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Students Lead the Way in Traffic Safety at "Arrive Alive" Event

SPECIAL 02

Bhagyashri Fever Takes Over The Internet Again



BOX-OFFICE 12

Revanth commends Priyanka for defending constitutional integrity

New Delhi, April 18: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has expressed his congratulations to Congress General Secretary and MP Priyanka Gandhi for her leadership in fostering opposition unity aimed at thwarting the undemocratic constitutional amendment put forward by the Union government, which seeks to undermine the power of southern India, the northeast, and smaller states.



Revanth Reddy met Priyanka Gandhi in New Delhi on Saturday and appreciated her for bringing the unity among the opposition parties against the Constitution Amendment Bill.

The Chief Minister said Priyanka has brilliantly exposed the truth behind the saga, and explained how the Parliament special session was not meant for Women's Bill (which has already been unannouncedly passed) or Women Empowerment but using it as a mask to push an unacceptable delimitation agenda.

"On behalf of all people of Telangana, I thanked her for her extraordinary efforts in supporting Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge in uniting the entire opposition to save the future of the country. I found great inspiration from the encouraging and appreciative words from Priyanka Gandhi for my efforts to bring up south Indian unity and not only making public the terrible flaws in the BJP-proposed delimitation model but also for providing positive alternative options," Revanth Reddy said.

SHORT TAKES



Stubbs, Miller win DC a thriller against RCB

Stubbs' unbeaten surge and Miller's explosive finishing powered Delhi Capitals to a thrilling six-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru, chasing 176 in a last-over finish that sealed a dramatic IPL encounter in Bengaluru.

STADIUM 11



Ponnam, Vakiti launch road safety initiative

As part of the 99-day action plan under Praja Palana Pragathi, Ministers Ponnam Prabhakar and Vakiti Srihari participated in the "Arrive Alive" road safety programme in Mahabubnagar district on Saturday.

TELANGANA 04



Rupee Slides, Prices Bite, India Slips IMF & The GDP Myth

The war is hitting many countries beyond they could have imagined. The IMF forecast has subdued global growth. IMF makes India slip to sixth largest economy as rupee sinks, oil prices hit inflation high and a combination of factors make IPO's lose steam and BSE Sensex thaws.

OPINION 06

"The BJP's defeat on the Women Reservation Bill shows its lack of sincerity, and it is attempting to weaken reservation safeguards under the guise of constitutional amendments."

"If the Centre truly believes in women's empowerment, it should immediately bring a 33% reservation bill for Lok Sabha and Assemblies—we are ready to support it without delay."

"Delimitation must not be done on a pro-rata basis that harms Southern and smaller states; it requires full consultations with states, experts, and public opinion before any decision."



"BJP failed women"

CM Revanth reacts sharply to bill defeat in Lok Sabha

◆ **BJP conspires to abolish reservation through constitutional amendment**

◆ **CM demands Modi and BJP to prove sincerity on women quota by implementing 33 per cent reservation in 2027 UP elections.**

◆ **Ready to hold talks with Southern stat CMs - Stalin, Siddaramaiah, Pinarai Vijayan, Chandrababu and Rangaswamy**

◆ **CM held a press conference today.**

New Delhi, April 18: Chief Minister Shri A. Revanth Reddy blasted the BJP over the defeat of the Women reservation bill in the Lok Sabha. The Chief minister accused the union government of conspiring to abolish reservation for all citing the BJP's slogan of 'Char Sau Paar' (crossing the 400-seat mark) to amend the constitution against the quota for all sections during 2024 general elections.

Demanding Prime minister Narendra Modi to prove sincerity on women quota, the CM proposed to draft a new legislation

for women's reservations and presented it before Parliament by Monday. The bill should ensure that one-third of the current 543 seats in the Lok Sabha, as well as one-third of the seats in state legislative assemblies, are reserved for women. If such a bill were introduced, the chief minister said the INDIA alliance would extend their support to it like in 2023. The chief minister suggested that the bill could be passed on Monday and the legislation implemented starting Tuesday itself.

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CM Urges Centre to Fast-Track Greenfield Steel Plant in Bayyaram

Delhi: Chief Minister Shri A. Revanth Reddy urged union minister for Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy to establish a Green Steel Plant (steel industry) in Bayyaram. The Chief Minister met with Kumaraswamy and also minister of state for Steel Bhupathi Srinivas Varma in New Delhi today.

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Jeevan Reddy's entry boosts BRS in north TG: Harish Rao

HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

Former minister and BRS Deputy Floor Leader Harish Rao said that senior leader Jeevan Reddy's decision to join the BRS will significantly strengthen the party in North Telangana.

Harish Rao, along with BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao, on Saturday reviewed arrangements in Jagtial for Jeevan Reddy's joining programme scheduled on the 20th in the presence of K.Chandrashekar Rao.

