northern Cape head coach Mduzuzi Mbhatha (fielding coach) and Tumi Masekela (strength and conditioning coach).

## I can be the best player in the world: Ayush Shetty

### NEW DELHI

Ayush Shetty expressed pride and optimism after clinching silver at the Badminton Asia Championships, calling it a "great tournament" that boosted his belief of becoming "the best player in the world," while acknowledging disappointment in the final and crediting Shi Yu Qi as the better player on the day.

"I think it was a great tournament for me... really happy with the way I played throughout. I had really tough matches, but happy that way I pulled through all of them. As for the final, a bit disappointed... I wanted to finish on a high note, but credit to Shi Yu Qi, he was the better player. Grateful for the silver," Shetty told IANS. The 20-year-old Indian, ranked 25th in the world rankings, suffered an 8-21, 10-21 loss against the reigning world champion Yu Qi in the final here at the Ningbo Olympic Center. With his silver medal finish, Ayush became the first Indian men's singles player since HS Prannoy in 2018 to earn a podium finish at the continental championship.

Ayush's win over defending champion Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand in the semifinal made him just the second Indian men's singles player, and third overall, to enter the Badminton Asia Champion-



ships final. A win in the final would have seen him emulate Dinesh Khanna, who became men's singles champion in 1965. "This tournament gave me a lot of confidence that I can be the best player in the world. The next one would be the Thomas Cup... really excited, and we'll try our best to bring the trophy home. Beating the best players gives confidence, but I need to work on beating them consistently. Going forward, the target is to be more consistent and play at this level regularly," he added.

Earlier, PV Sindhu heaped rich praise on Ayush Shetty, calling him a generational talent after the youngster stormed into the final of the Badminton Asia Championships with a stunning victory over World No. 1 Kunlavut Vitidsarn. "It feels really great when players like PV Sindhu and HS Prannoy appreciate you... I've always looked up to them."

## Sports Minister Mandaviya felicitates World Archery Para Series medallist

### NEW DELHI

The Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports today met and felicitated the Indian contingent that delivered an outstanding performance at the Bangkok 2026 World Archery Para Series held from March 30 to April 4, 2026, in Thailand.

The tournament witnessed participation from 21 countries and 113 athletes, with strong representation from Asian and Pan-American regions. India emerged as the top-performing nation, finishing first on the medal table with an impressive tally of 13 medals, including 7 gold, 3 silver, and 3 bronze. Indonesia secured the second position with 6 medals, followed by Thailand with 5.

The Indian contingent, comprising 39 members (21 athletes, 5 coaches, 3 support staff, and 10 escorts), delivered a dominant performance across categories. The participation and preparatory camp for the event were supported under the ACTC through the ANSF Scheme, with expenditures of Rs 1.04 crore and Rs 20.51 lakh respectively.

Key Highlights of India's Medal-Winning Performances:  
Toman Kumar (TOPS Athlete): 3 Gold (Compound Men Open, Mixed Team, Men Team)  
Sheetal Devi (TOPS Athlete):



2 Gold (Mixed Team, Women Team), 1 Silver (Women Open)  
Payal Nag: 2 Gold (Women Open, Women Team)  
Padma Shri Harvinder Singh (TOPS Athlete): 1 Gold (Men Team), 1 Silver (Men Open)  
Shyam Sunder Swami (TOPS Athlete): 1 Gold (Men Team), 1 Bronze (Men Open)  
Bhawna (NCoE Athlete): 1 Gold (Women Open), 2 Bronze (Mixed Team, Women Team)  
Swati Chaudhary: 1 Silver (W1 Women)

Rajshri Dhanraj Rathod: 1 Bronze (Women Team)  
Vijay Sundi: 1 Gold (Men Team), 1 Bronze (Mixed Team)  
The felicitations ceremony was also attended by senior officials from the Archery Association of India, including secretary general Virendra Sachdeva and Gautam Abrol. Sharing their experiences, athletes and coaches

highlighted both the competitive spirit and the pride of representing India on the global stage.

Payal Nag, world's first quadruple amputee para archer, who has risen into prominence in this competition for winning a gold in the same category that India's Sheetal Devi, expressed her satisfaction with the arrangements, stating that she was happy with the overall management of the contingent and proud that India topped the medal tally.

Sheetal Devi reflected on the emotional moments during the event, saying that witnessing the Indian tricolour being unfurled and hearing the national anthem multiple times amplified the pride of victory.

Coach Abhilasha Chaudhary noted that India emerged as a dominant force in the competition, not only due to its medal tally but also its strong presence.

