



# HYDERABAD HEADLINES

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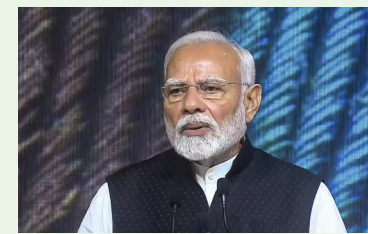
## PM Modi Applauds Pharma's Strategic Shift

NEW DELHI, APRIL 14

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday shared an article by Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda, underscoring India's evolving strength in the pharmaceutical sector.

The article outlines how India is transitioning from its long-held position as the "pharmacy of the world" to becoming a global hub for innovation. It emphasizes that the government's focus has increasingly shifted toward research and development, with significant advancements in biologics, biosimilars, and cutting-edge therapies.

Highlighting these developments, the Prime Minister noted that India is steadily moving up the value chain in pharmaceuticals. The article further



reflects on the country's preparedness to compete and lead in the global pharma landscape, driven by sustained policy support and investment in advanced medical research.

The Prime Minister's Office shared these remarks on social media, calling the article a "must-read retrospective" on India's journey toward becoming a leader in the global pharmaceutical race.



## CSK Hit Form With Back-to-Back Wins

STADIUM 11

## Alia Bhatt Back To Telugu? But..



BOX-OFFICE 12

### SHORT TAKES



## Samrat to be the New CM of Bihar

MLAs have officially elected BJP leader and current Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary as the new Chief Minister of Bihar. Samrat Choudhary is set to take oath as Chief Minister tomorrow.

HOME LAND 07



## The Hormuz Tax: Rs.1,600 Crore Daily Loss

The Middle East crisis continues to choke energy supplies across the world and push crude prices higher, swinging around \$100 per barrel mark. Fuel prices remain unchanged in India, pushing state-run oil marketing companies under mounting losses.

MONEY MATTER 09



## The Foundation of a New India and the Pinnacle of Possibilities

The emergence of a renewed consciousness in India's political and social landscape around the Nari Shakti Vandan Act is not merely indicative of a legislative reform; it signals the dawn of a wild social transformation and the prologue to a reimagined nation-building process.

OPINION 06

# Delimitation Debate Revanth Reddy Appeals to PM

CM Revanth Reddy writes letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi

CM flags injustice to Southern states

The CM proposes 'Hybrid Model' in the delimitation

HYDERABAD, APRIL 14

Chief Minister Shri A. Revanth Reddy urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi for extensive discussions and consultations at the national level to ensure that the Southern states get a fair share in the increase of constituencies in the delimitation process.

In a letter to PM Modi, the Chief Minister also requested to convene an all-party meeting involving all political parties and take decisions only after seeking the views of all states and political parties. The CM emphasized



Honourable Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy paid rich tributes to the Architect of the Indian Constitution - Dr BR Ambedkar on the occasion of his birth anniversary.

that a broader consensus should be evolved before taking decisions.

Stating that he was writing the letter with a sense of urgency and responsibility since the issue has a profound impact on the future of the country's democracy, CM Revanth Reddy clarified that three important issues—women's reservation, delimitation, and the increase in Lok Sabha seats were seen as a single issue thereby creating confusion among the

public. The Chief minister stressed that all these issues should be considered separately and take decisions appropriately.

The CM affirmed that the Indian National Congress party was extending its full support to the Women's Reservation Bill and the 33 percent reservation for women should be implemented immediately without alteration within the existing 543 Lok Sabha seats. The women reservation should also be pro-

vided in all State Legislative Assemblies as well. The Chief minister noted that the political empowerment of women is not merely a legislative amendment, but a moral imperative for a democratic society. Referring to the delimitation of the constituencies, CM Revanth Reddy recalled that such exercises were conducted by redrawing constituency boundaries without increasing the total number of seats in the past.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

## KTR Alleges Congress Betrayed Constitution Values

HYDERABAD, APRIL 14

BRS working president KT Rama Rao strongly criticised the Congress party for failing to honour Dr. B.R. Ambedkar both in principle and practice, reducing him to a mere campaign slogan for political advantage. While speaking to party leaders and supporters at Telangana Bhavan during the observance of Ambedkar's birth anniversary on Tuesday, he accused the Congress of historically marginalising Ambedkar and pointed out various instances where the party hindered his political



advancement and reforms.

KTR noted that the Congress government in Telangana continues this trend by neglecting the welfare initiatives pledged in Ambedkar's name. He praised BRS president and former chief minister

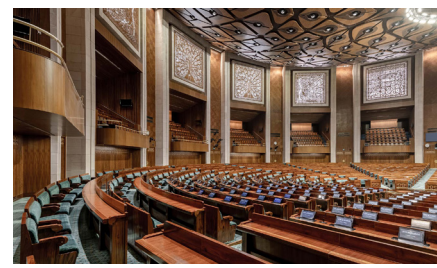
K. Chandrashekar Rao for implementing Ambedkar's vision through programs like Dalit Bandhu, which provides Rs. 10 lakh in financial assistance to help beneficiaries become entrepreneurs.

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## Democracy's Big Bang 850 Seats?

In a historic and potentially game-changing move, the Union Government has introduced the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 to expand the Lok Sabha from 543 to 850 seats, setting the stage for a major overhaul of India's electoral landscape and sparking a sharp political debate over representation, federal balance, and the future of the world's largest democracy.

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## Ponnampaluri urges TGS-RTC workers to call off strike; open to dialogue

HYDERABAD, APRIL 14

Minister for Transport and BC Welfare Ponnampaluri has appealed to TGSRTC workers to withdraw their proposed strike.

The Minister said the state government is always ready to resolve the employee issues amicably through dialogue.

In a statement here on Tuesday, Ponnampaluri noted that matters concerning the merger of the RTC with the state government and issues related to trade unions fall within the government's jurisdiction and affirmed that the state government is prepared to discuss all other employee-related issues barring these two specific topics.

The Minister further clarified that their doors remain open at all times to listen to



the grievances of employees. Ponnampaluri mentioned that a decision of 2.1 percent Dearness Allowance (DA) hike has recently been taken for the RTC employees and added that currently, there is no pending DA arrears. "The government is actively considering the issue of the Pay Revision Commission (PRC) for RTC employees. It remains firmly committed to the welfare of its employees," Ponnampaluri said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

## ASI dies after being struck by police vehicle at Manoor station

HYDERABAD, APRIL 14

Controversy arose following the tragic death of a police officer who was struck by a police vehicle operated by a home guard at the Manoor police station in Sangareddy district on Monday night.

The deceased officer, Govinda Nayak, an Assistant Sub-Inspector at the station, was involved in the incident when he was hit by the vehicle driven by home guard Rama Rao. Nayak suffered severe injuries and passed away while receiving treatment at a hospital in Narayankhed.

Tensions escalated as the officer's family alleged that the home guard deliberately ran over Govinda Nayak, labeling it as murder. Following the incident, Rama Rao fled the scene. The police have initiated an investigation and registered a case.

## Inclusive Growth Key to Viksit Bharat 2047: Governor Shukla

Hyderabad, April 14: Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla said inclusive growth and equal opportunities are essential to achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047. Speaking at an event at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, he distributed fellowships to 374 tribal and transgender students and praised initiatives like SAMATHA and NIPUNA for promoting social empowerment and skill development.

The Governor highlighted the importance of uplifting marginalised communities, recalling the ideals of B. R. Ambedkar, and termed the Women's Reservation law a historic step. He also noted the Centre's focus on economic growth, good governance, and empowerment of key sections to make India a developed nation by 2047, urging youth to work diligently towards their goals.

## WE Hub launches first district center of excellence in Peddapalli

HYDERABAD, APRIL 14

In a significant step toward strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Telangana, WE Hub, the Telangana government's nodal agency for promoting and supporting women entrepreneurs, has launched its first Center of Excellence (CoE) in Peddapalli district on Tuesday.

The initiative is being implemented with the support of HP and the District Administration of Peddapalli.

The Center of Excellence aims to empower women entrepreneurs, nurture youth innovation, and enable grassroots enterprises to access technology, market opportunities, and structured capaci-



ty-building support.

The centre will serve as a hub for skill development, incubation support, digital enablement, and enterprise acceleration, particularly for women and youth from rural and semi-urban regions. The CoE will provide structured programmes, including entrepreneurship training, digital skilling, business mentoring,

market linkages, and innovation support to help aspiring entrepreneurs transform ideas into viable enterprises. Special focus will be given to women-led enterprises, youth innovators, and emerging sectors such as technology-enabled services, manufacturing, creative industries, and sustainable MSMEs.

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# Price Shock to Regional Reset INDIA MUST LEAD SAARC

BY SHIVAJI SARKAR

The Iran-Israel conflict has abruptly exposed the fault lines in India's growth story, friendship—energy dependence, imported inflation, and policy vulnerability. With the Strait of Hormuz under threat, even a modest spike in crude prices can ripple through the economy, raising fuel costs, widening the trade deficit, and feeding directly into inflation.

It is just not the IMF, but the RBI and NITI Aayog also express deep concern. India was earlier seen by the IMF as a key global growth engine, the post-Iran conflict environment has sharply increased downside risks, with the Fund warning that such shocks are "asymmetric" and disproportionately hit energy-importing economies like India. The IMF has also flagged arms imports or dependence on external powers citing the failure of Arab nations. The West Asia demonstrates that hundreds of billions of dollars of weapons and security shields bought from the US failed to provide security to the Gulf region. The rivalries and mutual distrust have not been able to create a low-cost security umbrella of their own. It may be a cue for the Indian subcontinent that has virtually dodged a rising South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

The RBI's April 2026 Monetary Policy decision to hold the repo rate at 5.25 per cent reflects caution, not comfort. Its 6.9 per cent growth projection for FY27, against 7.6 per cent of budgetary speculation, already carries downside risks; sustained high oil prices could drag it closer to 6.7 per cent while pushing inflation towards 4.6–5 per cent, squeezing consumption.

This is not just a cyclical shock—it is a structural warning. Voices from NITI Aayog, including ex-CEO Amitabh Kant, are urging a faster pivot to renewables, but the immediate reality is stark: India remains deeply exposed to external energy disruptions. The question is no longer whether to diversify, but how long the economy can absorb repeated geopolitical shocks before growth, stability, and policy space begin to erode.

The IMF observes rising energy costs from the conflict are expected to fuel inflation, potentially causing central banks to maintain higher interest rates, which dampens growth. In other words, it says that the RBI cannot hold on to repo rate for long. The conflict is affecting supply chains and raising input costs for economies heavily reliant

on energy imports. The IMF warns that actions like price controls should be avoided.

## Independent Supply Chain?

The NITI Aayog observes that rising crude prices could add roughly billion to India's annual fuel import bill, weakening the rupee and raising inflation. A sustained 10 per cent increase in oil prices could potentially lower GDP growth by 20–25 basis points.

It not only hits LPG supplies and fertiliser costs but also FMCG and packaging industries face higher input costs. The IMF encourages indigenisation and supports the India's decision for 74 per cent FDI in the defence sector. Though that too has a high cost for profit repatriation on foreign exchange.

Data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) shows that India remained the world's second-largest importer of major arms from 2021 to 2025, accounting for 8.2 per cent of total global imports, according to reports in early 2026.

Be it the Aayog or foreign agencies they have limited the energy diversification to alternate, solar-wind etc, which have low efficiency or poor-tech-environment endangering battery cars. No road map has yet emerged for weaning India away from petroleum.

India also needs to reconsider its decision to stick to Western carbon-reduction and ephemeristic carbon trading methods. The decision to go for mobile nuclear reactors are fraught with hazardous radiation dangers and managing irradiating nuclear wastes.

## Questions on India tilt

Across regimes India has been tilting towards the West instead of building its strength in new regions like Africa. The policy for bypassing multilateral organisations like the WTO or the UNO has not helped it much. It is not a post-2014 Narendra Modi phenomenon, as often alleged in the political circles.

In 2005–06, India voted with the US and the EU at the International Atomic Energy Agency to declare Iran non-compliant with nuclear safeguards, paving the way for referral to the UN Security Council. These votes were closely tied to the Indo-US civil nuclear deal, with American officials indicating India's support on Iran was key to securing Congressional approval. Under pressure to project "responsible" nuclear conduct despite

being a non-NPT signatory, India shifted from its earlier strategic engagement with Iran—marked by the 2003 New Delhi Declaration—to a more US-aligned position.

The 2005–2006 votes marked a significant shift from the cordiality of 2001–2003, when Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Tehran and signed the New Delhi Declaration, establishing a "strategic partnership" with Iran.

## The SAARC Strength

The void created has now become a pivot of the discussion across the world. A "rogue" Pakistan, supporting various terrorist actions, including the World Trade Tower blast, is now at the centre of talks between Iran and the US—space that is believed normally belong to India.

Despite the balancing act, Iran is no more that close to India as it was about a decade back, when it was not only trading petroleum in rupee and re-investing in India for merchandise purchases. A neighbour, Iran, needs closer interaction, sympathy and engagement. It's careful strategic ways in dealing with the US may show a path to recalibrate diplomacy.

India has to reclaim the pre-2016 SAARC regional leadership for a friendly economic and security alternative. The Iran war and the irony of the Gulf security failures call for a relook at the subcontinent for refurbishing Indian efforts. India has done well to ensure petroleum supplies to Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka during the Hormuz closure. It may be a new beginning. The nations falter, do corrections and pave new ways. India has to evolve the new path to turn the region as the global engine. The eight SAARC nations, including Pakistan, can become the strength for a new energy, economic growth and enhancing security for the world.

India stands at an inflection point where external shocks are exposing internal policy gaps. Energy vulnerability, strategic drift, and weakening regional engagement cannot be addressed through incremental fixes. The lesson from West Asia is clear: dependence—whether on fuel, arms, or alliances—comes at a cost.

India must build resilience through energy diversification, stronger domestic capacity, and renewed regional leadership—reviving SAARC despite challenges. The choice is clear: react to crises or shape a stable, self-assured future.

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## Zen Diamond Opens the Doors to Refined Luxury in Hyderabad with a Stunning New Boutique at Lake Shore Mall

Samudrala Kiran, Correspondent

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI

In a significant milestone for India's evolving luxury retail landscape, global fine jewellery powerhouse Zen Diamond has unveiled its newest boutique at Lake Shore Mall, Hyderabad, marking the brand's elegant entry into the City of Pearls. The opening follows Zen Diamond's successful expansion into Mumbai, Chandigarh and Bengaluru, and signals a strategic move to deepen its presence in South India's fast-growing premium market.

Designed as a world of understated opulence, the new 800 sq. ft. showroom reflects Zen Diamond's signature design language—sophisticated, contemporary and timeless. A serene grey palette, refined fluted panels and graceful stucco textures come together to create an atmosphere of quiet luxury, allowing the radiance of the brand's natural diamond collections to take centre stage. The boutique has been thoughtfully envisioned for Hyderabad's modern connoisseurs, whose tastes are shaped by both cultural richness and global sophistication.

With this opening, Zen Diamond brings to Hyderabad a design philosophy rooted in timeless artistry and elevated by contemporary expression. The

boutique is more than a jewellery store; it is an immersive luxury destination crafted for patrons who seek exclusivity, elegance and enduring beauty.

Speaking on the occasion, Neil Sonawala, Managing Director at Zen Diamond, said, "India continues to be a key growth market for us. We are pleased to be furthering our position in South India and bring Zen Diamond to Hyderabad, a city known for its rich heritage and evolving design sensibilities."

The Hyderabad launch comes at a defining moment for the brand, which recently appointed global icon Jennifer Lopez as its brand ambassador. With its association, Zen Diamond continues to strengthen its position in the world of "Attainable Luxury"—a space where international glamour, fine craftsmanship and aspirational accessibility converge. Beyond its signature diamond jewellery, the new boutique also presents a curated selection of luxury accessories, including designer watches and pens, premium perfumes, ties and 24Kt gold coins, further enhancing its appeal as a complete lifestyle destination.

To celebrate the grand opening, as well as the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, Zen Diamond has introduced a host of exclusive customer privileges. Shoppers purchasing diamond jewellery worth ₹90,000 or more

will receive a complimentary 1.5g 24Kt gold coin. Customers trading in old gold for new Zen Diamond creations can avail an additional ₹2,400 per gram over the prevailing market value. The brand is also offering a Zero Cost, Zero Interest EMI plan, enabling customers to bring home exceptional jewellery with just a 10% upfront payment.

Since entering the Indian market in 2024, Zen Diamond has set an ambitious goal of establishing 100 stores across the country over the next five years. As one of the few jewellers offering Natural Diamond Certification, the brand continues to distinguish itself through trust, transparency and authenticity. Its partnership with the Natural Diamond Council further reinforces its commitment to responsible luxury, ensuring that every piece embodies not only brilliance and beauty, but also lasting value and confidence.

With its arrival at Lake Shore Mall, Zen Diamond introduces a new chapter in Hyderabad's luxury story—one defined by international finesse, contemporary elegance and a deeply personal celebration of natural diamonds. In a city where heritage and modern aspiration coexist so effortlessly, the brand's newest boutique stands poised to become a coveted destination for those who appreciate the rare art of refined living.

## EAGLE Force Telangana as part of the 99-day Government programme Praja Palana-Pragathi Pranalika



HYDERABAD

An Anti-Drug Awareness Programme was conducted at ZP High School, NBT Nagar, Banjara Hills, on the request of the Headmaster. DSP Sri Saidulu and EAGLE Force awareness team attended the programme, with around 200 teachers and parents participating. A strong message against drug abuse was delivered, encouraging them to act as role models in building a

drug-free society. Many participants also voluntarily registered as Anti-Drug Soldiers, showing their commitment.\*

## To share information on drugs:

\* Call on our Toll Free No : 1908  
\* One can send a message/call to EAGLE TG Control Room number on 8712671111 your confidentiality is ensured. Menimura deorei popopublium iurobse ntemoviri, nonis,

## Sikh community celebrates Vaisakhi with devotion and tradition

Hyderabad, April 14 (NSS): The 327th Khalsa Panth Foundation Day Celebrations, commonly referred to as the Vaisakhi festival, took place on the grand scale in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

The event featured the recitation of Gurubani Keertans and sermons delivered by esteemed Ragi Jathas (preachers). Attendees witnessed the revered Sri Guru Granth Sahibji being carried on a palanquin, as well as a vibrant Nagar Keertan (holy procession). The festivities also showcased an impressive display of Gatka skills by Sikhs, along with the serving of Guru ka Langar (free food).

The Sikh community celebrated the festival with great enthusiasm and dedication at Gurudwara Sahib Ameerpur in Hyderabad. The major attraction of the celebrations was held at Sri Guru Gobind Singhji Playground, Ameerpur, Hyderabad and organised

under the aegis of the Prabhandak Committee Gurudwara Sahib where hundreds of Sikh devotees and other community faiths converged in the "Vishal Deewan" (mass congregation).

The congregation began early in the morning and continued upto 5 pm. The preachers called upon the devotees to follow the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib which stands for national integration, communal harmony, brotherhood and peace to the whole humanity.

Gurudwara Sahib Ameerpur Prabhandak Committee president S. Darshan Singh and general secretary S.Surender Singh welcomed the devotees who came from various parts of the state. After the culmination of the congregation, the traditional Guruka-Langar (free community kitchen) prepared specially by the devotees was served to all the people.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

# Delimitation Debate

FROM PAGE 1

The Chief Minister suggested that a similar process could be undertaken nationwide at this juncture as well.

The Chief minister pointed out the proposal to increase the number of Lok Sabha seats to 850 was contentious and expressed concern over the concept of increasing the current number of seats and subsequently allocating them based on a pro-rata basis. The CM made it clear that the Congress would extend full support to women's reservation and also the delimitation, provided it does not involve an increase in the number of seats.

CM Revanth Reddy noted that several states, mainly the Southern states, would not accept any proposal to increase Lok Sabha seats based on population or a pro rata basis and raised concern regarding the potential consequences that could arise if a pro rata system were to be implemented in the country.

The Chief Minister highlighted the different systems followed by each state in the country in the implementation of the population control policies since the 1970s. Recognizing the risk that disparities in population growth could pose to national unity, former Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Atal Bihari Vajpayee had deferred the issue for 25 years.

The CM warned that increasing seats on a pro rata basis—without taking into account factors such as economic contribution, social progress, and human development—would disrupt the country's federal system.