He described Jeevan Reddy as a leader with strong political values and said his entry would strengthen the party not just in Karimnagar but across North Telangana. Harish Rao said the political mood in the state is clearly shifting, with people increasingly saying, "Revanth Reddy must go, KCR must return."

The BRS MLA strongly condemned Tejasvi Surya for comparing Telangana's formation with the India-Pakistan partition, calling it an insult to the



self-respect of four crore people of the state. "Telangana was formed constitutionally under Article 3 after a long democratic struggle. Insulting its formation is an insult to the sacrifices of its people," he said.

Harish Rao criticised Union Minister Kishan Reddy for defending the remarks instead of condemning them and demanded an unconditional apology from the BJP. The Minister termed the silence of 8 Congress and 8 BJP MPs from Telangana as "deeply disappointing," questioning why they failed to defend the state's dignity in Parliament.

He pointed out that BRS MPs in the Rajya Sabha strongly countered misleading statements by Union Ministers and

ensured corrections in official records. Harish Rao alleged that an understanding between the Congress and BJP has become evident. "While BJP calls for protests against Congress nationally, the Chief Minister shares platforms and meetings with BJP leaders. This contradiction is clear," he said.

Harish Rao dismissed the Chief Minister's "hybrid model" on delimitation, stating that "it is not a hybrid model, but a clear political arrangement." He also questioned why the Chief Minister has not responded to Tejasvi Surya's remarks. The BRS leader also accused both BJP and Congress of misleading women by linking the Women's Reservation Bill to delimitation.

BJP VOWS TO CONTINUE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: NRR

HYDERABAD, APRIL 18:

Tensions escalated in the capital city on Friday as the police placed BJP state president N. Ramchander Rao under house arrest, preventing him from proceeding towards Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's residence. The police action was aimed at stopping a planned protest march, where the BJP leader intended to condemn the Congress party's stance on the Women's Reservation Bill in Parliament. Rao accused the Congress of being "anti-women" and opposing measures intended to empower women politically.

Heavy police deployment was seen outside Rao's residence early in the morning, restricting his movement.

Speaking to the media during his confinement, Rao criticized the Congress, alleging that it suppresses dissent both in Parliament and in Telangana. He further



accused the party of functioning under a "family-centric" structure and claimed it has deviated from democratic values.

Further, Rao pointed to "double standards" by the Congress, stating that while the party supported the Women's Reservation Bill in 2023, its recent actions indicate inconsistency. He dismissed arguments related to regional concerns and alternative proposals as distractions from

the core demand of 33 percent reservation for women.

Expressing strong objection to his house arrest, Rao compared the situation to restrictions seen during the Emergency period, alleging that democratic rights were being curtailed in the state.

He urged women in Telangana to take note of the developments and to remember this 'betrayal' by the Congress party, and reiterated that the BJP would continue its efforts towards women's empowerment.

P. L. Srinivas of the Bharatiya Janata Party accused the Indian National Congress of being "anti-women" and obstructing the Women's Reservation Bill. He highlighted schemes under Narendra Modi-like Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao—as key to women's empowerment, and said the BJP will continue pushing for women's rights and representation.



A 'Parasitic' Opposition PM Escalates Rhetoric Against Congress and Allies

NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

"EVERY CITIZEN OF INDIA IS WATCHING HOW THE DREAMS OF OUR WOMEN HAVE BEEN CRUSHED... EVERY WOMAN WILL REMEMBER THIS."

"100 PERCENT OF THE NATION'S WOMEN POWER STANDS WITH GOVERNMENT" - MODI, PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday delivered a forceful and politically charged address to the nation, reframing a major legislative setback as an opportunity to sharpen the ideological divide between his government and the Opposition. A day after the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 failed to secure the required two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha, Modi sought to turn the defeat of the Women's Reservation initiative into a broader moral and political confrontation. In his speech, the Prime Minister accused Opposition parties of betraying women and cautioned that their position would carry consequences in future elections. "A woman may forget everything, but she never forgets her insult," he said, invoking themes of dignity, respect, and emotional memory to underscore his argument that the bill's rejection amounted to an affront to women across the country.

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Students Lead the Way in Traffic Safety at Lotus Lap's "Arrive Alive" Event

HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

A large-scale traffic awareness program titled "Arrive Alive" was successfully organized on Saturday evening by Lotus Lap Public School, Dilsukhnagar. The initiative aimed to promote road safety awareness and responsible behavior among the public, with active participation from students, parents, families, and the Traffic Police Department. In light of the increasing number of road accidents and traffic violations, the school took a proactive step to instill road safety values from a young age. The program emphasized the importance of discipline, responsibility, and adherence to traffic rules to build a safer society.