She emphasized that not just in sport, India is increasingly being recognised as a global power across multiple spheres, including sports.

Shyam Sunder Swami added that India's reputation preceded its participation, with competing nations closely observing the categories in which Indian athletes were competing, anticipating tough competition.

Congratulating the contingent, Dr. Mandaviya said, "I congratulate you for not just topping the medal tally but also for winning double the number of medals than the second country. When you win, it is never an individual victory—it is the country that wins, and every Indian feels proud of your achievements. You represent the spirit of New India, and what you accomplish today will define the sporting history of tomorrow."

## PM Modi's Khelo India initiative fuels sporting rise across India, says Arunachal CM Khandu

### ITANAGAR

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu said on Monday that since the launch of the 'Khelo India' initiative by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2017-18, sports development across the country has gained remarkable momentum. Felicitating the state contingent that participated in the 'First Khelo India Tribal Games 2026' held in Raipur from March 25 to April 3, the Chief Minister noted that Arunachal Pradesh has witnessed substantial growth in sports infrastructure and facilities over the past decade, resulting in improved performances at national-level competitions.

Congratulating the athletes and coaches for their outstanding achievements, Chief Minister Khandu said that Arunachal Pradesh secured an impressive fifth position among 30 states and Union Territories, emerging as the best-performing state from the Northeast. The contingent won a total of 11 medals - six gold, one silver, and four bronze.

He added that Arunachal Pradesh has secured more than 60 medals in various Khelo India competitions since their inception, highlighting the state's steady rise in the sporting arena.

Chief Minister Khandu also said that the state has significantly improved its rankings in national competitions, including the recent National Games held in Uttarakhanda, where Arunachal Pradesh finished among the top-performing Northeastern states.

Emphasising the importance of sports in youth development, the Chief Minister said that sports instil discipline, leadership, and determination among young people. He reiterated the state government's commitment to strengthening sports infrastructure across all districts and promoting grassroots talent.

Addressing athletes, coaches, officials, and members of sports associations during the felicitations ceremony, CM Khandu described the achievement as a moment of pride for the entire state.



# Asha Bhosle: The Timeless Echo of India's Soul

The sky of Indian music feels unusually silent today—somewhat emptier, somewhat more still. The playful bird of melody, the enchanting voice that sowed seeds of sweetness in millions of hearts for decades, may no longer be physically among us, yet her resonance has dissolved into eternity, becoming immortal. Asha Bhosle was not merely a singer; she was a stream of sound that embodied the very soul of India—flowing through every culture, every emotion, and every era. A legendary vocalist and a magical voice of countless aspirations, she created nearly 12,000 songs, setting a world record. Her passing due to cardiac arrest is not just the loss of an artist, but the end of an entire era of Indian sensibility. Yet, this end is not a conclusion—it is a transition into immortality, where an artist lives beyond the body, within their creations. Songs like “Abhi Na Jao Chhod Kar” now echo the heartfelt plea of millions. The voice that made even separation sound beautiful has now left the world in a state of emotional longing.

There was a unique vitality in her voice—it could transform into the playful innocence of a young girl or the aching cry of a lovelorn soul. Her songs encapsulated the entirety of life—laughter, tears, love, pain, romance, and devotion—in a rare and harmonious blend. This is why her resonance transcended India, touching hearts across the globe. If Indian music were an ocean, Asha Bhosle would be the river flowing into it, carrying within her every genre and style. From classical to pop, jazz to ghazals, and even qawwali, she left her indelible imprint on every form. It is astonishing how a single voice could express such diversity with such ease—but she made it possible. She did not merely sing songs; she lived them. That is why her music is not just sound—it is an experience.

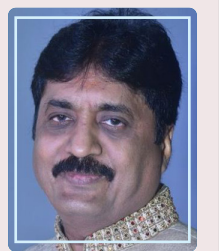
Born on September 8, 1933, Asha ji lived music as a spiritual discipline. Creating an independent identity under the towering shadow of Lata Mangeshkar was no easy feat. Many talents faded into obscurity under that immense presence, but Asha ji turned struggle into strength. She expanded the musical legacy inherited from her father, Deenanath Mangeshkar, through her relentless effort and courage. Despite personal upheavals, social pressures, and intense competition, she never allowed the flame of her voice to dim. Her association with O. P. Nayyar proved to be a turning point, after which there was no looking back. Her achievements went far beyond popularity—being honored with the Grammy, receiving the Padma Vibhushan, and having her name inscribed in the Guinness World Records for recording the highest number of songs are testimonies to her lifelong dedication and extraordinary talent. Yet, above all, her greatest achievement remains the boundless love she received from her listeners—a love that continues to live through her songs.