Emphasizing that equal representation for all regions is important for achieving the goal of a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India), the Chief Min-

ister said that the Union Government did not analyze the impact that an increase in seats would have on the southern states. Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Puducherry and Kerala made significant strides in population stabilization, healthcare, and human development for decades All these initiatives were undertaken in alignment with national priorities. The new delimitation proposal would land these states to suffer structural disadvantages and face a situation where the political importance is significantly weakened. The pro-rata model is not merely a statistical adjustment but would lead to political imbalance.

Further, CM Revanth Reddy pointed out that bias and discrimination was already existing in the distribution of funds from the Central Government to the states. While Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were receiving substantial funding, Telangana was getting less and it was a stark example and indicator of the disparity between the South and the North. In addition to the discriminatory allocation of funds, the Chief Minister said that the proposed increase in parliamentary seats would now result in political injustice. Despite the Southern states contributing significantly to the national economy, their prominence in Parliament would diminish. The North and Central regions which are characterized by higher population growth would benefit.

The CM remarked that states which actively contributed to development would effectively be penalized, whereas states with high population growth would be rewarded. This is not merely a matter of statistics, but a fundamental issue concerning the nation's integrity, equality, and justice. CM Revanth Reddy also explained that the Southern states were consistently contribut-

ing to the national income and upholding high standards of good governance and development. The Chief Minister warned that if the centre disregards these efforts of the states, it would have an adverse impact on the unity of the nation.

The CM clarified that the Southern states would not accept the pro-rata model and that this issue would trigger intense public opposition. A sustainable solution is required to ensure justice for all. Proposing a "Hybrid Model" as a viable alternative, CM Revanth Reddy explained that the model would strike a balance between ensuring equitable representation for all and acknowledging the contributions of every state. The CM cited the 50-50 formula suggested by the Supreme Court as an example.

According to the hybrid model, the Chief minister said that half of the newly added seats be allocated on a pro-rata basis, while the remaining half be distributed based on the states' economic contribution (GSDP) and development parameters. Citing Swami Vivekananda, CM Revanth Reddy he stated that if we open our minds to embrace new ideas, our democratic system and processes will inevitably yield the best solution—one that is fair and acceptable to all. The CM also noted that the hybrid model would not only ensure that developed states do not suffer any disadvantage but would also uphold the principle of democratic representation. The Chief Minister urged the PM that extensive discussions be held on this matter to build a consensus involving all states and political parties. The CM emphasized that India's strength lies in unity in diversity and the important decisions should be aimed at strengthening the unity. The CM hoped that the country's democratic system would find a solution that ensures justice for all.

## WE Hub launches first district center of excellence in Peddapalli

FROM PAGE 1

The launch event was graced by Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Peddapalli MLA and Government Whip Vijaya Ramana Rao, Ramagundam MLA Makkann Singh Raj Thakur, district collector Koya Sriharsha, WE Hub CEO Sita Pallacholla and others.

Through this initiative, WE Hub aims to create a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in Peddapalli district, enabling women and youth to build sustainable businesses, generate livelihoods, and contribute meaningfully to the economic development of Telangana.

The Center of Excellence is expected to serve as a catalyst for innovation, enterprise creation, and inclusive economic growth, reinforcing the Government of Telangana's commitment to strengthening district-level entrepreneurship ecosystems across the state.

The launch also marks an important milestone, as Peddapalli becomes the first district where WE Hub has established a Center of Excellence, paving the way for similar models of entrepreneurship

## support in other districts of Telangana.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Sridhar Babu said, "Empowering women entrepreneurs and nurturing youth innovation at the grassroots is crucial for building an inclusive and self-reliant Telangana. Initiatives such as this Center of Excellence will not only create sustainable livelihood opportunities but also inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs from our districts." (NSS)

## Ponnam urges TGSRTC workers to call off strike; open to dialogue

FROM PAGE 1

He recalled that the previous government had constituted a committee regarding the merger of the RTC employees on September 9, 2023—hastily bringing the merger issue to the forefront just ten days prior to the announcement of the election schedule. The Minister said the decision to strike was inappropriate at a time when the RTC is gradually recovering while noting that such action will cause difficulties for both the organization and the people. Ponnam Prabhakar appealed to the RTC employees to withdraw their decision to strike and to resolve their issues through dialogue.

## KTR Alleges Congress Betrayed Constitution Values

FROM PAGE 1

KT Rama Rao mentioned that the Congress had promised to increase this amount to Rs. 12 lakh under a scheme called "Ambedkar Abhayastam," but has quietly abandoned the promise after gaining power. He highlighted that the Congress party's SC-ST Declaration has remained unfulfilled, as essential commitments such as improved reservations, financial support for students from marginalized communities, and a pledge to allocate 72 per cent of government contracts to BC, SC, and ST communities have not been realised in the past two and a half years. He accused the government of reducing social justice to a mere footnote in their manifesto.

Rama Rao also criticised the Congress government for letting the welfare infrastructure deteriorate, noting that government residential schools established under the BRS are now facing neglect. He condemned the Congress administration for limiting public access to the 125-foot Ambedkar statue in Hyderabad for political reasons, asserting that such actions disrespect both Ambedkar's legacy and the communities he represented.

KTR called for renewed efforts, urging BRS members to communicate this message at the grassroots level and expose the Congress party's betrayal of society as a whole. He also announced plans for a series of outreach programs addressing social justice issues in the upcoming months, follow-

ing the party's Foundation Day celebrations on April 27.

In addition, the BRS working president visited the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Memorial at Necklace Road to pay his respects to the architect of the Constitution, accompanied by various leaders, including the Opposition leader in the Council S. Madhusudhanachary, former ministers Talasani Srinivas Yadav, Gangula Kamalakar, Koppula Eshwar, V. Srinivas Goud, MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra, and BRS leaders RS Praveen Kumar and others. KTR, along with party leaders, also visited the museum in the building below the statue and observed the biography and historical events of Ambedkar arranged there.

## “Revanth Reddy is Anti-Ambedkar”

- **Telangana state is a result of Ambedkar's contribution**
- **Telangana was possible only through Article 3 of the Constitution**
- **Even after 12 years of statehood, there is no significant progress**
- **Ambedkar is not just a person... he is an ideology**

HYDERABAD

Kalvakuntla Kavitha, President of Telangana Jagruti, stated that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is anti-Ambedkar. She remarked that if there is anyone on this earth who is against Ambedkar, it is Revanth Reddy.

She participated in the 135th birth anniversary celebrations of B. R. Ambedkar, organized by the United Forum for SC & ST Employees at midnight near the Ambedkar statue on Tank Bund, and paid her tributes.

Speaking on the occasion, Kavitha expressed hope that at least on Ambedkar's birth anniversary, the Chief Minister would gain wisdom



and work towards justice for the poor. She emphasized that Ambedkar is not just an individual, but an ideology and a thought. She also recalled that Ambedkar strongly believed that society progresses only when women are empowered and worked extensively for women's rights.

### “Telangana State is Ambedkar's Gift”

Kavitha stated that the formation of Telangana as a separate state was possible because of Ambedkar's contribution. She pointed out that without Article 3 of the Indian Constitution,

Telangana's formation would not have been possible. She said Ambedkar envisioned a society rooted in socialism, but unfortunately, such conditions are not present in Telangana today.

Even after 12 years of state formation, atrocities against Dalits and women are increasing, which is concerning. She alleged that whenever projects are undertaken in the state, governments are acquiring assigned lands belonging to Dalits. She cited examples like Velugumata and Parigi, claiming that large portions of acquired land belong to Dalits. Kavitha stated that Ambedkar represents courage, and with the

strength he inspired, they will continue to fight for the poor against the government. She expressed hope that more movements inspired by Ambedkar would emerge to address people's problems.

### “Conspiracy to Displace Chenchu Tribals”

Kavitha alleged that both central and state governments are trying to exploit the natural resources of the Nallamala forest by targeting the Chenchu tribal community. She claimed that over 200 Chenchu families in areas like Kadichintala Pale and Sarlapalli in Amrabad mandal of Nagarkurnool district are being pressured to relocate forcibly.

Despite the tribals expressing their unwillingness to leave the forest, attempts are being made to displace them under the pretext of rehabilitation packages, which she criticized as unjust. She demanded that governments stop efforts to displace the Chenchus and allow them to live in their native forest areas. She questioned why they are being forced out when they could be provided housing locally.

Kavitha warned that if such actions continue, Telangana Jagruti will launch a movement on behalf of the tribal communities.



## Young Woman Saved from Rare, Life-Threatening Metabolic Crisis at Medicovert Hospitals

SECUNDERABAD

In a remarkable display of clinical expertise and timely intervention, doctors at Medicovert Hospitals, Secunderabad successfully managed a critically ill young woman who presented with a rare and life-threatening condition known as euglycaemic ketoacidosis, a metabolic complication often difficult to diagnose due to near-normal blood sugar levels.

The patient was brought to the hospital in a critical state with altered sensorium, drowsiness, and low Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS). Her condition rapidly worsened, leading to respiratory failure, necessitating immediate intubation and

ventilatory support. Detailed evaluation revealed high anion gap metabolic acidosis with euglycaemic ketosis, suspected to be triggered by medication.

Further complicating the situation, the patient was pregnant and had unfortunately suffered an intrauterine fetal demise, making the case highly sensitive and complex.

A multidisciplinary team comprising Dr. Thajammul Samrin - Gynecologist, Dr. Balasubrahmanyam - intensive care, Dr. Pradeep Kumar Mishra - Internal Medicine, along with experts worked in coordination to rapidly stabilize the patient. Early diagnosis, aggressive metabolic correction, and critical care support proved lifesaving.

Thanks to the team's swift and comprehensive management, the patient has now made a successful recovery and is stable. Speaking on the occasion, the medical team emphasized that euglycaemic ketoacidosis can often be missed due to normal glucose levels, especially in patients on certain medications. They highlighted the need for increased awareness among both doctors and patients, particularly during pregnancy, where such complications can pose serious risks. This case stands as a testament to Medicovert Hospitals' advanced critical care capabilities and commitment to handling complex medical emergencies with precision and compassion.

## DGP pays tributes to B.R Ambedkar at Kamareddy Police Headquarters

KAMAREDDY

The birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Architect of the Indian Constitution, was celebrated at the district police office in Kamareddy on Tuesday.

Telangana Director General of Police B. Shivadhar Reddy attended the programme as the chief guest. On the occasion, he garlanded the portrait of Dr. Ambedkar and paid rich tributes, recalling his invaluable contributions to the nation.

IGP Chandrasekhar Reddy, District Collector Ashish Sangwan, Superintendent of Police Rajesh Chandra, and Additional SP B. Chaitanya Reddy also paid floral tributes to Dr. Ambedkar. Police officers and staff members participated in the programme and paid homage to Babasaheb Ambedkar, remembering his ideals and legacy. (NSS)

## CBFC appoints Merugu Madhu as advisory panel member

HYDERABAD

In a significant development within the film certification landscape, Merugu Madhu, a native of Bhuvanagiri, has been appointed as a member of the Advisory Panel of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) for its Hyderabad Regional Office. The appointment order was issued by Dr. Rahul Govilkar, Regional Officer of the CBFC, which functions under the aegis of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. According to an official communication, the appointment has been made in accordance with the Ministry's Notification No. M-11019/1/2025-DO(FC). The letter further stated that Merugu Madhu will serve on the Advisory Panel for a period of three years or until further orders are issued, whichever is earlier. As part of the formal induction process, he was provided with guidelines, instructions, a bio-



data form, and other relevant documentation pertaining to the roles and responsibilities of Advisory Panel members. The Advisory Panel of the CBFC plays a crucial role in the certification process of films, assisting in the evaluation of content in accordance with established norms and guidelines. Madhu's inclusion in the panel is being viewed as both an honour and a responsibility, reflecting trust in his judgment and commitment to the field. Following the announcement, several individuals from various walks of life extended their congratulations, acknowledging the importance of the position within the film industry. Expressing his gratitude, Merugu Madhu thanked the leaders and well-wishers who supported his appointment. He affirmed his commitment to discharging his duties with sincerity and upholding the standards expected of a CBFC Advisory Panel member.

## Site Inspection of Mudiraj Bhavan at Kokapet

- **Leaders Discuss Speeding Up Construction Works**
- **Bhavan Construction as a Symbol of Mudiraj Unity**
- **Top Leaders Unite Beyond Party Lines**
- **Bhavan as a Symbol of Community Self-Respect**

HYDERABAD

A significant step has been taken toward the development of the Mudiraj community. On Tuesday, prominent Mudiraj leaders jointly inspected the five-acre land allocated by the Telangana government for the construction of the Mudiraj Bhavan at Kokapet in Gandipet mandal, Rangareddy district.

On this occasion, leaders held detailed discussions on the future course of construction and instructed officials to expedite the work. The program was attended by State Minister for Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development,



Fisheries, Youth Services and Sports Vakti Srihari Mudiraj, Telangana Legislative Council Deputy Chairman Banda Prakash Mudiraj, Malkajgiri Member of Parliament Eatala Rajender Mudiraj, Telangana State Mudiraj Corporation Chairman Borra Gyaneshwar Mudiraj, Mudiraj Youth Association State President Kasani Veeresh Mudiraj, and other key leaders. Speaking on the occasion, the leaders stated that the construction of

the Mudiraj Bhavan is not just about building a structure, but a symbol of the self-respect of the Mudiraj community. They assured that the government would extend full support and provide all necessary resources for the construction.

They further emphasized that it is a positive and encouraging development that top leaders have come together beyond political affiliations for the progress of the Mudiraj community. This unity, they

said, will strengthen the community further in the future.

Leaders also mentioned that they are moving forward with inspiration from great personalities like Panduga Sayanna, Korivi Krishnaswamy, and Constable Krishnaiah, working collectively for the upliftment of the community. They reiterated that united efforts toward the development of the Mudiraj community will continue to inspire future generations.

## Komatireddy hails Ambedkar's Constitution as Brahmastra for poor

NALGONDA

Describing the Constitution as a powerful safeguard for the underprivileged, Roads & Buildings, Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Tuesday said the document drafted by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar remains a 'Brahmastra in the hands of the poor'.

Participating in the 135th birth anniversary celebrations of Dr. Ambedkar, the Minister unveiled bronze statues of Dr. Ambedkar and Babu Jagjivan Ram at Tipparti Junction in Nalgonda district.

The statues were installed at a cost of ₹70 lakh under the Roads & Buildings department. He also inaugurated junction beautification works taken up at an expenditure of ₹10.75 crore.

Addressing a public meeting, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said Dr. Ambedkar championed universal education and women's voting rights, stressing that education is the foundation for empow-



erment and progress and urged people to follow Ambedkar's ideals and access to quality education must remain their top priority. Highlighting government initiatives, the Minister said integrated residential schools are being established in each constituency with an outlay of ₹200 crore. In Nalgonda, the facility coming up at SLBC Colony is expected to be in-

augurated by the Chief Minister by December-end. Plans are also underway to establish a public school in every constituency, with transport facilities for students and provision for both Telugu and English medium instruction in government schools, he said. On development works in Tipparti mandal, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said 135 double-bedroom houses have been allotted, while another 100 units have been sanctioned and will be distributed shortly.

Komatireddy said efforts would be made to secure additional housing under the next phase of Indiramma scheme and to obtain ₹10 crore for drainage works in the mandal. He added that canal lining works under AMRP, taken up at ₹450 crore, would ensure irrigation to tail-end lands. Speaking to the media, the Minister reiterated support for women's reservation in legislatures while cautioning against any regional imbalance that could disadvantage southern states.

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## SHORT TAKES

### DONATION OF RS.10LAKHS TO TTD

**TIRUMALA:** A devotee Kovvuri Ram Deep Reddy, hailing from Pentapadu in West Godavari District donated Rs. 10,01,16 to the TTD Sri Balaji Arogya Varaprasadani Scheme on Tuesday. On this occasion, the donor handed over the donation cheque to TTD Additional Executive Officer Ch. Venkiah Chowdary at the Additional EO Camp Office in Tirumala.

### Bandi Sanjay urges political unity over Women's Reservation Bill

**HYDERABAD:** Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Tuesday lauded Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar—the Architect of the Constitution—as a great visionary, who fought tirelessly for the rights of women and for their equality. He stated that, inspired by Ambedkar's vision, the Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre was set to introduce the Women's Reservation Bill in Parliament. Bandi Sanjay appealed to everyone to extend their support to the bill by rising above political differences. On the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti, Bandi Sanjay Kumar paid floral tributes to the portrait of the great leader. Subsequently, he released a statement to the media. In his statement, the Union Minister noted that inspired by Ambedkar's ideals, the Narendra Modi government had taken the historic decision to implement reservations for women in legislative bodies. He appealed to every member of Parliament to rise above political considerations and extend their support to the Bill.

# Education is key to realising Ambedkar's vision: Adluri

HYDERABAD, APRIL 14

Minister for Social Welfare Adluri Laxman Kumar stated that the "Praja Government" (People's Government) of Telangana was moving forward in alignment with the ideals of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, guided by his principle that education alone is the solution to all problems. On Tuesday, marking the occasion of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's 135th birth anniversary celebrations, the Minister paid grand tributes by garlanding Ambedkar's statue at Tank Bund in Hyderabad in the presence of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. Speaking at a programme on the occasion, Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar remarked that under the leadership of

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, their government was taking several bold decisions aimed at achieving social justice and equality.

The Minister recalled the government's decision to establish "Young India Integrated Schools" in every assembly constituency across Telangana State—spanning approximately 25 acres each and at a cost of ₹200 crore with the objective of providing quality education to Dalit, Tribal, BC (Backward Classes) and Minority communities without any discrimination.

He expressed the view that these schools would serve as hubs for holistic education and personality development for future generations.

The Minister further noted that the

Praja Government was taking special initiatives to effectively implement the Constitution drafted by the global intellectual Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He explained that the formation of Telangana State itself was made possible in accordance with Ambedkar's theory, which posited that the creation of smaller states contributes to development.

The Minister highlighted that the Congress government deserves the credit for increasing diet charges by 40 percent and cosmetic charges by 20 percent, thereby ensuring that Dalit and Tribal students receive nutritious food in addition to quality education.

Adluri Laxman Kumar stated that the state government was prioritising the education sector by allocating funds

of ₹1,000 crore for the development of Osmania University, an institution with a rich history spanning 125 years.

The Minister appealed to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to incorporate the history of Dr. Ambedkar into the Telangana school curriculum. He expressed the view that such an inclusion would serve as a source of inspiration for future generations.

The event was attended by Ministers Seethakka and Ponnampalabakkar, MLAs Kavvampally Satyanarayana, Danam Nagender, Naveen Kumar Yadav and Mandula Samuel, MLC Addanki Dayakar, Professor Kodandaram, former MP Anjan Kumar Yadav, former Minister Mothkupalli Narsimulu and others.

## "We are doing massive work... take it to every doorstep!"

- Without power, the opposition is restless... behaving like monkeys stepping on fire
- Despite financial difficulties, we will keep our promises
- People's governance is possible only through the efforts of Congress workers
- Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy emphasized

KHAMMAM

"Previous rulers did very little but exaggerated it greatly. However, even though our government is delivering large-scale development, we are lagging in taking it to the people. Party workers must step up and explain the welfare initiatives being implemented by the government to every household," said Telangana Revenue, Housing, and Information Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy. He was speaking on Tuesday at the oath-taking ceremony of the newly appointed district and city Congress committees held at the Khammam District Congress office.

"Party workers are the foundation of this government"

Ponguleti stated that under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the government in Telangana is a workers-driven government. He said that despite the state's financial challenges, they are fulfilling every promise with the aim of bringing a smile to the faces of the poor. He added that it is due to the hard work and struggles of party workers that they are in power today, and everyone should recognize this responsibility and work accordingly.

"Counter the false narratives of the opposition"

The minister criticized the opposition, saying that those who ruled the state for ten years are unable to accept the loss of power. Out of frustration, they are behaving like "monkeys stepping on fire," and people are no longer in a position to believe their false claims. He expressed confidence that if the development and welfare measures of the government are communicated effectively to every household, no one can stop the Congress party's winning streak.

Oath-taking ceremony held ceremoniously

In the presence of PCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud, the newly appointed district and city Congress committee members took charge enthusiastically. The event, chaired by DCC President Nuthi Satyanarayana Goud, was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, MP Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy, MLAs Ramdas Naik and Matta Ragamaye Dayanand, along with corporation chairpersons and other key party leaders.

## TG may get normal rainfall despite weak monsoon forecast

HYDERABAD, APRIL 14

India faces a "below normal" Southwest Monsoon in 2026, but Telangana and South Peninsular states could dodge the bullet with normal to above-normal rains, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast Monday.