A grand awareness rally was conducted from the school premises to Dilsukhnagar

Center, with around 225 students participating enthusiastically. Holding placards and raising slogans, students actively engaged with the public, spreading awareness about traffic rules, safe driving practices, and civic responsibility.

The children conveyed key messages such as the importance of wearing helmets, using seat belts, obeying traffic signals, and avoiding mobile phone usage while driving. The powerful message

"If children change, families change – if families change, society changes" resonated strongly throughout the event.

As a unique and positive initiative, students appreciated responsible road users by offering flowers and chocolates, along with handshakes. This gesture encouraged and reinforced positive behavior among

commuters and received an overwhelming response from the public.

The program was graced by distinguished guests including LB Nagar DCP Srinivas, ACP Naveen Reddy, CI Venkateswarlu, and SI Madhusudhan, who appreciated the students' efforts and emphasized that road safety is a shared responsibility. They highlighted that strict adherence to traffic rules can save countless lives.

The eminent Educationist and environmentalist, TRSMA national advisor, Chairman of Lotus Lap group of Public Schools, lion Dr. Komatireddy Gopal Reddy, stated that creating traffic awareness at a young age can significantly reduce accidents in the future. He emphasized that a strong society can be built through the combined efforts of education, discipline, and social

responsibility.

Director Komatireddy Abhishek Reddy highlighted that the program aims to nurture leadership qualities and responsible attitudes among students. Principal Madhavi, along with the teaching staff, played a vital role in the successful execution of the event.

Parents and family members actively participated, making the program more impactful and community-driven. The positive response from the public further strengthened the purpose of the initiative.

Through the "Arrive Alive" program, Lotus Lap Public School once again demonstrated its commitment not only to academic excellence but also to fostering social responsibility and civic awareness among students and the community.



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A 'Parasitic' Opposition...

FROM PAGE 1

Referring to the proposed legislation—widely known as the Naari Shakti Bill—as a transformative step, Modi described it as a "great mission" intended to give "wings to women across all states" in the 21st century. He argued that opposing such a measure was equivalent to denying women their rightful aspirations. Naming parties including the Congress, DMK, Trinamool Congress, and Samajwadi Party, he accused them of opposing the bill out of political insecurity and a reliance on "family-based politics," claiming they had taken women's support for granted.

Escalating his criticism, Modi said the Opposition had "snatched women's rights and then thumped desks in self-congratulation," calling their actions an "attack on women's dignity and self-respect." He went further to allege that the Congress and its al-

lies had been "unmasked," accusing them of politically "feeding off their state partners like a parasite."

The Prime Minister's remarks signal a clear strategic shift by the government, which is now attempting to recast the parliamentary defeat not as a failure of legislation but as a rallying point to mobilize women voters—an increasingly decisive demographic in elections. By framing the issue in emotional and moral terms, the government appears to be aiming to consolidate support and reshape the narrative ahead of future polls.

Modi asserted that "100 percent of the nation's women power" stands with his government and reiterated his commitment to "remove every obstacle" in the path of women's reservation. His remarks suggest that the issue will remain central to the ruling party's political messaging and campaign strategy in the coming months.

The bill's failure came after a deeply polarized debate, particularly over its linkage with the proposed delimitation exercise and the planned expansion of the Lok Sabha to 816 seats. These provisions raised concerns among Opposition parties, who questioned the timing and implications of tying women's reservation to a future delimitation process.

Critics argued that this linkage introduced uncertainty regarding when the reservation would actually be implemented, potentially delaying its benefits. The government, however, maintained that such a framework was necessary to ensure fair and balanced representation across states in the long term.

Despite these procedural and structural complexities, Modi's address largely avoided engaging with the technical details of the bill's provisions. Instead, he focused on emotive appeals and political messaging.

"Every citizen of India is watching how the dreams of our women have been crushed," he said, adding that "every woman will remember this."

He characterized the Opposition's stance as not just a political miscalculation but a "grave mistake" and even a "sin," warning that they would "face consequences" and that women voters would deliver a "befitting reply" at the ballot box.

The speech also reinforced a broader ideological narrative, with Modi portraying the confrontation as part of a long-standing struggle against what he described as the Congress party's "anti-reform mindset." According to him, this mindset has historically hindered the country's progress and continues to obstruct meaningful change.

By linking the current episode to a wider history of stalled reforms, the government appears to be po-

sitioning itself as the driving force behind structural transformation, while casting its opponents as resistant and obstructionist.

Politically, the address suggests an escalation rather than an attempt at reconciliation. There was little indication of renewed efforts to build consensus across party lines. Instead, the government seems prepared to take the issue directly to the public, relying on themes of gender justice, dignity, and empowerment to resonate with voters.

Whether this approach succeeds in broadening support or further deepens existing political divisions remains to be seen. What is clear, however, is that the debate over women's reservation—and its political implications—is set to play a significant role in shaping the country's electoral and policy landscape in the near future.