The most remarkable aspect of her music is its timelessness. Songs like “Piya Tu Ab To Aaja,” “Dum Maro Dum,” “Chura Liya Hai Tumne,” and “Dil Cheez Kya Hai” still feel as fresh today as they did when first released. Her songs carried not just melody, but a living soul that infused meaning into every word, making them eternal. For her, music was not merely an art—it was the very breath of life. Just as life is impossible without breath, existence without music becomes dull and meaningless. Through her songs, she demonstrated that music is not just entertainment—it is nourishment for the soul. In every composition, one can sense a subtle devotion, a deeper meaning of life, and a sacred purity of emotions.

Today, as we remember her, it feels as though not just a person, but an entire era has come to an end. After legends like Mohammed Rafi, Mukesh, and Kishore Kumar, her passing marks the fading of yet another luminous flame of India's golden musical tradition. Yet, such artists never truly vanish—they live on in their creations, breathe within their melodies, and echo through generations. Tributes expressed by Mohan Bhagwat further affirm that Asha Bhosle was not just a singer, but a symbol of India's cultural consciousness. Her contribution extended beyond entertainment—through her songs, she expressed Indian identity, sensitivity, and the celebration of life itself. Her passing is undoubtedly an irreparable loss, but her voice, her rhythm, her vitality, and her spirit will continue to resonate eternally in the soil of this nation. That is her true immortality—and her greatest legacy.

Asha Bhosle's personal life was as full of struggles as it was of resilience, courage, and unwavering self-belief. Born into a family devoted to music, she faced hardships from a young age, yet transformed every challenge into strength. Despite living under the towering presence of Lata Mangeshkar, she carved her own distinct identity—an achievement that reflects her extraordinary personality. Through personal upheavals, societal criticism, and family complexities, she never allowed her inner strength to weaken. Her liveliness, boldness, wit, and celebratory approach to life made her not just an artist, but a living inspiration. She symbolized the rare ability to move forward with a smile in every circumstance—an art that transforms ordinary individuals into extraordinary beings. Her talent was significantly shaped by three major composers—O. P. Nayyar, Ravi, and R. D. Burman. One of her iconic songs, “Mera Kuch Saamaan Tumhare Paas Pada Hai,” earned her a National Award and remains deeply cherished.

In her voice lived not just sound, but a divine vibration, an invisible magic, and the power of deep spiritual practice. At times it would enchant the sweetness of romance, and at others, it would pierce the soul as the pain of separation. Through her singing, she made Indian music not only melodious and entertaining, but meaningful, emotional, spiritual, and deeply inspiring. Her songs carried philosophy, sensitivity, and an intimate spiritual touch—breathing life into every word, making music not just something to hear, but something to live. Truly, Asha Bhosle was an eternal stream of melody—one that elevated Indian music to global consciousness and will continue to inspire generations to come.



**LALIT GARGG**  
Writer, Journalist,  
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## Thalaivar 173: Cibi Chakaravathi as director?



Superstar Rajinikanth is currently working on his next release, *Jailer 2*, and is also expected to begin filming his next venture, *Thalaivar 173*, soon. However, it appears that the film may once again undergo a change in its directorial team. Is Rajinikanth's *Thalaivar 173* set to replace Cibi Chakaravathi as director? According to Valai Pechu, Don director Cibi Chakaravathi is likely to be replaced as the director of *Thalaivar 173*. Reportedly, the filmmaker is involved in a dispute with a Telugu production house over a film starring Nani, which he opted out of due to creative differences. However, the producers claim to have already spent money on the untitled project's pre-production and are asking him to repay the amount. Speculation suggests that the team even requested a partnership in *Thalaivar 173*, but the producers, RKFI, rejected the proposal. Due to the issue reportedly remaining unresolved, the makers may replace Cibi as director and instead bring in *Dragon* director Ashwath Marimuthu. The latter had earlier revealed that he narrated a story to Rajinikanth, which the superstar liked. If the collaboration turns out to be true, the Rajinikanth project will likely go on floors first, after which Ashwath may proceed with his film with STR. However, these reports remain unconfirmed, as no official statement has been made by the makers. Additionally, the report claims that the makers may have asked Cibi Chakaravathi to ap-

proach *Thalaivar 173* with a more serious tone rather than a lighter one. Apparently, the filmmaker was not keen on the idea. Earlier, director Sundar C had also opted out of the project. Initially, *Thalaivar 173* was announced with the Arammanai director; however, due to prior commitments, he stepped away, and Cibi was brought in as his replacement.