IMD's Long Range Forecast (LRF) predicts a 75% chance of below-normal rainfall nationwide—less than 92% of the Long Period Average (LPA) of 87 cm—driven by emerging El Niño conditions in the equatorial Pacific. Central and Northwest India bear the brunt, with odds of deficient rains at 60-70%.

Silver lining for the South: Probabilistic models show a 55-65% likelihood of normal (96-104% LPA) to excess (>110% LPA) rainfall across South Peninsular In-

dia, including Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. Telangana's districts signal 50-60% odds for above-normal downpours, especially late-season bursts.

A positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)—expected by August-September—could unleash intense spells, boosting kharif crops like paddy and cotton. Last year's neutral IOD delivered 108% LPA nationally; a positive shift might mirror 2020's wet South (112% LPA).

Historically, El Niño years like 2015 saw a 14% national deficit, but South India bucked the trend at 102% LPA. IMD warns of delayed onset over Kerala (by June 1-7) and urges farmers to prep for variability.

A detailed second-stage forecast drops late May, mapping June's spatial patterns.

## SSC Public Exam results 2026 likely in first week of May

HYDERABAD, APRIL 14

Over 5.16 lakh Class X students await their fates as Telangana's SSC Public Examinations 2026 results loom in the first week of May, Directorate of Government Examinations (DGE) officials confirmed Monday.

Major papers wrapped with Social Studies on Monday, drawing 5,16,915 appearances from 5,18,297 registrants across 2,676 centres statewide. Evaluation kicked off with Telugu, Hindi, English, and Maths already done; Physical and Biological Sciences wrap by April 16;



Social Studies runs April 17-23.

"If timelines hold, results drop first week of May," DGE sources said, as processing ramps up. Last year, 91.3% passed (up from 89.6% in 2025), with girls outshining boys at 93.2% vs. 89.5%. Toppers hailed from urban hubs like Hyderabad (95% pass) amid a 2% dip in rural turnout.

Pending: OSSC Main Language Paper-I and SSC Vocational on April 15; Paper-II on April 16. Stakes are high—SSC marks dictate streams for Intermediate, with over 70% eyeing MPC/BIPC for engineering/medicine.

# BJP slams Congress hypocrisy on Ambedkar's legacy and women's reservation

HYDERABAD

Telangana State BJP President N Ramchander Rao today vehemently refuted Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's allegations that delimitation would create inequalities between southern and northern states.

Rao was addressing media at state party office here after paying floral tributes on the occasion of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's birth anniversary. He garlanded statues of Babasaheb Ambedkar at Lalpet, Anandbag x road Malkajgiri and near GHMC office Tankbund.

He strongly condemned Congress party's false propaganda on Delimitation and Nari shakti Vadan Adhiniyam (Women's reservation bill).

BJP state president dismissed claims that Southern states would be disadvantaged, stating that seats will increase proportionately across the country and no state will lose representation. He clarified that while Census and Delimitation are distinct constitutional processes, they are being unfairly used by leaders like Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to mislead the public.

"Delimitation is a constitutional process last frozen by Congress in 1976. Since then, the population has grown to 140 crore, but the 543 Lok Sabha seats remain unchanged based on the 1971 census. This process will naturally be-



gin after the 2026 census and is likely to be implemented by the 2029 elections, BJP state chief said.

Launching a scathing attack on Congress party, Rao accused Congress party of historical betrayal toward the architect of the Indian Constitution while misleading the public on current issues like delimitation and women's empowerment.

Extending greetings to the people, he highlighted that Dr. Ambedkar was not just a legal scholar but a lifelong warrior for social justice. He claimed that despite Rahul Gandhi's recent public displays of the Constitution, the Congress party's history tells a different story.

Further He alleged that the Congress party has obstructed Dr Ambedkar at

ment, he claimed and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has developed five key sites associated with Ambedkar's life as "Pancha Teerth" (Five Pilgrimage Sites). He emphasized that real empowerment for SC/ST communities is being achieved through current welfare schemes rather than political symbolism.

Rao alleged that it was Congress party which has tried to divide people in the name of caste, religion and regions to derive political mileage.

The BJP challenged the Congress's moral authority to speak on women's rights, labeling Indra Gandhi's rise as a result of "dynastic politics" rather than systemic empowerment. He cited the reversal of the Shah Bano verdict and the delay in banning Triple Talaq as evidence of Congress's failure to protect women. Recent internal party conflicts involving women leaders including Simi Rosebell John (Kerala), Ankita Dutta (Assam), and Priyanka Chaturvedi were highlighted as proof of a "toxic culture" toward women within the Congress ranks, he said.

Rao urged people not to fall into "misinformation campaigns" regarding CAA or Delimitation. "Rahul Gandhi needs to do more than just hold the Constitution in his hand," he suggested and asked him to follow it in his heart and actions.



## "The essence of the stories of Mallanna and Beerappa is to help those in distress. Let us all follow this."

Jaggareddy at the Mallanna Swamy Jatara festival

SANGAREDDY

Jaggareddy and Nirmala participated in the Kalyanotsavam (divine wedding ceremony) of Sri Bhramaramba Sametha Sri Mallikarjuna Swamy, held at Gollagudem in Sangareddy town. Jaggareddy and Nirmala attended the jatara and performed special prayers to Lord Mallanna. Jaggareddy said that regardless of caste or deity, the main intention is to help those in distress. This is also the core message in the stories



of Mallanna and Beerappa, and he urged everyone to follow it.

He explained that the message in the stories of Mallanna and Beerappa is that people should live together in harmony without differences of caste.

Jaggareddy listened with great interest to the Oggu sto-

ries of Mallanna and Beerappa narrated by Oggu artists.

Sangareddy Municipal Chairperson Koonna Vanitha Santosh, Congress party leaders Koonna Santosh, Kiran Goud, Srisaillam, and others participated in this Kalyanotsavam.

## Jupally to visit Qutb Shahi Tombs, other historic monuments today

HYDERABAD

Minister for Tourism and Culture Jupally Krishna Rao will visit prominent historic monuments in the city on Wednesday morning.

Accompanied by MLAs Kausar Mohiuddin and Mir Zulfiqar Ali, he will undertake a field inspection of the Qutb Shahi Tombs (Seven Tombs) and Katora House in the Ibrahim Bagh precinct,

besides the Charminar. The visit is scheduled to begin at 7.30 a.m. The Minister will review tourist amenities and the status of infrastructure at these sites. As part of ongoing heritage conservation efforts, he will also assess the progress of works and seek updates from officials. Jupally Krishna Rao is expected to issue directions on further measures to strengthen the tourism sector.



## Fulfilling Our Duties Efficiently is the True Tribute to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

CMD Dr. Buddaprakas Jyothi at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Jayanti Celebrations at Singareni Bhavan

HYDERABAD, (SINGARENI BHAVAN)

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a great personality, not only granted rights to the people through the Constitution but also created opportunities for even the common man to rise to the highest positions, said Singareni CMD Dr. Buddaprakas Jyoti. He was speaking as the Chief Guest at the 135th birth anniversary celebrations of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar held at Singareni Bhavan. He stated that the Constitution is a crucial document that instilled a sense of unity among all of us as Indians, beyond caste and religion, and it was gifted to us by Dr. Ambedkar.



He emphasized that performing our duties and responsibilities diligently in our daily lives is the greatest tribute we can pay to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Executive Director (Coal Move-

ment) Shri B. Venkanna, GM (Coordination & Marketing) Shri T. Srinivas, along with employees and officials of Singareni Bhavan, participated in the program in large numbers.

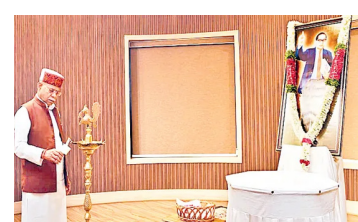
## Ambedkar's life a testament to triumph over adversity: Governor

HYDERABAD

The 135th birth anniversary of the architect of the Constitution and Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was observed with solemnity at Lok Bhavan here on Tuesday. Governor Shivpratap Shukla garlanded a portrait of Dr. Ambedkar and paid floral tributes to the leader.

Describing Babasaheb as one of India's greatest sons and the architect of the Indian Constitution, the Governor said, "Dr. Ambedkar's life stands as a shining testimony to the triumph of the human spirit over adversity. A visionary social reformer and an eminent jurist, he dedicated his life to the pursuit of justice, equality, and the empowerment of the downtrodden. His legacy is a clarion call for the protection of the rights of the poor and marginalised."

Terming the Constitution gifted by Dr. Ambedkar as among the finest in the world, Shukla said the occasion



should serve as an opportunity for every citizen to reaffirm their commitment to constitutional ideals and directives. He called upon the youth to draw inspiration from Ambedkar's life and work collectively to restore the nation's glory and build a just and inclusive society for all. "Let us move forward in the spirit of unity and fraternity espoused by Babasaheb," the Governor added, while extending his greetings to the people of the State and the nation on the occasion. Special chief secretary to the Governor M. Dana Kishore, officials and staff of Lok Bhavan were present at the event.



## Left Flags 'Death Warrant' Over Women's Quota, Delimitation Bills

NEW DELHI: April 14 Left leaders on Tuesday raised strong concerns over the proposed constitutional amendments linked to women's reservation and delimitation, warning of their potential impact on India's federal structure and political balance. John Brittas, Rajya Sabha Leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), said in a post on X, "The bills being introduced in the name of implementing Women's Reservation amount to a death warrant for federal India." Brittas further cautioned against the implications of the accompanying delimitation exercise, noting that the Delimitation Bill, presented as part of this exercise, would strip southern states, which have successfully implemented population control measures, of their rightful political power.

# Amaravati as the Launchpad for Quantum Technology

AMARAVATI, APRIL 14:

Marking World Quantum Day, a new technological chapter has begun in Andhra Pradesh with the inauguration of India's first Quantum Reference Facility. At SRM University in Amaravati and Medha Towers in Gannavaram, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu dedicated the 1S and 1Q quantum reference facilities to the nation. He stated that Amaravati will be developed as a launchpad for quantum technology.

Addressing scientists, researchers, and students, he said he was pleased to inaugurate India's first quantum reference facility on this occasion. He extended greetings to the scientific community and noted that this milestone coincides with 100 years of quantum science, making it historic. He also mentioned that the initiative aligns with the vision of B. R. Ambedkar, emphasizing that knowledge is a symbol of social progress.

The Chief Minister thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for supporting the Amaravati Quantum Valley initiative, and Union Minister Jitendra Singh along with Secretary Abhay Karandikar for their cooperation.

Self-Reliant Andhra

**Inauguration of the country's first Quantum Reference Facilities. Training for 4.5 million people in Quantum and AI skills**  
**Building the state's future with quantum infrastructure**  
**Quantum Valley to become a hub for research from pharmaceuticals to cryogenics**  
**Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu dedicates 1S and 1Q quantum testbeds at SRM and Medha Towers to the nation**



## Pradesh in Quantum Technology

He stated that:

- Electricity is vital for industry
- Internet is essential in the digital era
- Quantum technology is key for future innovation

**Countries mastering quantum technology will shape the future, he said. Amaravati's quantum facilities will serve as a hub for testing quantum hardware for researchers and industries.**

- The 1S system at SRM University will support research

The 1Q system at Medha Towers will support industrial applications

**These facilities were developed within just 8 months using indigenous technology, in collaboration with institutions like:**

- Tata Institute of Fundamental Research
- Indian Institute of Science
- DRDO

He emphasized that India no longer needs to depend on other countries for strategic technologies and that domestic production of quantum devices is crucial for the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision.

Amaravati Quantum Val-

ley from December

The Chief Minister announced that:

- Amaravati is being developed as a sustainable Blue-Green, Net-Zero city on the banks of the Krishna River
- It has legal status as the permanent capital

**Other major developments include:**

- Space City in Tirupati
- Drone City in Orvakal
- Green Hydrogen projects
- MedTech hub in Visakhapatnam
- Semiconductor hub in Anantapur

**He revealed that:**

- Google is investing \$15 billion in Andhra Pradesh
- AI infrastructure and data centers will be launched soon
- Amaravati Quantum Valley will begin operations from December

**The government aims to:**

- Promote "One Family - One Entrepreneur"
- Create one startup per 1,000 people
- Train 4.5 million people in AI, quantum, and data security in collaboration with IIT Madras, IBM, and others

**First State with Quantum Test Facilities**

With these developments, Andhra Pradesh has become the first state in India to have quantum test facilities.

**These facilities:**

- Enable testing and certification of quantum hardware
- Operate at temperatures as low as -273°C
- Provide open access to researchers, companies, and students

The 1S facility at SRM University has been made open-access for broader usage. The event was attended by several dignitaries including Abhay Karandikar, Ajay Sood, DRDO DG RV Prasad, and other scientists, professors, and officials.

**Summary:**

Amaravati is being positioned as India's quantum technology hub, with cutting-edge infrastructure, large-scale skill development, and global collaborations aimed at driving innovation across sectors like healthcare, agriculture, defense, logistics, and climate science.

## CM Chandrababu Naidu Bats for Women's Reservation, Writes to Political Parties and MPs

AMARAVATI, APRIL 14:

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has written to the presidents of political parties in the state, as well as to Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha Members of Parliament, seeking their support for the Women's Reservation 'Nari Shakti Vandan' in Parliament. In his letter, the Chief Minister requested them to extend their support to the 'Nari Shakti Vandan' Constitution Amendment Bill, which aims to implement 33 percent reservation for women in legislative assemblies starting from the 2029 elections. He appealed to them to strengthen Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolve to provide one-third reservation for women in

Parliament and legislative assemblies. The Chief Minister stated that the introduction of the Women's Reservation Amendment Bill in Parliament on the 16th of this month will stand as a historic milestone in Indian democracy. He expressed the view that the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam' will contribute significantly to women's empowerment as well as the nation's progress. Emphasizing the importance of inclusive governance, he noted that true progress is possible only when women's participation increases in government, administration, and legislative assemblies. He also called upon all stakeholders to pay homage to Nari Shakti in a country that reveres Bharat Mata.

## NER Will Operate Gorakhpur-Alipurduar-Gorakhpur Summer Weekly Special Train for 3 trips

GORAKHPUR, APRIL 14, 2026:

To provide additional convenience to passengers during the summer season, the Railway Administration will operate 05056/05055 Gorakhpur-Alipurduar-Gorakhpur Summer Weekly Special Train for 3 trips as follows:

From Gorakhpur on April 18, 25, and May 2, 2026 (Saturdays)

From Alipurduar on April 19, 26, and May 3, 2026 (Sundays)

**Train No. 05056** Gorakhpur-Alipurduar Summer Weekly Special

Will depart from Gorakhpur at 10:05 AM on the above Saturdays and will arrive at Alipurduar at 07:30 AM the next day, stopping at the following stations:

Kaptanganj (10:40 AM), Ramkola (11:02 AM), Padrauna (11:34 AM), Tamkuhi Road (12:10 PM), Thawe (1:05 PM), Siwan (1:55 PM), Chhapra (2:55 PM), Sonpur (4:10 PM), Hajipur (4:25 PM), Shahpur Patori (5:12 PM), Barauni (7:15 PM), Begusarai (7:57 PM), Katihar (11:30 PM), Barsoi (11:58 PM).

**Next day:** Kishanganj (12:50 AM), Aluabari Road (1:35 AM), New Jalpaiguri (2:45 AM), Siliguri (3:17 AM), New Mal Junction (4:25 AM), Binnaguri (5:12 AM), Hasimara (5:55 AM), and finally Alipurduar (7:30 AM).

**Train No. 05055** Alipurduar-Gorakhpur Summer Weekly Special (Return Journey)

Will depart from Alipurduar at 10:00 AM on the above Sundays and reach Gorakhpur at 09:00 AM the next day, stopping at: Hasimara (10:50 AM), Binnaguri (11:42 AM), New Mal Junction (12:45 PM), Siliguri (2:20 PM), New Jalpaiguri (3:10 PM), Aluabari Road (3:54 PM), Kishanganj (4:22 PM), Barsoi (5:22 PM), Katihar (7:30 PM), Begusarai (10:47 PM), Barauni (11:20 PM).

**Next day:** Shahpur Patori (12:17 AM), Hajipur (2:05 AM), Sonpur (2:17 AM), Chhapra (4:00 AM), Siwan (4:55 AM), Thawe (5:40 AM), Tamkuhi Road (6:12 AM), Padrauna (6:57 AM), Ramkola (7:22 AM), Kaptanganj (8:02 AM), and Gorakhpur (9:00 AM).

**Coach Composition**  
The train will consist of a total of 22 coaches, including:

1 Generator-cum-Luggage Van

1 LSLRD (Luggage-cum-Guard Van)

4 General Second Class Coaches

4 Sleeper Class Coaches

9 AC Third Tier Coaches

2 AC Second Tier Coaches

1 AC First Class Coach



## After years on the run, most wanted criminal arrested for murders in Andhra, Kerala

In a major breakthrough, Andhra Pradesh Police have arrested a most-wanted interstate criminal accused of targeting solitary women, murdering several of them, and fleeing with their jewellery across various South Indian states. The accused, Viswanath, who also operated under the aliases Prashanth and Aziz, was involved in at least four murders in and around Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh alone, according to police. In each case, he allegedly targeted women who were alone, killed them, and escaped with their gold jewellery. A native of the Karnataka-Kerala border region, Viswanath frequently changed identities to evade arrest, using forged documents, including an Aadhaar card altered with a different name, according to District Superintendent of Police (SP) Subbarayudu. His arrest came during the investigation into the recent murder of a woman

in Andhra Pradesh's Kona-seema district. Acting on leads, police tracked him down and took him into custody. During the operation, police seized gold jewellery worth approximately Rs 20 lakh and an auto-rickshaw used in the crimes. A woman identified as Rajamma, who allegedly assisted the accused, was also arrested. Further inquiry revealed that Viswanath had previously been convicted in a 2018 murder case in Kerala. However, he had escaped from police custody and had been on the run since then. SP Subbarayudu said the Kerala Police had announced a reward of Rs 2 lakh for information leading to his arrest. Further investigation is underway to determine whether the accused was involved in additional crimes across states. Details regarding the timeline of the recent murders and his initial escape are yet to be established.

# We all love you: Trump's special message for PM Modi during call

US President Donald Trump conveyed a warm message to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during their nearly 40-minute call, saying, "we all love you", PTI reported, citing US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor.

"We all love you," was the special message by US President Donald Trump for Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his nearly 40-minute call with him, news agency PTI reported, quoting US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor. "I just want you to know we all love you," Trump told PM Modi, according to Gor. The personal chemistry between PM Modi and Trump, visible since Trump's 2017 vic-



tory and strengthened after his re-election in 2024, remains a defining feature of India-US ties. Both the leaders call each other "great friends" during their conversations.

Over the years, both leaders have built a rapport marked by public warmth

and political messaging, from high-profile events like "Howdy Modi" in Houston in 2019 and "Namaste Trump" in Ahmedabad in 2020 to frequent telephonic conversations over the years.

**PM MODI ON HORMUZ CRISIS**  
Against this backdrop, PM Modi had last month told the Lok Sabha that the Iran war, now in its seventh week, would have far-reaching consequences and that India must prepare for its long-term impact. He condemned attacks on commercial vessels and disruptions in global shipping routes, particularly the Strait of Hormuz, calling them unacceptable.

Emphasising its strategic importance, the Prime Minister noted that a significant share of crude oil, gas, fertilisers and other essential supplies pass through the route. He also said that despite disruptions, India was taking steps to ensure its energy security and supply chains remain intact.

## WHAT PM MODI AND TRUMP DISCUSSED

During Tuesday's call with Trump, PM Modi and Trump held a 40-minute phone conversation, the first since the US-Iran ceasefire talks failed in Islamabad two days ago. During the call, PM Modi said he and Trump discussed the situation in West Asia and stressed the importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open and secure. "Received a call from my friend President Donald Trump. We reviewed the substantial progress achieved in our bilateral co-

operation in various sectors. We are committed to further strengthening our Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership in all areas. We also discussed the situation in West Asia and stressed the importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open and secure," he wrote on X. PM Modi and Trump earlier spoke on February 2 to review progress on a bilateral trade deal, with Trump announcing a cut in reciprocal tariffs on India from 50 per cent to 18 per cent. They

spoke again on March 24 to discuss the evolving situation in the Middle East following the US-Israeli strikes on Iran. Tuesday's call between PM Modi and Trump came amid heightened tensions in the Middle East, particularly after the US military's move to blockade ships entering or exiting the Strait of Hormuz, a critical energy chokepoint, through which nearly one-fifth of the world's seaborne crude and liquefied natural gas flows daily.