BJP's Bandi Ujwalaa Reddy Accuses Congress of Delaying Women's Reservation Debate

SAMUDRALA KIRAN OUR CORRESPONDENT

Medchal-Malkajgiri, April 18: Kukatpally BJP leader Bandi Ujwalaa Reddy on Friday criticized the Congress party over its stand on women's reservation, alleging that the party had acted in a way that could delay efforts to increase women's representation in Parliament. In a statement, Ujwalaa Reddy said the debate around the proposed Women's Reservation measure had become a key political issue, with the BJP presenting itself as supportive of expanding women's role in national lawmaking. She claimed that Congress had opposed or slowed the process at a crucial moment, when the issue of political representation for women had regained national attention.



According to Ujwalaa Reddy, the proposed constitutional change was intended to strengthen women's participation in Parliament by reserving 33 percent of seats, a demand that has been discussed in Indian politics for decades. She said such a measure would help address the long-standing underrepresentation of women in legislative bodies and would mark a significant reform in the country's democratic framework.

"The need of the hour is to ensure that women receive fair representation in decision-making institutions," she said, adding that political parties should support reforms that expand opportunities for women in public life.

Her remarks come amid a broader political debate on women's reservation, electoral reforms, and the implementation of structural changes that could affect future representation in Parliament. The issue has also been linked to discussions on delimitation, or the redrawing of parliamentary constituencies, which some analysts say could influence how reservation is implemented in practice.

Ujwalaa Reddy argued that delaying the process would amount to postponing an important step toward gender equality. She said women's empowerment should not remain limited to political speeches and election campaigns, but should be backed by legal and constitutional measures.

The BJP has in recent years sought to highlight women's welfare and representation as a central part of its political messaging. Leaders at both national and regional levels have repeatedly projected women-centric policies and legislative reforms as evidence of the party's commitment to empowerment. In that context, Ujwalaa Reddy's remarks are also being seen as part of a wider effort by the BJP to sharpen its political contrast with Congress on issues related to representation and reform.

Congress, however, has in the past maintained that it supports women's reservation in principle, while at times raising concerns over the timing, structure, and implementation of such measures. Opposition leaders have also argued in different forums that questions relating to sub-categorization, social justice, and electoral restructuring should be addressed alongside reservation. As of the time of reporting, there was no immediate local response from Congress leaders to Ujwalaa Reddy's latest statement.

Political observers say the issue remains sensitive and politically significant, especially as women voters continue to emerge as an influential electoral constituency across the country. Any major debate over reservation, representation, and parliamentary reform is therefore likely to carry both legislative and electoral implications.

The demand for reserving one-third of seats for women has long been viewed by activists and policy advocates as a major step toward improving gender balance in governance. Supporters argue that greater representation can influence policymaking on education, health, safety, employment, and social welfare. Critics and opposition voices, while often not rejecting the idea outright, have sometimes questioned the sequencing and political handling of such reforms.

In Telangana, the issue may also gain traction as parties seek to connect national legislative debates with local voter concerns. Statements such as those made by Ujwalaa Reddy are expected to contribute to the larger political conversation ahead of future electoral contests, particularly in urban constituencies where questions of representation are closely followed.

"BJP failed women"

FROM PAGE 1

CM Revanth Reddy noted that the Election Commission has already collected 2011 census data and other relevant information. The CM pointed out that a delimitation exercise was conducted in 2009, and based on those figures, it is possible to implement a 33 percent reservation for women by August 15, 2026. With these reservations in place, the policy could be implemented in the 2027 elections held in Uttar Pradesh from where the Prime Minister was representing.

The CM also announced that he is ready to take the initiative of holding discussions with the Chief Ministers of the southern states—Stalin, Pinarayi Vijayan, Siddaramaiah, Chandrababu Naidu, and Puducherry CM Rangasamy and garner their support to the women's bill. The Chief minister stressed that the 2023 women reservation bill should be implemented with just a minor modification and challenged the BJP and PM Modi to prove their sincerity now. The CM recounted that Amit Shah had claimed they could modify the bill if granted just one hour. However, pointing out that time was available until Monday, he asserted that if the BJP were to introduce the Women's Reservation Bill based on the current 543 seats, they would ensure its passage as early as Tuesday.

Expressing his gratitude to all the leaders who played a role in ensuring the defeat of the bills, the Chief Minister said that the Congress party with the support of other opposition parties has once again thwarted the BJP's attempt to amend the Constitution and abolish reservations under the guise of

bills concerning women's reservations, constituency delimitation, and the expansion of constituencies. The failure of passing the bills was not merely a defeat for the ruling party at the Centre, but also a reflection of the BJP's lack of sincerity. The Constitutional Amendment Bill failed precisely because Prime Minister Narendra Modi lacked genuine commitment, the chief minister alleged. The CM challenged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to demonstrate his sincerity and to draft the bills in a proper manner. BJP suffered a defeat in Parliament because of Modi's arrogance, the chief minister charged.