**Rajinikanth's next film**  
Rajinikanth will next appear in a lead role in *Jailer 2*. Directed by Nelson Dilipkumar, the sequel will once again explore the story of Tiger Muthuvel Pandian following the events of the first installment. With Mohanlal and Shiva Rajkumar reprising their roles, the film will also feature Vidya Balan, SJ Suryah, Mithun Chakraborty, Suraj Venjaramoodu, and others in key roles. Initially, the film was expected to include a cameo appearance by Shah Rukh Khan, but the actor later opted out due to prior commitments to *King*.

Looking ahead, Rajinikanth is also set to collaborate with Kamal Haasan for a project tentatively titled *KHxRK Reunion*.

## Peddi Gets Bigger: Sai Kumar Joins Ram Charan's Sports Drama



Amid rising buzz around its release, a fresh casting update has added new intrigue to Peddi, the much awaited rural sports drama starring Ram Charan and directed by Buchi Babu Sana. In a video recently captured by a fan, it has been revealed that veteran actor Sai Kumar is also part of the film. This marks his reunion with Ram Charan after *Yevadu*, which released over a decade ago. While the news has excited fans, details about his role are still under wraps, further fueling curiosity around the project.

Set against a rustic backdrop, Peddi is expected to deliver an intense blend of raw emotion and gripping sports drama. The film is currently in its final stages of production, with a special song yet to be shot. Once completed, the makers are likely to announce a new release date.

The film features a strong ensemble cast, with Janhvi Kapoor as the female lead, alongside Shiva Rajkumar, Divyendu Sharma, and Jagapathi Babu in pivotal roles. Backed by Vridhi Cinemas, the film is being planned as a grand multi language release across India.

Adding to the excitement is the music composed by AR Rahman, which is one of the film's biggest highlights. With its powerful cast, rooted setting, and high expectations, Peddi is shaping up to be one of the most anticipated releases of the season.

## Gopichand 33 Titled BharataVarsha

The makers had recently shared the official glimpse on social media. Previously titled *Gopichand 33*, the upcoming movie is touted to be a period action drama with a gritty premise. The film is said to embark on a journey to bring forth a crucial and forgotten chapter from Indian history, blending scale, intensity, and emotion into a grand cinematic experience. Sharing the update, the team wrote, “An age of glory... A land of legends... A story buried in time... Now... it rises.” Apart from *Gopichand*, the movie has Ritu Varma, Vinod Kumar, Gavi Chahal, Thanikela Bharani, Rakesh Varre, Bharath Reddy, Chatrapathi Sekhar, Ravi Varma, Kishor, Karthikeya, Madhumani, and many more in key roles. Written and directed by Sankalp, the film will have musical tracks and scores composed by Anudeep Dev. With Sundar Rajan S handling the cinematography, the editing will be done by Chota K Prasad. Tilak Nimmala pens the dialogue. While the premise and scale look promising, the makers haven't yet made the release date clear.



## Janhvi Kapoor Stuns in Elegant White Backless Look with Grace

Janhvi Kapoor stuns in this elegant white backless ensemble with criss-cross straps and a flowing sheer cape, her sleek updo and statement earrings adding a sophisticated touch to the minimalist setting.

Born on March 6, 1997, in Mumbai, Janhvi Kapoor is the daughter of late actress Sridevi and producer Boney Kapoor. She made her Bol-

lywood debut with the romantic drama *Dhadak* (2018) opposite Ishaan Khatter, a remake of the Marathi film *Sairat*. The film was a commercial success and earned her the Zee Cine Award for Best Female Debut.

She proved her acting prowess with the National Award-winning biographical drama *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl* (2020), followed by the horror-comedy *Roohi* (2021), survival thriller *Mili* (2022), and sports romance *Mr. & Mrs. Mahi* (2024). She expanded her

range with *Bawaal* (2023), spy thriller *Ulajh* (2024), and a special appearance in the pan-India blockbuster *Devara: Part 1* (2024) opposite Jr NTR.

In 2025, she featured in *Homebound*, *Param Sundari*, and *Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari*. As of April 2026, her upcoming projects include the much-awaited Telugu action drama *Peddi* opposite Ram Charan (April 30, 2026), *Lag Jaa Gale*, and other pan-India films showcasing her growing versatility.