## Faridabad transporter commits suicide, FIR against 8 for 'harassment'

FARIDABAD: (APR 14)

A 42-year-old transporter allegedly committed suicide after consuming a poisonous substance, with his family accusing a group of people of harassment, police said on Tuesday. The deceased has been identified as Chandra Prakash Sethi. His body was found in his house in the New Industrial Township-2 here on Monday night. Based on a suicide note left behind by Sethi and a complaint filed by his wife, Deepika, an FIR has been registered against eight people at the Kotwali police station, they said.

# Annamalai hits out at Stalin's 'warning' on delimitation, accuses him of fear-mongering

CHENNAI, APRIL 14

BJP leader K. Annamalai on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin over his remarks on the proposed delimitation process, calling his "warning" to the Centre "uncalled for" and alleging that it was aimed at creating "fear" among the public. Annamalai said the Modi government is committed to taking all stakeholders along on the issue and dismissed Stalin's concerns as an attempt to generate unnecessary apprehension among people in the state. The remarks come ahead of a Special Session of Parliament scheduled to begin on April 16, during which the amendments to the Nari

Shakti Vandan Adhinyam, 2023, and a proposed Delimitation Bill are expected to be discussed to facilitate one-third reservation for women in Parliament. Earlier, Stalin, in a video message, had cautioned the Centre against proceeding with delimitation in a manner that could adversely impact southern states. He said Tamil Nadu would launch a large-scale agitation if its interests were compromised or if the southern region faced disproportionate consequences. He also questioned the timing of the special session, noting that it coincides with assembly elections in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal scheduled for April 23. The Chief Minister argued that Tamil Nadu and other south-



ern states had implemented population control measures in line with the Centre's guidance and should not now face adverse outcomes as a result. He maintained that the state would not remain silent if its interests were undermined. Responding to these remarks, Annamalai told IANS, "It is very unfortunate that the

Chief Minister is trying to sow discord and create fear-mongering in the minds of the Tamil population. We all know, if you look at the video, the kind of language he has used, saying that Tamil Nadu will go back to the 1960s, threatening the Prime Minister is uncalled for." He further said that the Prime Minister has made a "lot of effort" to bring everybody together.

"Since 1996, it (women's reservation issue) has been stuck. Many senior leaders of various political parties in the current INDIA bloc have opposed reservations for our mothers and sisters. The Prime Minister made the effort from September 2023 to pilot this and get this bill passed in both Houses of Par-

liament by bringing everybody together," he said.

Slamming Stalin, Annamalai said, "What is the problem of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister? Nowhere have we said it's a population-based increase. Everywhere we have said we will take everybody together. The Home Minister in Coimbatore a year back said it's going to be a pro rata increase."

"Whatever increase we are going to bring, it is going to be pro rata so that nobody suffers. It is very, very unfortunate that the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, by putting out this video, has gone against the oath he took on the Constitution of India," the BJP leader said, referring to Stalin's video post on X.

## Energy Efficiency Services Limited to Boost World's Largest Street Lighting Programme



VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 14

Andhra Pradesh is charging ahead in India's green energy drive, leading the nation's Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP) with over 29.47 lakh LED lights installed—the highest in the country. This powerhouse performance, powered by a Centre-state partnership through Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), is slashing energy use and bills nationwide. Launched in 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi under the 'Prakash Path' initiative, SLNP has transformed 1.36 crore street lights across India. The results? Staggering savings of 9,031 million kWh annually, ₹5,400 crore in costs, 1,505 MW in peak demand, and 6.2 million tonnes of CO2 emissions avoided each year.

In Andhra Pradesh alone, EESL's efforts in Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) deliver 390 million kWh in yearly energy savings, ₹234 crore in monetary gains, and 0.36 million tonnes

less CO2. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's vision demands 100% LED coverage across all ULBs, including remote areas, cementing the state's top spot ahead of Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and others.

**From LEDs to Smart Lights: AP's Next Big Leap**  
But AP isn't stopping at LEDs. The state is rolling out India's first IoT-based Integrated Lighting Management System (ILMS) in Phase-II, targeting 7.5 lakh street lights. Signed via MoU at the CII Global Summit in Visakhapatnam, this upgrade promises real-time monitoring, auto on/off switches, fault alerts, and slashed power waste—boosting safety, efficiency, and jobs while cutting municipal bills. Principal Secretary (MA&UD) S. Suresh Kumar reviewed progress virtually with CDMA P. Sampat Kumar and EESL CEO Akhilesh Kumar Dixit, who pledged tenders by May 2026. "This sets global benchmarks for smart urban infrastructure," Suresh Kumar declared, echoing Naidu's push for sustainable transformation.

EESL hailed AP's leadership, calling it a model for India's climate goals. As the state shifts from basic efficiency to intelligent systems, it's not just illuminating streets—it's paving the way for a greener nation.

EDITORIAL

BEYOND THE BOREWELL:  
WHY INFRASTRUCTURE ALONE  
WON'T SAVE BENGALURU'S WATER

While Karnataka as a whole is improving its water security, Bengaluru is dealing with extreme groundwater withdrawal. The State drew 66% of the groundwater that it could sustainably extract in 2025, but Bengaluru East Taluka drew 378%. The sustainably extractable volume of groundwater is based on how much withdrawal will deplete the aquifer, so while 378% does not mean Bengaluru East has depleted its groundwater, it is reminiscent of an ongoing crisis that has, once again, turned acute. The Bengaluru region lies on crystalline rock that already stores little water and recharges slowly. The city further concentrates demand in areas with higher population density and per-capita consumption, including 'tech parks' and apartment complexes. The built-up area of such urban infrastructure also suppresses recharge by percolating rainwater. A growing fraction of the population depends on water from the Cauvery, which comes with a high expansion cost. Thus, the problem has a natural basis but has been compounded over the years by inconsiderate urbanisation, where the costs — monetary and, increasingly, existential — are being passed on to the populace.

In 2024, a weak monsoon left nearly half of Bengaluru's 14,000 borewells dry. The government launched a project to supply 775 million litres per day to 110 villages and lower groundwater stress. But to date, the project has achieved only midway coverage, leaving many residents still banking on tankers. A 2026 study found that the crisis has since moved to Koramangala and Hebbal. The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board has also been using treated sewage water to recharge lakes. It seems Bengaluru is treating supply as infinitely expandable when it is not. Its preference for grey over green infrastructure has sealed the ground against replenishment while the increasing demand liquidates ecological capital. The city does not manage its pipeline supply, groundwater, and wastewater together, allowing consumers to default to the most convenient solution: tankers. Authorities need to minimise distribution losses and penalise overextraction and mandate 100% decentralised wastewater recycling for all non-potable uses. The ideal long-term solution remains unchanged: Bengaluru needs to become a 'sponge city'. This includes restoring the connections between lakes and wells to capture monsoon runoff, thus aligning land-use planning with the recharge capacity of each taluka, and overall sealing the ground less and increasing absorption on the surface.



SMART OR CRUDE? —  
THE ETERNAL CHIME

Smart or crude?— a question flung by a restless age, like a sharp wind against the patient sea of culture. In the quiet where roots still remember, a fragile truth trembles— unheard, yet eternal. Only the child who has rested in the honeyed hush of a mother's lap can hear what the world forgets— the living music hidden in the chime of her bangles. That sound— no mere ornament of air, but the pulse of existence itself. When it fades, homes collapse into hollow echoes, walls breathing without a soul. In the green whisper of ripening fields rises the fragrance of a forgotten joy; in the soft circling of bangles sings the primal voice of the forest-mother's spirit. Petals flicker, fabrics flow, and spring becomes a quiet philosophy— woven in color, spoken in movement. The silver rhythm of circling wrists is no adornment— it is a sacred script, a hymn etched into the heart of home, a silent flame in the sanctum of belonging. When that rhythm falters, silence thickens; meaning loosens its hold on life. Circles of color— constellations in motion— trace the cartography of love. Between the home she leaves and the home she builds, they stand— golden bridges of memory and sacrifice. In black beads lives unbroken faith, in white anklets—the discipline of light; upon the brow, a still dawn

rests, and within bright bangles, a rainbow gathers itself into form. These are not ornaments—they are vows worn in silence, lifetimes held in fragile radiance. At dawn, thresholds bloom in patterned breath, and devotion gathers like dew on sacred leaves. Tradition is no relic—it is a living flame, the unseen architecture of the soul. And yet— decay seeps into the beads of belief, purity dims into unattended ash. The brow grows heavy with absence, and bangles whisper in low, breaking notes of loss. Silks fray. Stories scatter. Smiles fade into unnamed shadows. We call the rooted "crude," and crown the hollow as "smart," mistaking glitter for grace, forgetting the gravity of what endures. To be truly smart is to guard the invisible inheritance. To be truly crude is to abandon the sacred for the shallow. Where truth stands, culture breathes; where it falls, modernity becomes a beautifully carved emptiness. O human— listen, before the last chime fades. Within that trembling sound lives the memory of who you are. Hold fast to the roots, awaken the heart— only then does life rise into meaning. Beyond the brittle divide of "smart" and "crude," let truth reclaim its timeless throne— for in the eternal chime of a mother's bangles resides the undying music of existence.

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

Women's Reservation:

The Foundation of a New India and  
the Pinnacle of Possibilities

The emergence of a renewed consciousness in India's political and social landscape around the Nari Shakti Vandan Act is not merely indicative of a legislative reform; it signals the dawn of a wild social transformation and the prologue to a reimagined nation-building process. India today appears to be decisively acknowledging that the active and meaningful participation of women is indispensable to its developmental trajectory. The long-pending issue of women's reservation has never been confined to parliamentary debates alone; it has been deeply rooted in the collective social consciousness that has consistently demanded equality, dignity, and opportunity.

The provision of reserving 33% of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies marks a historic milestone. Prime Minister Narendra Modi aptly described this initiative as one of the most significant steps of the century. While the original plan was to implement the Act following a fresh census, delays in conducting it led the government to pragmatically decide on using the 2011 Census as the basis. Opposition parties have raised objections, arguing procedural concerns; however, giving weight to such objections could have postponed the implementation until after the 2029 general elections, considering the time required for delimitation processes based on updated census data. This urgency has prompted the convening of a special parliamentary session, which, occurring amid assembly elections, has further intensified political friction.

The history of women's participation in Indian democracy has



been marked by paradoxes. On one hand, the nation witnessed powerful leadership under figures like Indira Gandhi; on the other, women's representation in legislative bodies remained disproportionately low for decades. Even today, women constitute only around 15% of the Lok Sabha, highlighting a significant gap in political representation. In this context, the Women's Reservation Act emerges as a structured and systematic effort to bridge this disparity. The debate around census and delimitation underscores the inherent complexities of Indian democracy. The government's decision to rely on the 2011 Census reflects a practical and time-sensitive approach. While opposition concerns merit consideration, they have yet to be substantiated with compelling evidence strong enough to outweigh the urgency of implementation.

It is a well-established reality that major political decisions are often viewed through the prism of political advantage, and this Act is no exception. Allegations that the government seeks electoral gains through this initiative form part of democratic discourse. However, the more pertinent question is not the intent behind the decision, but its impact. If increased

representation leads to greater inclusion of women's perspectives in policy making, the benefits will extend to society as a whole. In recent years, the role of women in Indian politics has undergone a remarkable transformation. Women are no longer merely voters; they have emerged as a decisive electoral force. In the 2019 general elections, female voter turnout nearly matched that of men, and in several states, even surpassed it. This shift signifies not just numerical parity but a deeper Awareness and empowerment. Women today are more conscious of their rights and increasingly capable of influencing political outcomes.

Government initiatives have played a crucial role in this transformation. Schemes such as Ujjwala Yojana, Jan Dhan Yojana, Swachh Bharat Mission, and maternity benefit programs have directly improved women's lives. Their impact extends beyond economic and physical dimensions to social and psychological empowerment, fostering confidence and enabling women to participate more actively in public life. The ideas of B. R. Ambedkar remains profoundly relevant in this discourse. Through the Indian Constitution, he laid the foundation of

equality and justice, advocating strongly for women's rights. His belief that the progress of a society is measured by the status of its women finds resonance in the current movement toward reservation, which seeks not merely to protect but to empower.

However, it is important to recognize that women's reservation is not a panacea. It is a necessary step, but not a sufficient one. While increased political representation will amplify women's voices, achieving true equality requires sustained efforts across social, economic, and educational domains. India's female labor force participation rate remains around 25%, significantly below the global average. Although progress in education is evident, women's participation in higher education and technical fields still needs considerable enhancement. Challenges in implementation also persist. Concerns have been raised that women representatives may become nominal figures, with real decision-making controlled by male family members—a phenomenon observed in some Panchayat systems. However, over time, many women have overcome such constraints, asserting their autonomy and leadership. Strengthening political training and leadership development programs is crucial to ensure that women emerge not just as representatives but as effective policymakers.

Equally important is the transformation within political parties. Without meaningful inclusion of women in party structures, reservation alone cannot ensure genuine empowerment. Political organizations must proactively create opportunities, encourage female can-

didacy, and cultivate an environment conducive to women's leadership. The vision of a New India aspiring to become a developed nation places women's power at its core. Today, Indian women are making their mark across diverse fields—science, technology, sports, education, governance, and entrepreneurship. The achievements of ISRO's women scientists, Olympic medalists, and grassroots women-led self-help groups stand as powerful testimonies to their potential.

This Act sends a clear and compelling message: no model of development can be complete without the equal participation of half the population. While political disagreements and practical challenges may arise during its implementation, the fundamental spirit of the legislation remains unassailable. It must be viewed not as a political maneuver but as a transformative social opportunity. If the government, opposition, and society collectively embrace this vision, the Women's Reservation Act can become a defining milestone—not only for women but for the nation as a whole. It charts a path toward a stronger, more inclusive, and progressive India, reaffirming the belief that the rise of women is inseparable from the rise of the nation.



LALIT GARGG  
Writer, Journalist,  
Columnist

The Great North-South Debate, And Prickly Questions About 'Fairness'

The ongoing debate over delimitation and parliamentary representation, provoked by the government calling a special three-day session of Parliament this week to debate constitutional amendments on the Women's Reservation Bill (but really to alter the delimitation of constituencies in the North's favour before the 2029 elections) has reopened one of India's most sensitive political and constitutional fault-lines.

The core question is: how should a diverse federal union balance the democratic principle of "one person, one vote" with the need to ensure that smaller states or states with slower-growing populations retain a meaningful voice in national decision-making? The issue has acquired renewed urgency as population growth diverges sharply between regions, raising concerns that strict population-based seat allocation could deepen the emerging North-South divide.

**This dilemma is not unique to India.** The European Union has grappled with a similar challenge for decades: how to design a representative assembly for a political union in which Germany and Malta, or France and Estonia, must coexist as equal members. The EU's solution - degressive proportionality - offers a useful framework for India's current debate.

Europe balances democracy and federal equity through a clever formula set into law under the Treaty of Lisbon. Under it, the European Parliament is built on three constraints that together preserve both democratic legitimacy and federal balance:

- A minimum threshold:** No member state can have fewer than six seats.
  - A maximum ceiling:** No state can have more than 96 seats.
  - An inverse ratio:** The larger a state's population, the more citizens each representative must correspond to.
- This means that while Germany has far more Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) than

Malta, a Maltese MEP represents roughly 80,000 citizens, while a German MEP represents around 850,000. The system ensures that the "Big Four" - Germany, France, Italy, and Spain - cannot dominate the Parliament simply by virtue of population. Smaller states retain a meaningful voice, preserving the federal spirit of the Union.

The EU's approach is not perfect, but it reflects a recognition that pure proportionality can undermine the cohesion of a political union. Representation must reflect population, but not only population: it must also cater to needs of state identities. India, of course, faces a similar challenge.

Since, unlike the EU, we are one country, India's federal structure is more deeply rooted in our constitution and more politically consequential than the EU's. Yet the underlying tension is similar. States that successfully implemented population control - Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and others - now face the prospect of losing relative political influence if Lok Sabha seats are reallocated on the basis of population. Conversely, states with high population growth - Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, all in the Hindi heartland - stand to gain significantly. This raises a fundamental issue: should states be penalised or rewarded for their demographic behaviour? And should political power shift dramatically in ways that could destabilise the federal compact? The concern is not merely theoretical. A strict population-based delimitation could produce a Lok Sabha in which a handful of large northern Hindi-belt states hold a permanent majority, enabling them to shape national policies even against the preferences of the rest of the country. This would mirror the very scenario the EU sought to avoid.

The government has cleverly sought to divert the public conversation toward the case for women's representation - an important reform, but one that enjoys broad consensus and does not address the structural challenge at hand. Its real objective is to use women's representation as a "hook" to permit

delimitation ahead of the constitutionally-mandated 2027 Census, which would otherwise give us new constituencies only in time for the 2034 elections.

Sensing its own vulnerabilities in 2029, the ruling party wishes to advance that deadline by implementing women's reservation along with an expanded parliament and newly-delimited constituencies in time for the next general elections. Hence the unseemly rush to meet this week, even as election campaigning is going on in Tamil Nadu and Bengal.

The government's cleverness is not just to cloud the issue by presenting it as being about women's representation. It is also by seeming to address the concerns of Southern states by retaining the present proportion of seat differences between them and the North, by the simple expedient of raising all states' seats by 50%. The government argues that this would ensure that ratios between states remain the same: for example, UP's 80 seats would become 120 and Kerala's 20 seats would become 30, but the ratio between them remains 4:1. This masks the fact that the absolute difference in the number of MPs between these states changes from 60 (80 versus 20) to 90 (120 versus 30), giving more UP MPs a say in determining who forms the next government. That, in fact, is really the point of the entire exercise, which is why the Opposition parties have publicly expressed scepticism about it.

If all you want is women's representation, they say, go ahead and reserve one-third of the seats in the present Lok Sabha for women and we will support you. But don't do any delimitation until after the 2027 Census is over and a new Delimitation Commission has done its work while taking all these concerns into account.

For after all, the real debate is not about women's representation. No one opposes that. It's really about how to preserve India's federal equilibrium in the face of demographic divergence.

The question is not whether representation should be democratic. It is how democracy should

be structured in a union of unequal populations. And that's where the European idea of Degressive Proportionality could work.

A degressive model for India need not replicate the EU's formula, but it could draw inspiration from its logic. Several principles could guide such a system:

- A floor for small states: States like Goa, Sikkim, or those in the Northeast should not be reduced to symbolic representation. They could all have a minimum number of 2 or 3 MPs, however small their population is, so their views can be heard on national issues.
- A ceiling for the largest states: No single state should be able to dominate the Lok Sabha by sheer demographic weight. So a UP, say, could be capped at 100 seats or less, even if their population keeps increasing.
- A scaling ratio: Instead of a uniform ratio - say, two million citizens per MP - the ratio could increase with population. A state with 200 million people might have one MP per 2.5 million citizens, subject to the ceiling, while a state with 30 million might have one MP per one million citizens.

**Economic contribution as a factor:** A state's share of national GDP could be considered to avoid penalising states that have invested in human development and economic growth. The State's share in the country's well-being could be factored in when determining the size of its parliamentary delegation.

Such a system would preserve democratic proportionality while ensuring that smaller states, slower-growing states and/or richer states, do not feel disenfranchised.

Doesn't the Rajya Sabha already resolve this problem, as some argue, since it represents States and so ensures the protection of the federal principle? No, because the Rajya Sabha's composition is itself population-linked, and its powers are limited compared to the Lok Sabha.

A degressive model in the lower house would create a "weighted" democratic mandate - one that acknowledges population without allowing it to overwhelm the federal

balance. The north-south divide is not merely a rhetorical construct. It matters for India's national unity because it reflects real differences in development, demography, and economic performance.

Southern states have invested heavily in education, health, and social welfare, resulting in lower fertility rates and higher human development indicators. Northern states, facing different historical and structural challenges, have grown faster demographically.

If delimitation proceeds without addressing these disparities, it risks creating a perception - especially in the south - that success in human development is being punished and failure rewarded. Such a perception would be corrosive for national unity.

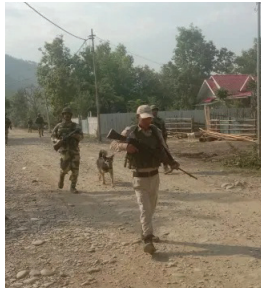
Any formula for degressive proportionality would require careful mathematical design and broad political consensus. It cannot be imposed unilaterally. It demands cooperation across party lines and across states; that, in turn, requires the central government to facilitate a transparent, inclusive process, which I call upon the Prime Minister to undertake, instead of rushing a flawed set of amendments through Parliament this week.