Referring to the delimitation of constituencies, CM Revanth Reddy recommended the centre to convene an all-party meeting and address the delimitation of constituencies. Consultations with experts, views of every state government and public opinion should be sought in every Lok Sabha constituency and take a decision on the delimitation. The CM was opposed to the delimitation of the constituencies based on pro-rata basis and asserted that the number of seats in the Legislative Assemblies could be increased in consultation with the respective states. The delimitation proposal introduced by the BJP would politically undermine the Southern states, Northeastern states, and smaller states. It was a move that would ultimately weaken both the nation and its democracy. The CM pointed out that the Southern states implemented family planning policies in accordance with the Central Government's directives, resulting in a decline in population within those states.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy questioned the centre for penalizing the Southern states which had acted with loyalty and obedience toward the nation.

The Chief Minister lashed out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi stating that the PM has repeatedly displayed animosity towards the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and likened it to "killing the mother to save the child". BJP MP Tejasvi Surya's comments were uncalled for. The CM also criticized Union Minister Kishan Reddy and MP Laxman, alleging that they are attempting to get Modi's attention to secure promotions, rather than paying any heed to public opinion. The Chief Minister further questioned Kishan Reddy's approach and why the latter did not offer an alternative solution instead of resorting to counter-attacks.

Further, CM Revanth Reddy criticized Modi and the BJP accusing them of engaging in a smear campaign against Congress party. Since the people of the country would not accept an amendment to the Constitution, Modi and the BJP—anticipating that Congress might plan to implement women's reservations—sought to discredit them by claiming that the Congress party had obstructed such efforts. The protests were orchestrated as part of the strategy to defame the opposition, the CM alleged that the BJP's true agenda is to alter the Constitution and abolish reservations altogether and the 1.4 billion citizens of the country witnessed this conduct unfold on the floor of Parliament.

CM Revanth Reddy asserted that no one can sincerity regarding women's reservations.

While women in the United States—a global superpower—had to struggle for 150 years to secure the right to vote, the Congress party holds the distinction of granting women the franchise immediately upon India's independence and placing them on an equal footing with men. The Congress has appointed a female President and a female Prime Minister and also elevated women to key positions such as Speaker of the Lok Sabha, as well as Governors and Chief Ministers in various states.

The Chief Minister also highlighted that women were elected as Presidents of the Congress party even before independence. In the post-independence era, Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi served as the party's Presidents. The CM noted that Rajiv Gandhi introduced a 33 percent reservation for women in local bodies and has resulted in women's representation in local governance reaching 50 percent in several parts of the country today.

Since its inception in 1980, the BJP has had 15 different Presidents, yet not a single one of them has been a woman, the CM pointed out that leaders like Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi served as presidents two or three times, yet not a single woman was given the opportunity. The Chief Minister questioned how the BJP could criticize the Congress party regarding the issue of women's reservations. MPs Dr. Mallu Ravi, Suresh Shetkar, and Balram Naik, Government Whips Yennam Srinivas Reddy and Beerla Ailaiah; and MLAs Malreddy Ranga Reddy, B Manohar Reddy, T Megha Reddy were also present.

CM Urges Centre to Fast-Track Greenfield Steel Plant in Bayyaram



FROM PAGE 1

During the meeting, the CM briefed the union ministers about the importance of the establishment of the steel plant to solve the shortage of steel and address the environmental concerns. CM Revanth Reddy explained to the union ministers about the industrial revolution envisioned in the "Telangana Rising - 2047" vision document. The Chief Minister requested the Union Ministers to facilitate the establishment of a steel recycling industry utilizing scrap from old vehicles in Telangana. The CM highlighted the prospects of promoting Hyderabad as a central hub for achieving the country's industrial production targets with the available technology, existing heavy industries, and favorable conditions for industrial production.

CM Revanth Reddy also appealed to Kumaraswamy and Srinivasa Varma to facilitate the establishment of an EV battery manufacturing hub in Hydera-

bad following a massive surge in electric vehicle (EV) sales and a robust growth in establishment of green steel cluster utilizing hydrogen technology, as well as manufacturing industries catering to the automotive and defense sectors.

Furthermore, the Chief Minister requested the Union Ministers to set up a dedicated park for the manufacturing of modern equipment, such as machine tools and robotics. The CM briefed the union ministers about transforming Hyderabad into a pollution-free city by 2034 and sought the Centre's cooperation in facilitating the transition of vehicles to electric power. The union ministers were also requested to establish a national-level institution in Hyderabad to impart the specialized skills required by modern industries.

Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister, Srinivasa Raju, and Special Secretary for the Coordination of Central Projects, Advait Kumar Singh were also present.