The stakes are high. A hasty delimitation that ignores the underlying issues could deepen regional mistrust and weaken the federal fabric. A thoughtful, consultative approach could instead strengthen India's unity by ensuring that every state - large or small, fast-growing or stable - feels respected within the national framework.

India has always balanced democracy with diversity. The challenge now is to update that balance for a new demographic reality. Degressive proportionality is not a magic solution, but it offers a starting point for a conversation India urgently needs to have. This is a moment for thoughtful reform, not political short-termism. The prize is the political unity of our beloved and diverse India.

- SHASHI THAROOR, MP

Disclaimer: These are the personal opinions of the author



## Manipur Violence After Drug Raid; 18 Injured, Vehicles Burnt IMPHAL, APRIL 14

At least 18 civilians, including five women, were injured and a mob set fire to two security force vehicles in Manipur's Bishnupur district on Tuesday, officials said.

The mob violence erupted following the seizure of a large quantity of drugs from a suspected drug peddler at the Imphal airport. A senior police official stated that, acting on credible intelligence, a joint operation by the Central Industrial Security Force and Airport Police was carried out at Bir Tikendrajit International Airport in Imphal, leading to the arrest of a suspected drug peddler, identified as Mohammad Sabir Ahamed, a resident of Moirang sub-division in Bishnupur district. Following a thorough examination of Ahamed's checked-in baggage, approximately 6.74 kg (including container weight) of suspected brown sugar, concealed inside six containers, was detected and seized. The accused, along with the seized contraband, was handed over to Singjamei Police Station, where a case has been registered for further investigation. During preliminary interrogation, the accused revealed information about a concealed cache of arms and ammunition in the Kwakta area of Bishnupur district. Acting on this input, security forces moved towards the location. However, while en route near Thinungei in Bishnupur district, the security team's movement was obstructed by local residents due to the spread of mischievous, unverified rumours about the identity and purpose of the personnel. A mob soon gathered and blocked the security vehicles.

## Samrat Choudhary to be Bihar's first BJP Chief Minister as Nitish Kumar era ends

The BJP leader expressed his gratitude to the party for bestowing the opportunity to serve the people of Bihar as the next Chief Minister.

BJP leader and Bihar's Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary is set to become the next Chief Minister after Nitish Kumar brought down the curtain on his over two-decade stint in office. With Choudhary's elevation, the BJP will also get its first Chief Minister in Bihar. The prominent OBC leader, who earlier served the party as its state unit chief, will take oath tomorrow (April 15) in Lok Bhawan as part of the new cabinet rejig. Choudhary's name as the frontrunner for the Chief Minister's post emerged as soon as Kumar decided to contest for the Rajya Sabha. The buzz soon translated into consensus as several senior party leaders backed his name for the next Chief Minister to rule Bihar. In a key legislature party



meeting, Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sinha, along with senior BJP leaders Mangal Pandey, Dilip Jaiswal and Renu Devi, formally proposed his name as leader of the BJP Legislature Party. The proposal was endorsed by the central observer and Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. **CHOUHARY EXPRESSES GRATITUDE TO PARTY**

As soon as the announcement came to light, Choudhary expressed his gratitude to the BJP for bestowing him the opportunity to serve the people of Bihar. Taking to X, the BJP leader wrote, "This is

new heights of development, good governance, and prosperity. Your affection, blessings, and cooperation are my greatest strength," his post on X read.

### WHO IS SAMRAT CHOUHARY

Active in state politics for more than three decades, Choudhary's first major political breakthrough came in 1999 when he was sworn in as the Minister of Agriculture in the RJD-led Bihar government. The veteran leader in Bihar politics is known for his strong ground-level mass connections, which became evident in 2010, when, amid a state-wide JD(U) storm, he held his constituency, Parbatta. He was also made the Chief Whip of the Bihar Assembly in the same year.

However, his tenure with the RJD ended shortly, as in 2014, he resigned from the party and joined the JD(U). During his time in JD(U), he was made the Minister of Urban Development and Housing Department.

However, Choudhary rose through the ranks of Bihar politics as a leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party, which he became a part of in 2018. He was elevated to the Vice President's role in the state shortly and was also made the star campaigner for the NDA in the 2020 assembly elections. Under his guidance, the BJP won 74 seats in the election. In 2023, he was made the president of the state unit – a move that benefited the BJP supremely as it emerged as the single largest party in the 2025 assembly election.

Choudhary is the son of Shakuni Choudhary, a seasoned Bihar politician and the founding member of George Fernandes-led Samata Party, which included former Bihar CM Nitish Kumar.

As a strong OBC leader, Choudhary has remained a key face to attract the votes of the Kushwaha or Koeri community, which, together with the Kurmi community, forms seven to eight per cent population in the state.

## Lok Sabha strength to rise from 543 to 850, setting stage for women's reservation

The government has shared the draft bill with MPs ahead of a likely push to amend the Constitution. If implemented, the new Lok Sabha will comprise 850 members, up from its current strength of 543.

The central government has proposed expanding the Lok Sabha from 543 to 850 seats, a move that would pave the way for implementing the long-pending women's reservation law alongside a fresh delimitation exercise.

Sources said a draft bill outlining the expansion has been shared with MPs, with the government planning to take up key constitutional amendments during a special three-



day sitting of Parliament. The special session has been convened to amend provisions tied to a 33 per cent quota for women in Parliament and state assemblies, and to carry out delimitation of constituencies based on the 2011 Census. The increase in seats is aimed at enabling a smoother rollout of the quota by redrawing con-

stituencies. Under the proposal, 815 seats would go to states and 35 to Union Territories, taking the total strength to 850. The changes are expected to come into effect from the 2029 Lok Sabha elections.

### OPPOSITION RAISES RED FLAGS

The Opposition is gearing up to challenge the govern-

ment's delimitation push, particularly the use of 2011 Census data. Parties including AAP, RJD and DMK are expected to argue that the exercise should instead be based on updated 2021 Census figures. Sources said several INDIA bloc parties may also seek clarity on the long-standing demand for a "quota within quota" for women from backward classes. A strategy meeting of Opposition leaders and allies, including AAP, is scheduled at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's residence in Delhi. Leaders from Trinamool Congress and DMK, which are in power in poll-bound West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, are expected to attend.

### A NUMBERS GAME

Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien questioned the government's intent, arguing that the proposed amendments are more focused on delimitation than on implementing women's reservation. "Constitutional Amendment Bills are to be taken up on April 16. Where is the copy of the bill?" he asked, also flagging the timing of the session, called before assembly polls set to take place on April 23 and April 29. He noted that the BJP would need Opposition support to pass constitutional amendments, which require a two-thirds majority in Parliament. The Opposition bloc is banking on this requirement to push its demands and seek greater clarity from the government.

## Election Commission of India Announces 2,926 Candidates for West Bengal Polls

NEW DELHI, APRIL 14:

Candidate Breakdown:

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has announced that a total of 2,926 candidates are in the fray for the West Bengal Assembly Elections 2026 after the withdrawal deadline. The election schedule for Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal was declared on March 15, 2026. In West Bengal, polling will be conducted in phases, with Phase-II voting scheduled for April 29, 2026. For Phase-II, the last date for filing nominations was April 9, scrutiny took place on April 10, and candidates were allowed to withdraw nominations until April 13.

Phase-I (152 constituencies): 1,478 candidates  
Phase-II (142 constituencies): 1,448 candidates  
Returning Officers will publish the final list of candidates in the Official Gazette as per election rules and securely store all nomination-related documents.

Voters can access candidate details—such as educational qualifications, criminal records, and assets—through the ECINet App under the "Know Your Candidate" section. Additionally, EVM ballot papers will feature coloured photographs, names, and symbols of candidates to make voting easier.



## Protests in J&K's Sopore after teacher accused of sexual harassment, 8 arrested

The accused lecturer has been identified as Gulam Hassan alias Azhar and has been suspended after a complaint of sexual assault.

Violent protests erupted in Sopore town of Jammu-Kashmir's Baramulla district following allegations of sexual harassment involving a girl student and a senior lecturer, officials said on Tuesday. The demonstrations, initially led by students, escalated into clashes and vandalism, prompting police action and led to the arrest of eight individuals. According to officials, the accused lecturer, identified as Ghulam Hassan Mir, was booked after a complaint of sexual assault was filed. The incident triggered widespread outrage among students, who staged protests demanding strict action against the accused.

Senior Superintendent of Police Sopore, Iftikhar Talib, addressed the situation, stating, "There is a teacher at Bokhdal Zahid's Kandhi school whose name is Gulam Hassan alias Azhar. He has committed adultery with a girl. In that case, the girl has also protested and we have taken legal action. An FIR has been filed against that teacher and has also suspended her from school education." "These girls are protesting here. We are talking to them and explaining the situation. I hope they understand what is happening". In response to the allegations, the Directorate of School Education Kashmir has suspended the lecturer and ordered a time-bound departmental inquiry.

The Joint Director (North Kashmir) has been appointed as the inquiry officer and is expected to submit a report within 15 days. As a precautionary measure to prevent further unrest, authorities have ordered the closure of major educational institutions in Sopore, including Government Degree College Sopore, until April 18. Officials said the situation is currently under control, with security forces deployed to maintain order and prevent escalation. Authorities have urged students and residents to remain calm while assuring that strict legal and administrative action will be taken in the case.

## Uttar Pradesh Approves ₹3,000 Wage Hike After Noida Violence

After violent protests by factory workers in Noida, the Uttar Pradesh government has approved a wage hike of up to Rs 3,000 across worker categories.

A day after workers' protests in Noida turned violent and brought parts of the NCR to a standstill, the Uttar Pradesh government has increased minimum wages across worker categories by up to Rs 3,000. Gautam Buddha Nagar District Magistrate Medha Roopam on Tuesday said the revision was approved by a high-powered committee and has been made effective retrospectively from April 1. "The

wage increase has been done by the high-powered committee. The decision was approved by CM UP late last night," Roopam told reporters. This is an interim decision and a broader review will be carried out later, after which a process for a permanent solution will be initiated through a wage board. Under the revised structure in Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad, unskilled workers will now earn Rs 13,690 per month, up from Rs 11,313. Semi-skilled workers will receive Rs 15,059, while skilled workers will get Rs 16,868, according to an official statement. In other municipal corporation areas, monthly wages have been fixed at Rs 13,006 for unskilled



workers, Rs 14,306 for semi-skilled workers and Rs 16,025 for skilled workers. For the remaining districts, unskilled workers will earn Rs 12,356 per month, semi-skilled workers Rs 13,591 and skilled workers Rs 15,224. Officials said the decision was taken after consultations with employers' associations and labour organisations, with suggestions and objections reviewed to ensure a "balanced and practical" outcome. The development

comes after large-scale protests by factory workers in Noida on Monday, during which thousands demanded higher wages and improved working conditions. The protest escalated into widespread violence across multiple industrial sectors in Noida, including arson, vandalism and stone-pelting, severely disrupting traffic and damaging property. Police have arrested around 350 people and detained over 100 others, while also examining CCTV footage to identify more suspects. Seven FIRs have been registered, and the situation is now under control with efforts ongoing to restore normalcy. The unrest prompted the government to set up a commit-

tee to engage with both workers and employers and address the situation. The government has urged workers to remain calm and assured dialogue to resolve grievances. Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Labour Minister Anil Rajbhar on Monday night termed the violence during workers' protests in Noida as a "well-planned conspiracy," while also hinting at a possible Pakistan link being probed in light of recent terror-related arrests in the region. The minister said preliminary findings suggest an attempt to destabilise law and order, citing the arrest of four suspected terrorists from Noida and Meerut with alleged links to handlers in Pakistan.

## Himachal Pradesh Chamba: Miscrants Stone Forest Team, Case Filed

SHIMLA: (APR 14)

Unidentified people have been booked for pelting stones at a Forest Department team transporting a seized consignment of timber in Chamba district, police said on Tuesday. The incident took place on Sunday night on the Kaljel-Bajli link road near Salhuni nullah. The team had seized 12 timber sleepers and was transporting them to the Range Office in Masroond when several miscrants began pelting stones at the vehicles from a hillside. One was injured in the incident, but a forest department vehicle was damaged. The officials called the police and left the spot, while the attackers fled.

## 10 killed, over 30 injured after blast at Vedanta power plant in Chhattisgarh, toll may rise

A deadly boiler explosion at a Vedanta power plant in Chhattisgarh has left at least 10 workers dead and many injured, but with rescue operations ongoing, the final toll and cause remain uncertain.

At least 10 workers have died and over 30 others have been injured after a major explosion at a Vedanta power plant in Chhattisgarh, with several in critical condition following one of the state's worst industrial accidents in recent times. The incident took place on April 14 in Sakti district around 2:30 pm, when workers were on their lunch break, triggering panic and a large-scale emergency response. Officials confirmed that 33 workers were injured in the blast, of whom 23 are in critical con-



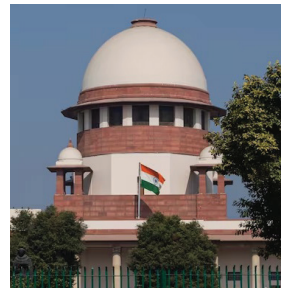
dition and undergoing treatment. Four workers died on the spot, while six others succumbed to injuries while being taken to hospital, taking the death toll to 10. According to preliminary findings, the incident was triggered by the bursting of a pipeline carrying hot water, leading to severe burn injuries among workers present at the site. Earlier reports had indicated a boiler-related explosion, with officials now working to establish the exact cause. The injured workers have been admitted to hospitals in neighbouring Raigarh district, including OP Jindal Fortis Hospital, where they are undergoing treatment under close supervision. Authorities said the condition of several injured

remains critical. Rescue operations have now been called off, with officials confirming that all affected workers have been evacuated from the site. Senior officials, including the district collector and police teams, rushed to the spot soon after the incident and supervised rescue and relief efforts. Authorities have ordered a probe to ascertain the exact cause of the incident, and further investigation is underway. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai described the incident as "heart-wrenching" and extended condolences to the families of the deceased, while wishing a speedy recovery to the injured. He directed officials to ensure immediate medical care and said, "A thorough and impartial probe will be conducted, and strict action will be taken against those found respon-

sible." Meanwhile, Congress MLA Ram Kumar Yadav staged a protest outside the plant, demanding adequate compensation for the victims and accountability from the administration. The plant management said, "An unfortunate incident occurred at one of the boiler units at our Singhitarai plant, involving personnel from our sub-contractor, NGS (NTPC GE Power Services Limited), which operates and maintains the unit." "Our immediate priority is to ensure the best possible medical assistance and treatment to those affected, and we are closely coordinating with medical teams and local authorities," it said. "We are in the process of ascertaining details, and a thorough investigation has been initiated in coordination with our partner and relevant authorities."

## Supreme Court closes Sandesara fraud case after Rs 5,000 crore settlement

During the proceedings, the Sandesara Group paid Rs 3,507 crore directly to the lending consortium, while an additional Rs 1,492 crore was recovered through liquidation. In its compliance order dated December 17, 2025, the Supreme Court recorded a final settlement deposit of Rs 5,111.43 crore. The Supreme Court has closed the 13,000 crore bank fraud case against Sterling Biotech promoters Nitin and Chetan Sandesara after the brothers paid over Rs 5,100 crore and agreed to settle the remaining Rs 8,100 crore, quashing all criminal proceedings against them. The Sandesara brothers were accused of taking large loans from Indian banks before fleeing the country in 2017, after which they were declared fugitive economic offenders. During the proceedings, the Sandesara Group paid Rs 3,507 crore directly to the lending consortium, while an additional Rs 1,492 crore was recovered through liquidation. In its compliance order dated December 17, 2025, the Supreme



Court recorded a final settlement deposit of Rs 5,111.43 crore, taking the total recovery to around Rs 9,800 crore. The total outstanding, according to lenders, amounts to over Rs 19,000 crore. However, an FIR filed by the CBI in 2017 pegged the outstanding amount at over Rs 5,300 crore. The court had observed that continuing criminal proceedings would serve no meaningful purpose in light of the substantial recovery already made. Banks had moved the Supreme Court seeking release of over Rs 5,000 crore deposited under the settlement covering Sterling Biotech and its group entities, and lenders have since agreed on a formula to distribute the recovered funds.



## Pakistani forces kill 12 civilians in Balochistan shelling

QUETTA, APRIL 14

At least 12 civilians, including women and children, were killed and three others severely injured in Balochistan's Barkhan district during Pakistani military bombardment and shelling in the area, local media reported on Tuesday, citing sources. Reports suggest that unidentified armed men earlier launched an attack on Pakistani forces, killing 12 security personnel. Following the attack, Pakistani forces reportedly carried out a large-scale operation in the civilian areas, resulting in multiple casualties. Citing local sources, Balochistan reported that bodies of several individuals inside a vehicle were set ablaze during the operation, though the claim could not be independently verified.

Criticising Pakistani military actions, Tara Chand, President of Baloch American Congress, took to his social media platform, X and posted: "We strongly condemn this act and believe that any army involved in harming innocent civilians should be deeply ashamed of such actions." Last week, one young man was killed, and several women were injured in a drone strike carried out by Pakistani forces in the Mas-

tung district of Balochistan, local media reported.

Citing reports, The Balochistan Post stated that Pakistani forces targeted a house in the Kurdgap area of Mastung with a drone, fatally injuring Abdul Samad, while women in the house were also wounded. Abdul was transferred to Quetta for medical treatment when he succumbed to his injuries on the way. Additionally, the women injured in the attack were shifted to Quetta for further medical care, following initial treatment at a local hospital. In recent days, several Pakistani forces and Special Service Groups personnel were reportedly killed in attacks by Baloch armed groups in the area, prompting the forces to launch a large-scale operation. Reports suggest that this is not the first time that civilians were impacted by drone attacks by Pakistani forces in Balochistan, and underscores a recurring concern. Several human rights organisations, including the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, as well as Baloch political parties, have voiced grave concern over the targeting of civilians in these attacks, calling on the government to act immediately to prevent further incidents in Balochistan.

## Xi Jinping offers 4-point peace proposal for US-Iran war after Pak talks derail

China's President Xi Jinping proposed a four-point roadmap for promoting lasting peace in the Middle East during a meeting on Tuesday with Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince, Sheikh Khalid bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chinese official news agency Xinhua reported. The proposal comes days after US-Iran ceasefire talks derailed in Pakistan.

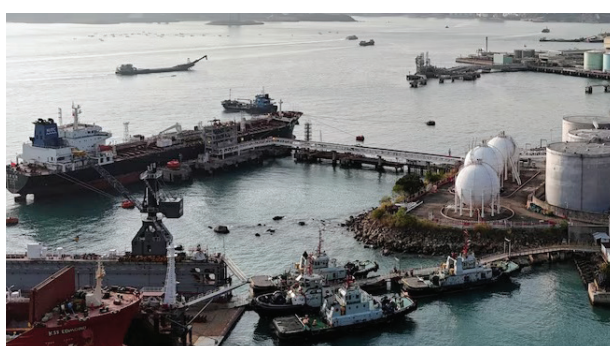
**Jinping's proposal calls for the following:**

- Upholding the principle of regional peaceful coexistence.
- Respecting national sovereignty.
- He also underscored the principles of coordinating development and security.

Xi also stressed the need to safeguard international rule-based order. "Safeguard the authority of the international rule of law. It can't be 'use it when it suits us, discard it when it doesn't,' and we cannot allow the world to revert to the law of the jungle," Xi stated. The remarks are widely being viewed as a tacit but sharp rebuke of the US-Israeli war on Iran. While China has repeatedly criticised the joint US-Israeli military campaign as illegal, Xi has made only a handful of public comments about the war. The leader is likely to hold talks with his US counterpart, Donald Trump, in a highly-anticipated meeting in Beijing next month.

## Sanctioned Chinese ship sails through Trump's Hormuz blockade, Iran taunts US

A Chinese tanker became one of the first ships to make its way through the Strait of Hormuz after the US military began a blockade of Iran's ports. The incident was used by Iran to mock Trump.



A US-sanctioned tanker linked to China crossed the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday, becoming one of the first ships to make its way through the energy chokepoint after the US military began a blockade of Iran's ports. The spectacle of a China-linked ship crossing Hormuz despite Trump's threats gave Iran ammo to take a swipe at the US, stressing that the blockade only applied to countries "Trump isn't afraid of". Maritime traffic data showed that Rich Starry, a medium-range tanker, is now in the Gulf of Oman after successfully crossing Hormuz. The vessel, which was sailing under the flag of Malawi (a landlocked country),

had turned back on Monday just as the blockade came into effect, Bloomberg reported. However, it restarted its voyage through Hormuz after broadcasting that it had a Chinese crew. Its exit marked the first such challenge for the US Navy to enforce its blockade.

### CHINESE TANKER CROSSES HORMUZ

It came as Trump announced the US Navy would begin blocking ships entering or leaving Iranian ports after peace talks collapsed between Washington

and Tehran in Pakistan. However, the US made it clear that ships using non-Iranian ports would not face any blockade. Thus, it is not clear whether the Chinese tanker visited Iranian ports before its transit through the Strait of Hormuz. Data shows the Rich Starry is owned by Shanghai Xuanrun Shipping Co Ltd. Both the owner and the vessel were blacklisted by the US around two years back for helping Iran evade energy sanctions. The tanker was carrying about 2,50,000 barrels of methanol. It loaded the cargo

at the UAE's Hamriyah port, the data showed. Iran used the occasion to taunt Trump. "The US Navy, with its many 'big beautiful ships,' issued repeated warnings. Reportedly, the tanker's captain upgraded to premium to skip the ads," the Iranian embassy in Ghana tweeted. Apart from Rich Starry, two other vessels - Panama-flagged Peace Gulf and Murlikishan - passed the vital oil chokepoint on Tuesday. While the Peace Gulf was heading to Hamriyah port, Murlikishan, also a sanctioned vessel, moved towards Iraq. The tanker has previously transported Russian and Iranian oil. Experts have emphasised that Trump's move to block Hormuz raises the risks of confrontations with major oil-importing countries like China. The numbers reveal the significance of Hormuz for China. Around 38% of the oil and 25% of LNG that typically passes through Hormuz is bound for China, the world's largest crude importer.

## Iran's "Picture Abhi Baaki Hai" Warning on Hormuz

As tensions spike in West Asia amid the US naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's warnings of retaliation, Tehran delivered a Bollywood-style retort to Washington on Tuesday. "Abhi toh sirf trailer hai, picture abhi baaki hai," Iran's Consulate in Mumbai posted on social media while sharing a video showcasing the country's naval capabilities, particularly its fleet of fast missile boats operating in the Persian Gulf. "Red bees of the Persian Gulf" yeah, the



fast missile boats are warming up. Funny how Trump kept claiming Iran's navy was 'finished' now they're about to find out how a swarm can pin you down real quick," the Consu-

late wrote on X, referencing the famous dialogue from Shah Rukh Khan-starrer Om Shanti Om: "Abhi toh sirf trailer hai, picture abhi baaki hai" (It's only the trailer so far, the full movie is yet to come). The warning comes amid a major escalation in West Asia after the Donald Trump administration enforced a naval blockade targeting Iranian ports and maritime traffic through the strategically crucial Strait of Hormuz. The move came after peace talks in Islamabad between Tehran and

Washington collapsed without any breakthrough toward a long-term agreement. While Donald Trump has threatened to strike any Iranian vessels attempting to facilitate passage through the Strait, Tehran has warned of severe retaliation in the event of any US escalation, with tensions persisting despite both sides agreeing to a temporary ceasefire. Trump on Monday said Iran's control of the strait amounted to blackmail and extortion as the US blockade took effect.

## Debt-ridden Pakistan feels the heat of rising oil prices

NEW DELHI, APRIL 14

The March Economic Outlook prepared by the Finance Division of the Pakistan Government has stated that oil markets remain on tenterhooks, multiple supply outages have heightened crude markets, while geopolitical tensions between Iran and the US have intensified. As a result, oil markets remain volatile, according to an article in the Karachi-based Business Recorder. On March 30, the IMF stated that in the Middle East and South Asia, already meagre reserves and limited market access makes external shocks to financing conditions more dangerous - "especially as higher import bills for fuel, fertiliser, and food widen trade deficits and put pressure on currencies." This observation is particularly relevant to Pakistan given that re-



serves as on March 19, 2026 were 16.4 billion dollars - an amount that is a massive improvement from the under 3 billion dollars (2916.7 million dollars) reserves on February 3, 2023, yet they constitute over 12 billion-dollar annual roll-overs by three friendly countries with the rest borrowed from other multilaterals/bilaterals and maturing debt equity from issuance of

Eurobonds/Sukuk, the article points out. It highlights that this month alone the United Arab Emirates requested a 3.45 billion dollar loan recall from Pakistan (there was reportedly no request to cut the 800 million dollars owed by Etisalat to Pakistan since the privatization of PTCL decades ago) and an additional 1.4 billion dollars was repaid on maturing Eurobonds this week

past. Pakistan's access to foreign commercial markets has remained compromised for the past three to four years due to a fragile economy that accounts for non-investment grade rating by the three international rating agencies.

In spite of the much touted rating improvement last year, sourced to the country being on an active IMF programme, Pakistan's rating remains in the highly speculative category defined as at material default risk with a limited margin of safety with financial commitments being met though capacity for continued payment is vulnerable to deterioration in the business and economic environment.

The Middle East conflict has certainly deteriorated Pakistan's business and economic environment further, as it has globally, the article further states.



## 16 injured after ex-student opens fire in Turkey school, then shoots self

The 18-year-old attacker, armed with a shotgun, fired randomly at his former vocational high school in Turkey's Siverek before hiding inside the building.

A teenager opened fire at a school in southern Turkey on Tuesday, wounding at least 16 people, including students and teachers, before killing himself, Governor Hasan Sildak said.

The 18-year-old attacker opened fire with a shotgun at a vocational high school in the town of Siverek, firing indiscriminately before retreating inside the building, according to Governor Hasan Sildak. The attack injured 10 students, four teachers, a canteen worker and a police officer. The assailant killed himself when police tried to capture him at the scene, Sildak added.

Most of the injured were treated in Siverek, while five teachers and students in more serious condition were transferred to a hospital in the provincial capital, the governor added. He said the motive for the attack is still unknown. School shootings are rare in Turkey. According to an Associated Press report, all students were evacuated from the school, while police special operations units were deployed after the attacker refused to surrender.

"The suspect was cornered inside the building during a police operation and died after shooting himself," Sildak told reporters, adding that a "comprehensive" investigation into the incident would be conducted. Footage from the incident site showed dozens of students running out of the school toward the gate and onto the street.



## Stealth jets, 15 warships: US's show of strength near Iran waters amid blockade

The US Central Command offered a rare glimpse into its nighttime operations, showcasing some of its most lethal assets, including the amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli ploughing through the Arabian Sea near the Strait of Hormuz under the cover of darkness.

As Donald Trump ordered a naval blockade targeting Iranian-linked ships over the weekend, tensions in the Strait of Hormuz and the risk of further military escalation in the region have risen. Against this backdrop, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) offered a rare glimpse into its night-time operations, showcasing some of its most lethal assets, including the amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli ploughing through the Arabian Sea near the Strait of Hormuz under the cover of darkness. The design of the Tripoli, the CENTCOM pointed out, allows it to carry a larger fleet of F-35B stealth fighters, MV-22 Ospreys, helicopters, and enhanced maintenance facilities. At full capacity, the vessel can support more than twenty F-35Bs, it added. Following Trump's blockade order, CENTCOM said it would be enforced equally on all vessels entering or leaving Iranian ports

and coastal regions, including those in the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. On Monday, the US President warned that any Iranian fast-attack boats approaching the blockade would be destroyed. He also asserted that the United States would not permit Tehran to "extort the world." Meanwhile, Al Jazeera reported that an Iranian-linked ship, which was either stuck in the strait or about to depart, managed to pass through the US blockade shortly after it was announced. The blockade was announced by Trump on Sunday following the return of a US delegation from talks with Iran in Pakistan. Led by Vice President JD Vance and including special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, the group failed to secure a deal to end the six-week war between the US, Israel, and Iran. Trump's initial statement on Truth Social indicated that the blockade would target all vessels departing from or seeking to dock at Iranian ports. However, moments later, CENTCOM clarified that US forces would not interfere with ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz to or from ports outside Iran. The move comes despite a two-week ceasefire agreed upon last Wednesday between the United States and Iran to support ongoing negotiations.

## Hormuz Mines: Clearing the Strait Challenge

The Strait of Hormuz, a thin waterway through which roughly 20% of the world's crude supply is shipped, has become a literal minefield. More than a month into the now-paused US war with Iran, Hormuz remains a no-go zone for global shipping amid fears of what may be lying underneath.

ways for global shipping. NAVAL MINES: CHEAP, CRUDE, DISRUPTIVE

Naval mines are underwater explosive devices designed to damage or sink ships and submarines. They are one of the oldest tools in maritime warfare, but they remain brutally effective, not simply because of their explosive power, but because of the uncertainty they create: enough doubt and enough risk to make merchant shipping hesitate, insurers raise rates, and traffic slow down. Naval mines come in various forms. The most common is the contact mine, which explodes when it makes physical contact with a ship. Then there are influence mines, which are triggered not by contact but by the signatures of a ship: acoustic waves released by the ship's engines, distortion in magnetic fields caused by the ship's hull, or changes in pressure due to the weight of a vessel cutting through water. Mines can also be grouped by where they sit in the water. Moored mines are tethered to the seabed and float at a chosen depth, making them dangerous to surface ships and sometimes submarines. Bot-



tom mines sit on the seabed itself, making them harder to detect and particularly suited to shallow waters. Drifting mines are less predictable, and much more dangerous because they can move away from where they were first laid depending on the current. In the current conflict, Iran is believed to have used its Maham series (a name that means "full moon" in Persian) of naval mines. The Maham-1 and Maham-2 are conventional contact mines: circular weapons either anchored to the seabed by a chain or allowed to drift at a set depth. They are fitted with five contact horns -- known as Hertz horns -- containing primers that det-

onate the mine when bent or dislodged, and can carry up to 120kg of explosives. Iran is also believed to have used the larger Maham-3, a moored mine weighing about 380kg, and the Maham-7, a limpet mine that uses magnets to attach itself to a ship's hull. The latter weighs around 220kg, carries a 150kg high-explosive charge, and can be laid in waters up to 35 metres deep.

### HOW MINESWEEPERS DEAL WITH THEM

Tackling naval mines is an arduous, painstaking task. Traditionally, these threats were countered by wooden-hulled 'minesweepers' that would drag wires through the water to catch

and cut the cables anchoring a mine. Once cut loose, the mine would float to the surface, where it could be destroyed by gunfire. Over time, as naval mines got more complex, sweeping methods too became sophisticated. Instead of just cutting cables, navies began towing devices that imitate the noise or magnetic profile of a ship, in effect tricking mines into detonating early and at a safer distance. The ships that employed these counter-measures also evolved over time. While older minesweepers often used wooden hulls, later designs relied on materials and construction methods that reduced their magnetic signature. The whole point was to lower the odds that the sweeper itself would trigger the mine it was trying to clear. Modern mine warfare goes a step further. It utilises specialised mine-hunting ships, helicopters, unmanned vehicles, and sensors. Together, some or all of these systems search for mines with the help of sonar, which uses sound waves to detect underwater objects, as well as laser systems. Once identified, the mines are inspected with the help of underwater

vehicles (UUVs) and unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) and destroyed in a controlled manner.

### WHAT US IS LIKELY TO DO IN HORMUZ

For the US Navy, the practical aim in the current conflict will not be to make every inch of the strait instantly mine-free. It will be to make enough of it safe enough for controlled transit, then widen that corridor over time. This is what the US military's Central Command commander said on April 11 as he announced the start of mine-clearing operations: "Today, we began the process of establishing a new passage and we will share this safe pathway with the maritime industry soon to encourage the free flow of commerce". At the centre of this effort will be the US Navy's Littoral Combat Ships, which specialise in near-shore operations such as mine clearance, and helicopters such as the MH-60 Romeo, which are equipped with the Airborne Laser Mine Detection System. The helicopters can detect and track possible mines over a wide area, making them useful for building an initial map of the minefield.

## Pak security forces arrest 16 terrorists in Punjab province

BY M ZULQERNAIN

LAHORE: (Apr 14) Pakistan's security agencies have arrested sixteen terrorists belonging to various terror outfits in multiple operations conducted in Punjab province, an official said on Tuesday. Security forces conducted 113 intelligence-based operations (IBOs) over the past week in different districts, which led to the arrest of these terrorists, a spokesperson for the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) said.

A major terror plot was



foiled by Punjab police by arresting 16 terrorists belonging to various banned organisations, including Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Al-Qaeda and Daesh (ISIS), he said.

## Reliance Jewels Launches Smart Festive Collections for Akshaya Tritiya with Unbeatable Value Offers



MUMBAI, 14 APRIL

Reliance Jewels, one of India's most trusted jewellery brands, ushers in Akshaya Tritiya with a fresh, value-led approach—introducing new gold and diamond collections designed to make festive buying smarter and more accessible.

Customers can avail gold jewellery at a flat 9% making charge and diamond jewellery with 99% off on gold value, ensuring they pay primarily for the diamonds—making this a truly compelling, one-of-a-kind festive offer. The offer is valid till April 19, 2026.

This Akshaya Tritiya, customers can choose from a wide range of jewellery including earrings, rings, bangles, and chains in gold and diamond. The collection includes everyday favourites like studs, hoops, and sleek finger rings, as well as festive styles such as jhumkis, chandbais, statement necklaces, and intricately crafted bangles. With options spanning daily wear to bridal jewellery, the range offers both design variety and strong value for jewellery enthusiasts.

Amid ongoing gold price volatility and evolving consumer behaviour, Reliance Jewels highlights a key shift—jewellery today is not just a traditional purchase, but a smart and wearable investment. Consumers are increasingly seeking designs that balance emotional value with

practical spending.

Bringing this thought to life, the brand's festive campaign features a warm father-daughter moment with critically acclaimed actor Gajraj Rao and Pratibha Ranta of \*Laapataa Ladies\* fame. The ad film reflects how younger consumers are reinterpreting traditions with a more informed and value-conscious approach, while staying deeply connected to family values. While Akshaya Tritiya continues to signify shubh buying, Reliance Jewels sharpens its proposition from "Shubh Akshaya Tritiya" to "Smart Akshaya Tritiya".

Speaking on the Akshaya Tritiya offerings, a Reliance Jewels spokesperson said, "Amid ongoing gold price volatility, consumer behaviour is clearly shifting—today's customers are more informed, value-conscious, and discerning. At Reliance Jewels, we've anchored our approach in this sharp insight by launching a value-led range for Akshaya Tritiya and positioning Reliance Jewels not only as an integral part of tradition, but also as a smart, wearable investment relevant to current times—bringing together 'Shubh' with a more 'Smart' way of celebrating."

Customers can explore Reliance Jewels' intricately designed collections at 140+ showrooms across India and online, and avail exciting offers on gold and diamond jewellery.

## The Hormuz Tax: Why Indian Oil Firms are Losing Rs.1,600 Crore Daily

The Middle East crisis continues to choke energy supplies across the world and push crude prices higher, swinging around \$100 per barrel mark. However, even though input costs for energy continue to rise, fuel prices remain unchanged in India, pushing state-run oil marketing companies under mounting losses. Losses are estimated at around Rs 18 per litre on petrol and Rs 35 per litre on diesel. Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) have not revised retail prices since April 2022, even though global crude rates have fluctuated sharply during this period.

Crude prices have been volatile recently, moving from above \$100 per barrel to about \$70 earlier this year, before soaring to \$120 again last month after the Middle East war began.

**How much are oil giants losing?**  
At their peak, the three



firms were losing about Rs 2,400 crore per day but came down to around Rs 1,600 crore daily. The reduction came after the government cut excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 10 per litre each, which was used to offset losses and was not passed on to consumers, sources told PTL. Losses in March have wiped out gains made in January and February, and the companies are likely to report losses for the January-March quarter. A Macquarie Group report said, "At spot petrol-diesel pricing of \$135-165 per barrel, we estimate India's oil marketing companies lose Rs 18 and Rs 35 per litre on petrol and diesel sales (re-

spectively)." It added that every \$10 per barrel rise in crude increases losses by about Rs 6 per litre. The report also flagged a possible fuel price hike after elections in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu later this month, stating, "We see risk of higher pump prices post state elections in April." India imported about 88% of its crude oil needs in 2025, making it vulnerable to global price changes. Imports came mainly from the Middle East, Russia and the United States, though the country continued to export refined products like petrol, diesel and aviation fuel. Even after the recent duty cut, central taxes stand



## CBI Hyderabad Honors Ambedkar with Wheelchair Giveaway

HYDERABAD, APRIL 14:

The Central Bank of India, Zonal Office here commemorated Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's 135th birth anniversary by donating wheelchairs to differently-abled and underprivileged individuals through local NGO Narayana Seva Sansthan at Koti.

The initiative, led by Shri Dharasing Naik K., Zonal Head for Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka, underscores Dr. Ambedkar's

vision of equality, dignity, and social justice by boosting mobility and independence for those in need. He was accompanied by Shri Ujjwal Kumar Chandra (Deputy Zonal Head), Shri Gajendra Kumar Chouhan (Regional Head, Hyderabad), and other staff members. The event also included floral tributes to Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, honoring his enduring contributions to nation-building.

## 100 flights expected to arrive in India from UAE on Tuesday

NEW DELHI, APRIL 14

Airlines continue to operate from the Gulf countries where airspace remains open with around 100 flights expected to arrive in India from the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs. Airlines are operating limited non-scheduled commercial flights based on operational and safety considerations, the statement said. Flights continue to operate from various airports in Saudi Arabia and Oman to destinations in India. With Qatar airspace partially open, Qatar Airways is expected to operate around 10 flights to India on Tuesday. Kuwait airspace remains closed. Jazeera Airways of Kuwait and Kuwait Airways

are operating non-scheduled commercial flights from Dammam Airport in Saudi Arabia to India. Travel of Indian nationals to India from Kuwait continues to be facilitated through Saudi Arabia. Bahrain airspace is open. Gulf Air is expected to begin limited flight operations from Bahrain to India soon and is currently operating non-scheduled flights from Dammam Airport in Saudi Arabia to India. Travel of Indian nationals from Bahrain continues to be facilitated through Saudi Arabia to India. Embassy in Tehran has so far facilitated movement of 2,313 Indian nationals from Iran to Armenia and Azerbaijan for onward travel to India. This includes 1028 Indian students and 657 In-

dian fishermen. Israel airspace is partially open with restricted flight operations. Travel of Indian nationals is being facilitated from Israel, through Jordan and Egypt to India. "Iraq airspace is open. Iraqi Airways has resumed flights to India. Travel of Indian nationals continues to be facilitated from Iraq, through Jordan and Saudi Arabia to India," the ministry said. Around 9,55,000 passengers have travelled from the Gulf region to India since February 28, when the Iran war started. The ministry is also in regular contact with State Governments and Union Territories for better sharing of information and coordination. Efforts remain focused on ensuring the safety, security and welfare of the Indian community in the region, the statement added. Indian Missions and Posts continue to operate round-the-clock helplines and are proactively assisting Indian nationals. They remain in close contact with the local Governments. Updated advisories are being issued regularly, including information on local government guidelines, flight and travel situations and consular services and various welfare measures being undertaken to support the Indian community. The missions remain actively engaged with Indian community associations, professional groups, Indian companies and other stakeholders in the region, the statement added.

## Real Estate Captures 70% of Household Savings: Report

NEW DELHI, APRIL 14

Real estate now dominates Indian household savings at nearly 70%—up from 58% pre-pandemic (FY16-FY20)—as debt hits 6.2% of GDP in FY24 from 4.1%, cutting net financial savings to 5.2%, says Client Associates report. Property investment reached 12.8% of GDP, fueled by low mortgages and aspirations. Lending grew 17.6% CAGR (FY16-FY25), with credit cards at 25.2%. "Households are active players now—borrowing for

assets and markets," said Nitin Aggarwal, Director of Investment Research. Equity flows rose to 15% of assets by FY25. Households provide 60% of domestic savings (20% GDP avg.). Rising debt signals confidence but risks cash strain if unmanaged, aided by youth demographics and digital credit.

## Malla Reddy University Achieves Landmark ICAR Accreditation

### Sets New Benchmark in Agricultural Education

HYDERABAD, APRIL 13

In a moment of immense pride and academic distinction, Malla Reddy University has achieved a historic milestone by securing prestigious accreditation from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi, for its B.Sc (Hons.) Agriculture Programme. With this achievement, the University becomes the first State Private University in Telangana to receive this honour; marking a new chapter in the evolution of agricultural education in the region.