That daily antacid tablet may be doing more harm than good

On World Liver Day (April 19), Medicover Hospitals urges Indians to rethink self-medication and prioritise long-term digestive and liver health

HYDERABAD

Antacid tablets have quietly become one of the most commonly consumed medicines in India. Whether it is acidity after a heavy meal, a burning sensation in the chest, or a general feeling of discomfort, most people reach for an antacid without a second thought. For many, this becomes a daily habit—continued for months or even years—under the assumption that these medicines are completely harmless.

However, as World Liver Day draws attention to the importance of preventive care and mindful medication use, doctors across Medicover Hospitals are highlighting a growing but overlooked concern—long-term, unsupervised use of antacids and its wider impact on digestive health. Increasingly, patients with underlying conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and kidney disorders are presenting with complications linked not to their primary illness, but to prolonged use of antacid tablets, particularly Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs).

The scale of the issue is significant. More than 50% of patients visiting hospitals in India are prescribed an antacid at some point during their treatment. Alarmingly, nearly 30% continue taking these medications far beyond the medically

recommended duration. In addition, millions of people purchase antacids directly from pharmacies without prescriptions, often unaware of the potential long-term consequences. This concern is particularly relevant among cardiac patients, many of whom are prescribed antacids alongside heart medications for gastric protection but are rarely guided on when to discontinue them.

While antacids act on stomach acid, their overuse often reflects a deeper issue—symptoms being repeatedly suppressed instead of investigated. The digestive system, including the liver, functions as an interconnected unit. When early signs are ignored and masked with medication, underlying metabolic or liver-related conditions can remain undiagnosed until they become more serious.

Stomach acid plays a crucial role not only in digestion but also in the absorption of essential nutrients. Continuous suppression over time leads to deficiencies that the body cannot easily compensate for. Long-term unsupervised use of antacids has been associated with magnesium and potassium loss, leading to muscle cramps, fatigue, and even disturbances in heart rhythm. Reduced absorption of iron and Vitamin B12 can result in anaemia, persistent tiredness, and nerve-related issues. Prolonged use is also linked to bone weakening, increasing fracture risk, par-



ticularly in older adults. In some cases, extended use may contribute to kidney-related problems and interfere with the effectiveness of essential medications such as blood thinners and cardiac drugs.

Patients are advised to watch for warning signs such as unexplained fatigue, muscle cramps, dizziness, irregular heartbeat, tingling sensations in the hands or feet, or signs of anaemia like brittle nails and hair fall. These symptoms are often overlooked but may be linked to prolonged antacid use.

"Antacids are effective medicines when used correctly and for the right duration. The concern arises when they are treated as harmless tablets that can be consumed indefinitely. We frequently see patients—especially those on long-term treatments—who have been using antacids for years and are now facing complications like mineral deficiencies, anaemia, or bone loss without understanding the cause. A simple and timely review with a doctor can prevent these outcomes," says "Dr. Krishna Gopal Bhandari Sr. Consultant Gastroenterologist* Medicover Hospitals Secunderabad.

This World Liver Day, Medicover Hospitals emphasises a larger message: good health is not just about relieving symptoms, but about understanding their cause. Responsible medication use, timely diagnosis, and a proactive approach to

digestive health are essential to protecting not just the stomach, but vital organs like the liver over the long term.

The public is strongly advised to avoid taking antacids for more than four to eight weeks without medical supervision. Individuals who have been using these medications for extended periods should seek a comprehensive medical evaluation. Repeated self-medication without a valid prescription should be avoided, and patients must ensure that their doctors are aware of all medications they are taking, particularly if they are on treatment for heart disease, diabetes, or other chronic conditions. Persistent or recurring acidity should always be properly investigated rather than repeatedly suppressed with medication.

The Gastroenterology teams across Medicover Hospitals are equipped to assess patients with long-standing gastric complaints, review ongoing medications, and design personalised treatment plans that address the root cause rather than offering temporary relief.

About Medicover Hospitals India

Medicover Hospitals is one of India's fastest-growing multi-specialty hospital chains, with a strong presence across Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, and other major cities. With over 1,000 expert doctors and advanced medical infrastructure, Medicover Hospitals is committed to delivering accessible, high-quality healthcare to families across the country.

Jayesh Ranjan outlines vision for Irrum Manzil restoration

HYDERABAD

On the Occasion of World Heritage Day 2026, the Quli Qutub Shah Urban Development Authority hosted a clean-up and treasure hunt event at the historic Irrum Manzil Palace, in collaboration with the Roads and Buildings department and Deccan Archive.

Special Chief Secretary, MA&UD department, Jayesh Ranjan, highlighted the site's historical importance and its potential for conservation and adaptive reuse under the upcoming Heritage Partner Scheme by the Telangana government.