This recognition is widely regarded as one of the highest distinctions in the field of agricultural education, research, and extension in India. The accreditation reflects the University's unwavering commitment to academic excellence, high-quality research, innovative teaching methodologies, and robust infrastructure dedicated to agricultural sciences.

Speaking on this remarkable achievement, Dr. VSK Reddy, Vice Chancellor of Malla Reddy University, stated, "This milestone reflects the dedicated efforts of our faculty, staff, and students. ICAR accreditation will further strengthen our mission to deliver high-quality education and impactful research for the benefit of society and the farming community."

The accomplishment stands



as a testament to the visionary leadership and continuous support of the University's management. The pivotal contributions of Sri Ch. Malla Reddy, Founder Chairman, Dr. VSK Reddy, Vice Chancellor, Dr. K. Srinivasa Rao, Registrar, and Dr. A. Raja Reddy, Dean, have been instrumental in steering the institution towards this prestigious recognition.

ICAR accreditation is not merely a title, it signifies adherence to the highest national standards in agricultural education. It ensures that the curriculum, faculty expertise, research capabilities, and infrastructural facilities are aligned with the evolving needs of the agricultural sector and global best practices.

Highlighting the broader impact of this recognition, a senior university representative noted, "This achievement elevates Malla Reddy University's standing among leading institutions in agricultural sciences. It reinforces trust among students, parents, and

industry stakeholders, while opening new avenues for research, innovation, and collaboration."

The accreditation brings with it several key advantages that will benefit both students and the institution at large. It enhances the University's reputation as a centre of excellence in agricultural sciences, significantly boosting confidence among academic and industry stakeholders. Students enrolled in the programme can expect greater access to placement opportunities, fellowships, and advanced studies, both in India and abroad.

Additionally, ICAR-accredited institutions are often prioritised for financial assistance, research funding, and developmental grants, enabling them to further strengthen their academic and research ecosystem. This will empower Malla Reddy University to expand its contributions to the agricultural sector, particularly in areas that directly impact farmers

and rural communities. The University also expressed its heartfelt gratitude to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, along with its dedicated faculty members, staff, students, and stakeholders, whose unwavering support and commitment made this achievement possible.

As agriculture continues to play a critical role in India's economic and social fabric, milestones like these highlight the importance of quality education and research in shaping the sector's future. With this accreditation, Malla Reddy University is poised to emerge as a key contributor to agricultural innovation, sustainability, and rural development in Telangana and beyond.

About Malla Reddy University  
Malla Reddy University is a premier institution committed to delivering excellence in higher education across diverse disciplines. Known for its focus on innovation, research, and industry-oriented learning, the University strives to nurture future-ready professionals equipped to address real-world challenges. With state-of-the-art infrastructure, experienced faculty, and a strong emphasis on holistic development, Malla Reddy University continues to set benchmarks in academic excellence and societal impact.

## GAIL to invest Rs. 3800 crore in 700 MW Solar Power Projects in UP and Maharashtra

NEW DELHI, APRIL 14

GAIL (India) Limited has approved setting up of 700 MW of solar power projects with an investment of Rs 3800 crore in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.

As part of this initiative, GAIL will develop a 600 MW Solar Power Project along with a 550 MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at TUSCO Solar Park Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh. The project will primarily cater to the captive energy requirements of GAIL's Petrochemical Plant at Pata in Auraiya district.

In addition, the company will set up a 100 MW Solar Power Project with a 22 MWh BESS in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar district (formerly Aurangabad) in



Maharashtra. This facility will mainly serve the captive requirements of GAIL's PDH-PP Plant at Usar in Raigad district. These projects mark a significant milestone in GAIL's journey towards achieving its Net Zero targets, aligned with India's broader energy transition goals. Further, the integration of advanced energy storage systems will ensure efficient utilization of solar power by addressing intermittency challenges

and enabling round-the-clock availability of Renewable Energy. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Deepak Gupta, Chairman & Managing Director, said, "GAIL's installed renewable energy capacity shall increase substantially to over 1,000 MW from the current 147 MW upon commissioning of these projects." He further emphasized that this expansion underscores GAIL's strategic vision of aligning its growth trajectory with environmental responsibility while ensuring long-term energy security. These projects further reinforce GAIL's role in driving India's energy transition and strengthen its position as an integrated energy major with a balanced portfolio of conventional and green energy assets.

## 'Unani Ki Kahaani' Sparks Holistic Healing Buzz: Jim Sarbh, Experts Target Youth Wellness

NEW DELHI, APRIL 14

Hamdard Laboratories is riding the wave of its documentary 'Unani Ki Kahaani', launched on World Unani Day (February 11, 2026) on Discovery Channel, by sparking dialogues with experts, leaders, and influencers on Unani medicine's role in modern holistic healing. Narrated by actor Jim Sarbh, the film demystifies Unani for Millennials and Gen Z through storytelling, insights, and cultural narratives. It showcases Unani's holistic method—balancing mind, body, and environment to tackle root causes of illness, not just symptoms.

The documentary has drawn robust engagement from audiences, practitioners, wellness groups, and online platforms, fueling talks on preventive care and traditional systems combating NCDs like diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular issues tied to lifestyles. Hamdard also debuted its brand song

'Hamdard Banke', sung by National Film Award winner Swanand Kirkire, capturing the company's legacy of care, societal giving, and nature-based holistic solutions.

### Influencers Advocate Integrative Approaches

Building momentum, Jim Sarbh, cardiologist Dr. Alok Chopra, and Hamdard Digital Lead Uzma Majeed emphasized holistic healing for today's stress-filled world. They highlighted Unani's fit for youth seeking sustainable wellness amid lifestyle challenges. Jim Sarbh reflected: "What struck me most about 'Unani Ki Kahaani' was how beautifully it connected history, culture, and balance. Unani anticipates health issues via lifestyle, not just symptoms. Travelling to Kashmir, seeing herbs sourced and formulated, and witnessing personalized Unani diagnoses was eye-opening. It's science-backed tradition for long-term well-being."

Dr. Alok Chopra, co-founder of Aashlok Hospital, added: "Unani isn't alternative—it's foundational functional medicine boosting body functions. With rising lifestyle disorders, we need preventive health, lifestyle management, and integration. I aim to deepen Unani understanding for broader medical awareness."

Uzma Majeed noted: "Unani Ki Kahaani' made Unani relatable for youth beyond quick fixes. We've seen strong responses, sparking curiosity in holistic preventive wellness. These talks bridge tradition and modern needs."

### Hamdard's Wellness Push Continues

These discussions align with Hamdard's drive for integrative healthcare awareness. On World Health Day (April 7, 2026), it launched the 'Holistic Healing' campaign, blending research, education, and engagement for preventive care.



## Pre-monsoon season emerging as new high-risk period for crops, analysis shows

The monsoon has long been seen as the most destructive season for Indian agriculture, with heavy rains and floods between June and September damaging crops across large areas. However, an analysis of data from 2022 to early April 2026 suggests a shift in both the timing and scale of risks to farming. Alongside the monsoon, the pre-monsoon season is now emerging as a new period of high risk to crops, according to the analysis based on India's Interactive Atlas on Weather Disasters.

### Rising crop losses before the monsoon

Unseasonal rains and hailstorms during the pre-monsoon period are increasingly damaging crops at a time once considered relatively safe for farming. In three of the past four years — 2022, 2024 and 2025 — a significant cropped area was affected by extreme weather events, particularly hailstorms, during the pre-monsoon season. The trend appears to be continuing in 2026. In just the first 38 days of the pre-monsoon period this year (March 1 to April 7), unseasonal rains and hail were reported on 29 days across at least 24 states.

At least 627,000 hectares of cropped area have been affected across 13 states, including Uttar Pradesh (347,366.43 ha), Maharashtra (204,704 ha) and Bihar (45,000 ha). These figures are likely to be underestimates, as data from 11 other affected states — including eastern states such as West Bengal — is not included. In total, more than 620,000 hectares have been affected in just over a month, making this the second-highest pre-monsoon crop loss

### Extreme weather hits at harvest time

The timing of these events is critical. March and April mark the harvest period for rabi crops such as wheat, mustard and pulses. Extreme weather is now clustering within short periods and striking just before harvest, leaving farmers with little chance to recover losses. Unlike earlier in the season, crops damaged at this stage cannot be re-planted, resulting in a complete loss of income. Even brief spells of rain or hail can destroy standing crops ready for harvest. In many cases, moisture at this stage also reduces grain quality, affecting market prices. Crop-wise data shows that the impact is particularly severe on rabi crops ready for harvest. Across states such as Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana, wheat, mustard, gram and pulses have been widely affected. Wheat, the main rabi crop, has been among the hardest hit. It had already faced stress due to a warmer winter, especially in February, a crucial period for grain development. Alongside cereals, crops such as potato, onion and garlic in states including Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have also suffered damage, adding to the economic burden on farmers.

since 2023, when around 636,000 hectares were affected over the entire season. March 2026 alone recorded at least 195,000 hectares of crop damage — the highest in five years. By comparison, March 2023 saw about 120,000 hectares affected. Similarly, in just the first week of April, more than 426,000 hectares of cropped area were affected, according to estimates available until April 7, 2026. HarDOI district in Uttar Pradesh alone

accounted for over 80 per cent of this damage. On April 5, around 30 millimetres of rainfall along with hailstorms caused extensive losses to standing wheat crops across approximately 343,069 hectares in the district, according to preliminary data from the Agriculture Department cited in media reports.

### Expanding geography of crop damage

The geography of crop loss

is also changing. Earlier, such damage during this period was largely confined to north-western states such as Punjab, Haryana and parts of Uttar Pradesh. In 2026, however, the impact has spread much wider. Maharashtra has emerged as a major hotspot, with more than 120,000 hectares affected in March alone. Losses have been recorded across all regions — central India, the east and north-east, the north-west and the southern peninsula. Eastern states such as Bihar and southern states including Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, which previously saw little or no damage during this period, have also reported significant losses this year. This widening spread suggests that unseasonal rains and hailstorms are now affecting a much larger part of the country. This shift is worrying. The data indicates that March and early April are becoming high-risk months for farmers. With the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting a hotter and wetter April, pre-monsoon losses could be the highest in five years. As risks extend across more

months and regions, farmers may now face two high-risk seasons in a year — the pre-monsoon and the monsoon — instead of one. The changes also make agricultural planning based on past seasonal patterns increasingly unreliable, with potential long-term implications for food security and farmer incomes. Experts say the changing seasonality of crop risks needs to be recognised, alongside timely support and improved data systems to protect farmers in a changing climate.

### What is driving these events?

According to the IMD, the unseasonal rains and hailstorms in March and April 2026 have been driven by strong and active western disturbances bringing cold air into the plains. This cold air has interacted with early summer heat over India, creating conditions for intense thunderstorms and hail. At the same time, additional moisture from the Arabian Sea and unstable atmospheric conditions have made these weather systems more widespread and severe.



## Wildlife damage to crops not monitored

### Experts call for data systems, specific action plans

A herd of elephants passing through overnight can leave a paddy field stripped bare by morning. Boar tear through groundnut plots in a matter of hours. Nilgai and peafowl return week after week until little is left worth guarding. Elephant conflict alone was estimated to affect between 0.8 and 1 million hectares of cropland every year in India, touching nearly a million rural families. In the Western Ghats, farmers growing banana and arecanut report annual losses approaching or exceeding Rs 1 lakh in severely affected years. In Himachal Pradesh's hill zones, a field study found an average economic loss of Rs 25,358 per affected farm, with cultivated area shrinking by 12-17 per cent in conflict-prone zones. A 2021 multi-landscape household survey found that roughly half of all households near forests had experienced crop damage from wildlife.

Yet, India has no national database to count any of it. There is no central system to track where wildlife conflict incidents happen, how often, which species cause them, or what they cost farmers.

These findings are at the heart of a comprehensive

policy compendium released by the Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture (ASHA), a civil society network of organisations and individuals working at the intersection of agriculture and sustainable and viable farm livelihoods in rural India. The paper's central demand is the establishment of a 'National Human-Animal Conflict Mission', backed by a unified data system that records every species — including high-frequency ones like giant squirrels, monkeys, peacocks, parrots, deer, that currently go uncounted — alongside location, seasonality, crop phase, incident frequency, type of loss, and underlying causes. This data, it said, must drive species- and context-specific protocols and must be integrated into infrastructure planning, corridor protection and environmental clearances. Without such a system, the authors warned, governance will remain permanently reactive, budgets will remain misallocated, and rural communities will continue absorbing public costs with their crops, their cattle, and many times their lives.

Crop loss from wildlife is now among the most finan-

cially destabilising threats facing farmers, especially in forest-edge India. Entire farming systems — paddy, bananas, maize, sugarcane, tubers and horticulture near forests and on the hills — are becoming economically unviable. "The invisibility of data ensures the conflict remains underestimated and undebated in a nuanced fashion," the experts noted in the report.

The Union government has introduced a national action plan for human-wildlife conflict mitigation, expanded Project Elephant with a focus on corridor protection and early warning measures, funded rapid response teams in conflict-prone states, and pushed for geo-tagged digital compensation systems.

The crisis, however, has deepened regardless these measures, the authors pointed out. The answer, they argued, lies not in the absence of policy intent but in the architecture of the response itself. From compensation schemes being chronically underfunded and early-warning systems working only in patches to fencing projects left without maintenance and mandated interdepartmental coordination almost never institutionalised in practice.



## Push for sustainable agriculture at farmers' fair in Mandi district

A farmers' fair promoting sustainable agriculture practices was organised by the Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA), Mandi, at Disti gram panchayat in Chachoty tehsil of Mandi district, with a focus on the Indian natural farming system.

The event drew participation from around 470 farmers, signalling a growing interest in eco-friendly and cost-effective agricultural methods. The primary objective was to raise awareness about natural farming and encourage a reduction in the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Agricultural experts at the fair provided detailed guidance on key natural farming techniques, including Jeevamrit, Ghanjeevamrit and Beejamrit, explaining both their preparation and application. They highlighted the advantages of these methods, such as lower input costs, improved soil fertility and the production of healthier food. Farmers were also briefed on the latest Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for major crops such as wheat, maize and turmeric, enabling them to make informed decisions and secure better returns for their

produce. Experts said natural farming was not only environmentally sustainable but also a profitable alternative for the future of agriculture. Farmers were encouraged to adopt these practices to enhance long-term productivity and resilience.

The event was attended by several dignitaries and officials, including HP SC/ST Commission Chairman Lal Singh Kaushal, district-level Farmer Advisory Committee member Heer Singh Thakur, 20-Point Programme member Deep Mani, ATMA Mandi Deputy Project Director Sanjay Kumar Thakur, agricultural expert Dr Hitender Thakur, SMS Agriculture Gagan Pradeep Saini, Executive Engineer (Electricity) Sumesh Chauhan, SDO (Jal Shakti) Kishore Lal, Horticulture Development Officer Dr Kajal Sharma and Veterinary Officer Dr Rakesh Sharma, among others.

# Inside Syngenta's AI Driven Approach To Modern Agriculture

Agriculture may be the world's oldest industry, but at Syngenta, it is being reshaped by some of the most advanced technologies available today. As Chief Information and Digital Officer, Feroz Sheikh leads efforts to integrate data, artificial intelligence and digital platforms into how food is grown and how farmers make decisions.

"Syngenta is an agriculture inputs provider," Sheikh explained. "We make the crop protection products that farmers use on their fields, and we develop seeds for crops like corn, soybeans and tomatoes." Operating in more than 100 countries with roughly 60,000 employees, Syngenta Group reported approximately \$28.5 billion in sales in 2025. This scale increases Syngenta's global reach and influences highly localized farming realities. For Sheikh, the role extends far beyond traditional IT. His remit spans everything from foundational infrastructure to cutting edge AI, with a strong emphasis on driving innovation that benefits both researchers and farmers. "A lot of my time goes into helping use data and technology in meaningful ways," he said, "whether that is accelerating product development or helping farmers make better decisions in the field." A defining feature of Syngenta's approach is how it organizes for innovation. Rather than isolating technical expertise, the company builds interdisciplinary teams that combine deep domain knowledge with advanced computational skills. Sheikh points to computational agronomy as a core example, where data scientists and engineers work alongside soil experts and entomologists. "That intersection allows us to develop solutions that take data about the soil and feed it into models," he noted. "From there, we can make recommendations on how farmers can improve outcomes." This blending of disciplines reflects a broader shift in how talent is evolving. Increasingly, success depends not just on technical proficiency, but on the ability to bridge domains. Syngenta is also investing in roles like knowledge managers, who ensure that AI systems are trained on accurate, current and relevant information. "It is about making sure the expertise behind these tools is consistent and usable," Sheikh underscored.

### The Digital Layer on a Physical Industry

Yet even as digital capabilities expand, agriculture remains fundamentally physical. Seeds must still be planted, crops must still be harvested and environmental conditions remain unpredictable. Sheikh describes modern agriculture as a kind of "jigsaw puzzle," where advances in chemistry, genetics and machinery have laid the groundwork, but data and AI are emerging as the final piece. Today's tractors, he points out, function as "data centers on wheels," generating vast amounts of information as they move across fields. The opportunity lies in turning that data into actionable insight. "Every decision a farmer makes can now be more data driven," Sheikh emphasized. "From soil conditions to weather patterns to seed performance, we can help optimize each step."

### AI Across the Value Chain

This philosophy extends across Syngenta's broader AI strategy, which Sheikh organizes into four pillars: AI in the lab, in the supply chain, in the enterprise and in the hands of farmers. In research and development, AI helps scientists analyze trial data and predict which innovations are most likely to succeed. In supply chain operations, AI driven agents assist with procurement and logistics decisions. Internally, AI is being used to modernize workflows and improve productivity. At scale, these capabilities unlock entirely new possibilities. With digital platforms now deployed across more than 150 million acres, Syngenta can identify patterns and trends that were previously invisible. For example, early detection of crop diseases in one region

can be used to predict how those diseases will spread, enabling farmers in other areas to take preventative action. "This is not just about climate models," Sheikh explained. "It is about combining real-time observations with environmental data to create a collective intelligence that benefits everyone." The stakes could not be higher. By 2050, the global population is expected to approach 10 billion, requiring a dramatic increase in food production without expanding agricultural land. Sheikh sees this challenge as both urgent and motivating. "We have already maxed out on agricultural land," he said. "The only way forward is to produce more from what we have." Digital technology, he believes, is essential to solving that equation. By enabling more precise, data driven decisions at every stage of the farming cycle, it becomes possible to

increase yields while reducing waste and environmental impact. Looking ahead, Sheikh is particularly excited about the convergence of AI with robotics and automation. Drones are already being used to monitor fields and apply treatments, and the next wave of innovation could include autonomous machines capable of executing complex agricultural tasks. "It almost sounds like science fiction," he noted, "but it is closer than we think."

In an industry defined by tradition, Syngenta's approach illustrates how technology can drive meaningful transformation without losing sight of the fundamentals. As Sheikh and his team continue to push the boundaries of what is possible, the future of agriculture is becoming not just more digital, but more intelligent, adaptive and sustainable.



### Democratizing Expertise Through AI

One of the most powerful applications of this approach is the democratization of expertise. Farmers operate in vastly different contexts, from small family farms in emerging markets to large scale commercial operations. Digital tools and AI have the potential to bridge that gap. Sheikh describes a scenario where a farmer can simply take a photo of a crop issue using a smartphone. AI models can then diagnose the problem and recommend a course of action, often in the farmer's native language. "That farmer now carries expertise in their pocket," he offered with a note of pride. "It is transformational."





## Bowlers power CSK to convincing 32-run win over KKR

### CRICKET

**Sanju Samson bags player of the month award for March after T20 WC heroics**



**NEW DELHI:** Indian wicket-keeper batter Sanju Samson has been named the ICC men's player of the month for March after a stellar performance in the T20 World Cup 2026 knockouts. This is the first time Samson has won the prestigious title for his World Cup-winning performance. Samson, who began the 2026 Men's T20 World Cup watching from the sidelines, wrote one of the tournament's most dramatic personal arcs once handed an opportunity to be in the team since the Super Eight clash against Zimbabwe in Chennai. He struck an unforgettable 97 not out against the West Indies in a must-win Super Eight fixture in Kolkata before hitting scores of 89 each in the semi-final against England in Mumbai and in the final against New Zealand in Ahmedabad.



### CHENNAI

A clinical bowling display led by Noor Ahmad and Anshul Kamboj complemented a strong batting performance as Chennai Super Kings defeated Kolkata Knight Riders by 32 runs in their IPL 2026 clash at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, here on Tuesday.

Defending a competitive 192/5, CSK struck early and maintained control throughout, restricting KKR to 160/7 in 20 overs despite late resistance from Ramandeep Singh and Rovman Powell. KKR's chase began on an experimental note, with Sunil Narine opening alongside Finn Allen. While Narine showed early intent with a couple of sixes, Allen fell cheaply as Kamboj struck in the second over to provide CSK an early breakthrough.

Narine failed to build on his start and was dismissed by Khaleel Ahmed during the powerplay, leaving KKR struggling at 36/2 after six overs — their lowest powerplay score since 2024. Ajinkya Rahane and Angkrish Raghuvanshi attempted to rebuild, briefly lift-

ing the scoring rate with a mix of boundaries and sixes.

However, CSK's spin attack turned the game decisively in the middle overs. Akeal Hosein broke the partnership by removing Raghuvanshi, before Noor delivered a match-defining spell. The Afghan left-arm wrist-spinner dismissed Rahane and struck twice in quick succession, removing Cameron Green for a golden duck and later Rinku Singh, derailed KKR's chase.

Noor finished with impressive figures of 3/21, consistently troubling batters with his variations and exploiting the Chepauk surface. His spell reduced KKR from a position of recovery to deep trouble at 91/6.

With the required rate climbing, Ramandeep (35 off 23) and Powell (31 not out off 22) stitched together a fighting partnership, keeping KKR's hopes alive with occasional boundaries. However, disciplined bowling from CSK ensured the target remained out of reach.

Kamboj returned at the death to seal the contest, finishing with 2/32. He removed Ramandeep in the penultimate

over and conceded just 12 runs in the final over to close out the game.

Earlier, CSK posted a strong 192/5 after electing to bat. Sanju Samson led the charge with a fluent 48, while young Ayush Mhatre provided a blistering start with a 17-ball 38. Dewald Brevis added impetus in the middle overs with a well-compiled 41, helping CSK recover after a brief slowdown.

Despite efforts from KKR's bowlers, particularly Narine and Varun Chakravarthy, to pull things back in the middle overs, CSK's aggressive start ultimately proved decisive.

The win marks CSK's second successive victory, while KKR continue to struggle for consistency in their batting and remain winless.

### Brief scores:

Chennai Super Kings 192/5 in 20 overs (Sanju Samson 48, Dewald Brevis 41, Ayush Mhatre 38; Kartik Tyagi 2/35) beat Kolkata Knight Riders 160/7 in 20 overs (Ramandeep Singh 35, Rovman Powell 31; Noor Ahmad 3/21, Anshul Kamboj 2/32) by 32 runs.

## 'The IPL changed everything': Graeme Smith on revolution brought by franchise cricket

### NEW DELHI

Graeme Smith, the former South Africa captain, thinks that the growth of franchise cricket has significantly changed the global cricket scene. He notes that the Indian Premier League remains the standard for other leagues around the world.

Now serving as the SA20 commissioner, Smith has observed the sport's development firsthand, from the classic challenges of Test cricket to the booming commercial industry and worldwide popularity of T20 franchise leagues. Smith reflected that the Indian Premier League served as the key driver of cricket's contemporary development.

"The IPL changed everything. It showed how big franchise cricket could become commercially, in terms of fan engagement, and also in the quality of cricket being played. Every new league that has emerged since then has learned something from the IPL model," Smith told Olympics.com. Since starting in 2008, the IPL has become a worldwide force, shaping not just the game itself but also its marketing and consumption. As Smith notes, its influence reaches far beyond India, inspiring leagues in other countries to adopt comparable models. "Leagues around the world have taken inspiration from the IPL," Smith said. "Whether it's the structure, the player auction system, or the way the tournament connects with fans, it has become the template for modern franchise cricket." Smith observed that the swift growth of franchise tournaments is a natural development, fueled



by rising broadcast audiences and higher private investments in cricket. Additionally, he discussed potential changes to the future cricket calendar to incorporate several premier leagues.

"It's always difficult to predict exactly how things will unfold. But if you look at the direction cricket is heading, the game will probably settle with four or five tier-one leagues globally, each occupying its own window in the international calendar," he observed. Even within that framework, Smith asserted that the IPL would still lead the ecosystem, saying, "The IPL sits at the top of the pyramid. It attracts the best players in the world and generates enormous interest. Other leagues can thrive as well, but the calendar will have to be structured carefully so that these competitions complement each other."

Looking ahead, Smith also floated the possibility of a global club competition featuring top franchise teams from different leagues. "You could easily see a Club World Cup-type tournament emerg-

ing. Imagine the champions of the IPL, SA20, Australia's Big Bash, and other major leagues competing against each other," he noted. "With private franchise ownership now involved across several leagues, the idea has real potential. There's obviously a lot of work to do before something like that becomes reality, but the foundations are already there. Franchise cricket has created a completely new ecosystem," he added.

Smith emphasised the importance of cricket's reintroduction to the Olympics at Los Angeles 2028, viewing it as a pivotal milestone for the sport's worldwide expansion.

"For many years, the Olympics simply weren't part of cricket's world. Players grew up dreaming of World Cups or playing in the IPL, but not necessarily about Olympic medals," Smith explained. "You look at athletes like Novak Djokovic and how emotional winning an Olympic gold medal was for him. Even in sports that already have huge tournaments, the Olympics still hold a very special place," he said.

### IPL 2026

**Dilshan Madushanka replaces injured Brydon Carse in SRH**



**NEW DELHI:** The 2016 champion Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) have been dealt a big blow amid the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 as all-rounder Brydon Carse has been ruled out of the whole tournament without playing a single match due to injury. The team has announced Sri Lankan pacer Dilshan Madushanka as Carse's replacement. "Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) have picked Dilshan Madushanka as a replacement for Brydon Carse for the remainder of the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026. Carse has been ruled out of the ongoing IPL season due to an injury," the Indian Premier League wrote in a statement released on Tuesday. "Dilshan Madushanka, a left-arm medium pacer, has represented Sri Lanka in one Test, 28 ODIs, and 19 T20Is and has 70 wickets against his name.

## Defending champion Gauff, world No. 1 Sabalenka headline Roland Garros entry list

### NEW DELHI

The main-draw entry list for this year's French Open has been unveiled, featuring an almost complete field of the world's top-ranked players, with 100 of the top 101 in the WTA rankings confirming participation in the clay-court major.

Defending champion Coco Gauff returns to Paris after securing her second Grand Slam title at the venue last year. She is joined by former champions Jelena Ostapenko, Iga Swiatek, and Barbora Krejickova, making it a strong line-up of past winners.

Swiatek, a four-time champion in Paris, will be aiming to further cement her legacy by targeting a fifth title — a feat achieved in the Open Era only by legends Chris Evert and Stefanie Graf. Several



Grand Slam winners are also in contention for their maiden Roland Garros crown, including World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka, reigning Australian Open champion Elena Rybakina, along with Naomi Osaka, Madison Keys, Emma Raducanu, Marketa Vondrousova, and Sofia Kenin. Among them, Sabalenka, Vondrousova, and Kenin have previously reached the final in Paris.

## Alcaraz advances in opener, De Minaur progress

### BARCELONA

World No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz made a strong start to his campaign at the Barcelona Open, defeating Finland's Otto Virtanen 6-4, 6-3 to move into the second round of the ATP 500 event on Tuesday. Returning to action after his runner-up finish at the Monte-Carlo Masters, where he fell to Jannik Sinner, Alcaraz looked composed in his first match on home soil this season. The Spaniard, now ranked No. 2, has an opportunity to reclaim the top spot with a title-winning run in Barcelona.

Despite requiring a medical timeout for an arm concern at the end of the opening set, Alcaraz showed little sign of discomfort thereafter, wrapping up the contest in one hour and 25 minutes. He will next face Tomas Machac,



who battled past Sebastian Baez 2-6, 6-4, 6-1.

"It feels great to be back and to get another win in front of my people in Barcelona; it means everything. This morning was my first practice here to adapt to the conditions. Different conditions

in Monte-Carlo, but overall I am really happy with the way that I played," Alcaraz was quoted by ATP. The 22-year-old has enjoyed considerable success at this event, having clinched back-to-back titles in 2022 and 2023. He also reached the final last year,

finishing runner-up to Holger Rune. Alcaraz arrives in Barcelona chasing his third title of the season, having already triumphed at the Australian Open and an ATP 500 event in Doha.

His recent defeat to Sinner in Monte-Carlo, the third

Masters 1000 tournament of the year, has added further motivation as he looks to return to winning ways. With the Italian not competing this week, the door remains open for Alcaraz to reclaim the No. 1 ranking. Elsewhere, second seed Lorenzo Musetti advanced with a 7-5, 6-2 win over Spanish wild card Martin Landaluce. After a closely fought first set, Musetti took control from the baseline to seal victory in 88 minutes, setting up a meeting with Corentin Moutet.

Third seed Alex de Minaur also progressed, overcoming Austrian qualifier Sebastian Ofner 7-6(7), 6-4. De Minaur showed resilience in the opening set, saving a set point in the tie-break before closing out the match in straight sets. He will next take on Hamad Medjedovic in the second round.

## 'I'll be able to bowl four overs,' says Green

### CHENNAI

Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) all-rounder Cameron Green admitted the team is still searching for momentum in IPL 2026, even as he remained optimistic about a turnaround ahead of their clash against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) at the MA Chidambaram Stadium.

Green, who arrived at KKR with high expectations following a Rs 25.20 crore deal, has endured a modest start with the bat, managing scores of 18, 2, 4 and an unbeaten 32 in four outings. With Cricket Australia advising caution due to his recent recovery, his bowling has also been gradually reintroduced, with the all-rounder sending down two overs in the previous game against Lucknow Super Giants.

Reflecting on his experience with a new franchise after stints with Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Green highlighted the positive environment within



the KKR camp despite results not going their way.

"It's awesome. Obviously, on field it's not been our year so far. We know it's a long tournament, so probably need to win some games pretty desperately. But no, off field it's been awesome. I think all the support staff, the players have been great and up and about. So hopefully that holds us in good stead," the all-rounder told the broadcasters ahead of the CSK vs KKR clash. KKR are coming off a narrow defeat in their previous outing, and Green pointed out that the team has focused on staying positive and backing the processes that are working.

## Russia put three past India women's team in U17 friendly

### NEW DELHI

The India U17 women's team suffered a 0-3 defeat against Russia in the second of three friendly matches at the Matsesta Football Center in Sochi, Russia, on Tuesday. Valeria Menyailova struck twice early in the second half (49', 52') after Sofia Svyatnaya (18') had opened the scoring, as the hosts capitalised on key errors to secure the win. While the entire Russia squad was born in 2009, four in 2011, and three in 2010. The Young Tigresses, coached by Italian Pamela Conti, are using these matches to prepare for next month's all-important AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup China 2026. India lost 0-4 in the first game against Russia three days ago.

Russia began on the front foot and nearly went ahead as early as the second minute. Menyailova was played through inside the box and showed neat footwork to get past Divyani Linda, but her close-range effort was denied by a sharp save from goalkeeper Mundi. The winger continued to pose problems and came close again in the 10th minute, only for Mundi to rush off her line and produce an excellent diving stop to keep the scores level. India, however, took time to settle into the



contest. Their first shot on target arrived in the 13th minute when Valaina Fernandes tried her luck from distance, but it was comfortably gathered by goalkeeper Emelianova Anastasiya. A minute later, Valaina laid the ball off for Olivia Chanu Ningthoujam, who tested the Russian custodian again. The match marked Olivia's youth international debut for India.

Despite India's growing involvement, Russia broke the deadlock in the 18th minute through an unfortunate error. Sofia Svyatnaya floated in a free-kick from the left that should have

been a routine take for Mundi, but the goalkeeper misjudged the flight, allowing the ball to slip and roll over the line.

The setback sparked a response from the Young Tigresses, who began to push higher up the pitch and create openings. Their best opportunity of the half came in the 32nd minute when Valaina skipped past her marker and aimed a curling effort towards the far corner. Emelianova, however, reacted swiftly to dive and parry the ball away, preserving Russia's lead going into the break. India's hopes of a comeback

were dented early in the second half following a defensive lapse. In the 49th minute, a sequence of poor backpasses proved costly. Ritu Badaik initiated the move under pressure, and captain Elizabeth Lakra's attempted clearance only made matters worse. Menyailova capitalised, intercepting the loose ball before rounding Mundi and finishing calmly to double Russia's advantage.

The hosts extended their lead soon after with a well-worked move in the 52nd minute. Mira Kuznetsova threaded a precise through pass to Menyailova, who made no mistake in front of the goal, dispatching a powerful right-footed strike to make it 3-0.

India continued to show intent despite the deficit and came close to pulling one back in the 70th minute. Substitute Pearl Fernandes struck firmly on goal, but Emelianova once again proved equal to the task, making a solid save to deny the visitors.

While the scoreline reflected Russia's clinical edge, India showed moments of promise, particularly through Valaina and Olivia, but were ultimately undone by individual errors at crucial moments. The two teams will meet once more in the final friendly on April 17, as India look to regroup and fine-tune their preparations for the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup China 2026

## Premier League: Bournemouth boss Iraola to leave club at end of season

### BOURNEMOUTH

Premier League club AFC Bournemouth has confirmed that head coach Andoni Iraola will leave the club at the conclusion of the 2025/26 season, bringing an end to his successful three-year tenure on the south coast. Since his appointment, the club has continued to compete in the Premier League, most notably delivering a record points total of 56 in 2024/25 and consequently achieving their joint-highest finish of ninth place, AFC Bournemouth said in a statement on Tuesday.

Iraola has played a pivotal role in establishing the club's identity in the Premier League, earning widespread recognition for his progressive style of play and commitment to developing both emerging and established talent, the statement said. Fitness Coach, Pablo de la Torre, will also leave the club following the conclusion of the 2025/26 season.

# Alia Bhatt Back To Telugu? But..

There's a fresh buzz doing the rounds in Telugu film circles that Bollywood diva Alia Bhatt is being considered for a key role in a big-ticket Telugu pan-India project. Nothing official yet, but the buzz is strong enough to grab attention from the audience.

This wouldn't be new territory for Alia, provided with the fact that with SS Rajamouli's RRR, she already stepped into Telugu cinema. While her role was limited, her presence did add a certain pull in the North India market. It gave the film extra visibility in Hindi circuits, especially during the initial buzz phase. That's the kind of crossover value makers are clearly looking at again. However, Alia will not be a big crowd puller as expected, other than costing the exchequer of the producer's very huge bills.

Bollywood has gone through a visible shift post Dhurandhar 2: The Revenge's release. The audience is no longer buying into star-driven hype alone. Scale, conviction, and rooted storytelling are driving results. And in that process, even big names like YRF are facing heat. Alia Bhatt's very own upcoming biggie Alpha is reportedly going through reshoots. For a YRF-backed project, that signals pressure to get things right before release.

At the same time, Alia herself hasn't had a smooth run lately, with films like Jigra biting the dust, and the actress not taking up big films post the birth of her child. That would also result in the audience showing less interest in her these days. Pan-India cinema today is less about language and more about positioning. A strong Telugu film with the right scale can offer what many Hindi films currently can't. So, Alia's presence is neither plus nor minus, but only the content drives the theatrical pull.



# Hrithik In Rajamouli's Varanasi? Buzz Or Bluff?

Out of nowhere, social media has picked up a wild rumour that Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan is playing the role of Lord Shiva in Varanasi. The imagination is running full throttle, with people sharing a lot of AI-generated images of the actor in his Lord Shiva avatar. However, many are wondering if Rajamouli would take such a risk, because Hrithik's arrival would kill the film Varanasi's chances in Bollywood. On paper, it sounds exciting. Hrithik has the star power, the physique, and that screen presence to pull off a role like Shiva. In fact, the moment this buzz started, AI-generated looks of the actor in Lord Shiva avatar began flooding timelines on Twitter. But here's where things get tricky. This film is primarily driven by Superstar Mahesh Babu. Bringing in a star like Hrithik, even for a cameo, might make fans think he's doing a longer role, like how it happened with Jr NTR in WAR 2. That kind of move will switch the spotlight, and that affects the film's prospects big time.

That said, Rajamouli is not someone who overlooks star dynamics. He knows exactly how fanbases and audience expectations work. After managing the delicate balance between two big stars in RRR, he would think twice before putting another massive presence alongside his lead unless it's absolutely necessary. Already, there are enough stars like Priyanka Chopra and Prithviraj Sukumaran in the movie, so what's the need for a Hrithik gamble now? At this point, it's purely social media speculation riding on this rumour it looks like. So, the buzz is just a bluff.



## Sesh Scores Hat-Trick with \$1M Club Entry

Adivi Sesh's Dacoit has notched another major milestone by crossing the coveted \$1 million mark in North America—the fastest in Sesh's career to hit this benchmark at just 4 days into its run. The film, released on April 11, 2026, has grossed \$1.02 million in the region so far, per early tracking from Sacnilk and Box Office Mojo.

Directed by Shaneil Deo, Dacoit has shown steady performance in North America, bolstered by strong word-of-mouth from Telugu audiences in key markets like the US and Canada. It's now just short of its breakeven target of \$1.1 million in the region, with projections suggesting it could cross that by the weekend.

With this, Dacoit becomes Sesh's third film to cross the \$1 million mark in North America, after Major (\$1.8 million in 2022) and HIT: The Second Case (\$1.2 million in 2022). This hat-trick cements Sesh's status as a reliable overseas performer, with his films consistently outperforming domestic Telugu averages in premium markets. In four days, Dacoit has already amassed a global gross collection of 37.8 crore.

## Balakrishna Appreciates Song from 'M4M'



The team of the upcoming pan-India suspense thriller M4M (Motive for Murder), directed and produced by Mohan Vadlapatla, has received a major promotional boost after actor Nandamuri Balakrishna appreciated a song from the film. The track titled "Who is the Killer.", recently released as part of the film's promotions, was showcased to Balakrishna by the film's lead actress Jo Sharma. Impressed by the presentation, visuals, and energetic composition, the star reportedly lauded the team and even hummed the catchy line "Evadu Vaadu," adding excitement to the film's publicity campaign. The song, choreographed by Bhanu Master and released in Telugu and Hindi through Aditya Music, has been receiving a positive response for its engaging visuals and catchy music. On the occasion, Jo Sharma expressed her happiness at meeting Balakrishna, stating that she was warmly received and blessed by the veteran actor. She added that his encouragement has further motivated the entire team ahead of the film's release. M4M features Jo Sharma and Sambit Acharya in lead roles and is being produced under the Mohan Media Creations banner, with support from McWin Group USA. The film is scheduled for a world-wide theatrical release on May 8 and will be released in five languages—Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam. **Banner: Mohan Media Creations; Support: McWin Group USA; Cast: Jo Sharma, Sambit Acharya and others; Director & Producer: Mohan Vadlapatla; PROs: Parvathaneni Rambabu, Kadali Rambabu, Ashok Dayyala**



## BOLD SCENE PANIC: KIARA WANTS IT REMOVED!

Kiara Advani remains a popular actress known for her glamorous screen presence. However, she has largely avoided performing scenes that are considered bold or explicit. Recently, reports have emerged suggesting that her upcoming film Toxic includes a surprising and controversial scene that has caught attention. According to sources, the film features a bold sequence involving her character. While she was initially comfortable during filming, it is said that after watching a glimpse of the final output, she became concerned. She now reportedly wants the scene to be removed, fearing it may affect her public image, especially after her marriage. The situation has created a dilemma for the filmmakers. Some believe that retaining the scene could generate significant buzz and push creative boundaries, while others worry it may invite criticism and distract from the film's overall narrative. Reports also claim that the scene is bolder than one performed by Triptii Dimri in Animal, directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga. The film Toxic stars Yash and is directed by Geetu Mohandas.

## NTR's Birthday Blast: 'God of War' Incoming!

The highly anticipated project God of War is finally greenlit to move forward, quashing months of swirling speculation. Originally envisioned with Allu Arjun and director Trivikram Srinivas at the helm, the film has now pivoted to NTR as its lead. Even amid occasional rumors of Allu Arjun rekindling his interest, the makers have locked in their final decision. An official announcement is slated for May 20, coinciding with NTR's birthday.

Trivikram Srinivas will direct this ambitious venture, set to unfold as a grand mythological epic. NTR is expected to embody Lord Murugan, also revered as Lord Kartikeya. The production will be helmed by S Radhakrishna. Prior to kicking off God of War, Trivikram intends to complete his current project, Adarsha Kutumbam, starring Venkatesh. Shooting for that film is projected to wrap up in the next couple of months, paving the way for its release. Pre-production for God of War will kick off immediately after, with principal photography slated to begin in 2027.