He appreciated the 60+ volunteers who had participated in the clean up, inviting them to continue collaboration in the field of conservation as Heritage Ambassadors.

Irrum Manzil, meaning "Paradise Mansion," was built in the late 19th century by Nawab Fakhr al-Mulk, a distinguished noble of the Salar Jung family who

served in the administration of the Nizam of Hyderabad.

Situated on a hilltop in Punjagutta, the palace once spread across multiple acres, featuring landscaped gardens, pathways, and hundreds of rooms. After Independence, it was repurposed for government use, housing departments like the State Archives and Public Works department, and recently the Irrigation and Roads and Buildings departments.

Today, the historic structure lies mostly unused and was earlier even slated for demolition.

However, the participants were surprised to see the extent and architectural significance of the building's interiors, which had been largely inaccessible to the public for a decade.

Administrator QQSUDA, P. Gouthami highlighted the importance of collaboration and protecting our heritage for the future generations and announced an annual calendar, with monthly events for heritage awareness and conservation.

CBI Conducts Raids in "Digital Arrest" Case; Three Arrested

HYDERABAD

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday carried out searches at five locations across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in connection with a "digital arrest" case. According to officials, the raids were part of an ongoing investigation into cyber-related

fraud involving intimidation and illegal detention through digital means. During the operation, the agency arrested three accused persons allegedly linked to the case. The CBI stated that further investigation is underway to uncover the full extent of the network and identify other individuals involved.

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Auction Programme - May 2026					
Notice No: 05/2026					
E-Auction will be conducted for disposal of Ferrous scrap, Non-Ferrous scrap, other Misc scrap, condemned Wagon, Coaches & Locos, Scrap Rails and other Permanent Way scrap material.					
Sl. No.	E-Auction Conducted By	Date of auction for the month of May-2026			Material for auction
1	GSD/PER	06/05/26	15/05/26	25/05/26	-
2	CSSD/GOC	11/05/26	20/05/26	27/05/26	-
3	SSD/PTJ	04/05/26	14/05/26	22/05/26	-
4	MAS	06/05/26	15/05/26	27/05/26	-
5	SA	05/05/26	13/05/26	21/05/26	29/05/26
6	TVC	05/05/26	13/05/26	21/05/26	-
7	PGT	07/05/26	-	26/05/26	-
8	TPJ	04/05/26	14/05/26	22/05/26	-
9	MDU	07/05/26	18/05/26	26/05/26	-

The details of items to be sold in e-auction will be available in catalogue www.irps.gov.in website

Total no. of auctions for MAY 27
For detailed terms and conditions and downloading of catalogue please visit our web-site <http://www.irps.gov.in> -> E-Auction->Sale->Live Auctions.
Principal Chief Materials Manager

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA		
Ministry of Railways, Southern Railway Construction Organisation		
E-Tender Notice No. E/CN/ERS/TN/11/2025-26 Dated 13.04.2026		
For and on behalf of The President of India, The Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer, Construction, Southern Railway, Ernakulam Junction-682016 invites E-tenders for the work mentioned below as per Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) in the portal www.irps.gov.in . The tenderer/Contractors intending to apply for the tender needs to get enrolled in the portal www.irps.gov.in and only online tenders will be accepted. The cost of the tender form and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) should be paid through online payment gateway available on the website by the way of multiple banks net banking, debit and credit card.		
S/No.	Description	Item
1.	Tender No.	E.572/CN/ERS/WC/OT/600
2.	Name of Work	TVC-CAPE Section- Electrification of Neyyattinkara station PF No. 2, 3 & 4, Palliyadi station PF No-1 and provision for 25kV/230V Auxiliary transformer at ERL-PYD section, left over works at TRIVANDRUM NORTH station in connection with augmentation of Coaching Facilities
3.	Approx. cash value	Rs.2,74,03,104.00
4.	Earnest money deposit	Rs. 5,48,100.00
5.	Completion period	12 months
6.	Closing/Opening of Tender	12:00 hrs on 05.05.2026

For further details visit internet site www.irps.gov.in or contact Office of Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer, Construction, Southern Railway, Ernakulam-682016.
Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer, Construction, Ernakulam Junction
For and on behalf of President of India



DGP B. Shivadhar Reddy inaugurates new canteen at Police Headquarters

HYDERABAD

A newly constructed staff canteen named "Suruhi" was inaugurated on Saturday by Director General of Police B. Shivadhar Reddy at the State Police Headquarters for the convenience of staff. The canteen has been built with modern facilities under the supervision of the Police Welfare Department. During the inauguration ceremony held on the office premises, DGP B. Shivadhar Reddy formally opened the canteen

by cutting the ribbon. Later, he inspected the canteen premises along with officials and reviewed the facilities provided to the staff. Additional DGP (Law & Order) Mahesh M. Bhagwat, TSLPRB Chairman V.V. Srinivasa Rao, Cyberabad CP Dr. M. Ramesh, Welfare IGP Gajjarao Bhupal, Railway IGP Ramesh Naidu, TG Picks Chief Engineer D. Tulasidhar Reddy, Welfare DSP Srinivas Reddy, along with several other police officials and staff of the DGP office, attended the event.

GITAM Congratulates Ahmed Minhajuddin Ph.D. Achievement

HYDERABAD:

GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, congratulates Dr. Ahmed Minhajuddin on earning his Ph.D. in Civil Engineering. His research, titled "A Study on Sustainable Concrete Incorporating Agro-Industrial Waste as Partial Replacements of Cement and Fine Aggregate," offers a meaningful contribution to sustainable construction practices. Conducted under the guidance of Dr. Arijit Saha, Associate Professor, the study addresses the pressing challenge of industrial waste management by exploring the use of untreated sugarcane bagasse ash (Ut-SCBA) and waste granite powder (WGP) in concrete. The research evaluates their effectiveness as partial replacements for cement and fine aggregate in M25 grade concrete through comprehensive mechanical, durability, and microstructural analyses. The findings identify an optimal mix of 15% Ut-SCBA and 30% WGP, demonstrating improved strength, durability, and environmental performance. The study highlights a viable, eco-friendly alternative that reduces landfill burden and conserves natural resources.



CS Conducted a Vedio Conference with District Collectors

HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao today conducted a video conference with District Collectors from the Secretariat to review the implementation of the 99 Days Praja Palana Pragathi Pranaalika program. He stated that "Welfare Week" will be observed across the state from April 20 to April 26 as part of the programme.



The Welfare Week aims to strengthen institutional mechanisms, improve service delivery in welfare hostels and residential schools, and enhance student engagement and community participation. CS directed the District Collectors to ensure meticulous planning, active supervision, and wide participation in all scheduled activities.

Providing an overview of the planned activities, Special Chief Secretary Sabyasachi Ghosh outlined the day-wise schedule:

1. April 20: A comprehensive kitchen and sanitation drive should be undertaken in all welfare educational institutions. Officials should

visit and inspect facilities to ensure hygiene standards.

2. April 21: A Talent Fest for welfare students should be conducted featuring competitions such as quiz, debate, and drawing to encourage creativity and intellectual development.

3. April 22: Focus should be on minor repairs in hostels and residential schools. Authorities should prepare estimates, obtain necessary approvals, and schedule execution of works during the summer vacation.

4. April 23: Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) should be conducted, during which meritorious students to be felicitated to encourage aca-

demic excellence.

5. April 24: Skill development programmes for youth should be organized, highlighting various government initiatives aimed at enhancing employability.

6. April 25: Summer camps should be held for students, incorporating activities such as sports and games, arts and crafts, music, digital literacy, and personality development.

7. April 26: The "Badi Baata" programme should be conducted across all hostels and residential schools in the state.

Mr Ghosh instructed District Collectors to closely monitor the implementa-

tion of each activity, ensure proper documentation, and submit day-wise reports, culminating in a comprehensive consolidated report to the government.

Secretary Planning, Gaurav Uppal urged the Collectors to actively involve public representatives in all programmes to enhance outreach and transparency. He also emphasized the importance of creating awareness among the public about the government's flagship schemes and welfare initiatives. Secretary agriculture Surendra Mohan, CIPR Ch.Priyanka and other officials attended the video conference.



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Telangana Govt Strengthens Crackdown on Human Trafficking



Labour minister calls for convergence of all departments to eradicate the crime

HYDERABAD

Telangana State Labour Minister Mr. Vivek Venkataswamy said: "Bonded labour is a serious issue that severely undermines human dignity. Its eradication requires a collective effort from the government, civil society organizations, and the public. The government is committed to eliminating bonded labour. We are strengthening rescue efforts, rehabilitation programs, housing support, and social security measures. I urge all stakeholders from different departments to work together in building a society free from exploitation."

Strengthening awareness at the grassroots level is essential. People must understand their rights and avoid falling into exploitative systems. At the same time, laws must be strictly enforced to ensure justice for victims."

He was speaking at the State-Level Convergence Workshop on Combating Human Trafficking and Bonded Labour organised by the The Women Safety Wing (WSW), Telangana Police, in collaboration with the International Justice Mission (IJM).

The workshop brought together over 200 participants, including senior government officials, police officers, judiciary representatives, legal professionals, media personnel and civil society



organisations, providing a vital platform to deliberate on emerging trends and strengthen coordinated responses to combat human trafficking and bonded labour.

The inaugural session was graced by Sri B. Shivadhar Reddy, IPS, Director General of Police, Telangana, along with Ms. Charu Sinha, IPS, Additional Director General of Police, Women Safety Wing, and Smt. D. Anasuya Seethakka, Hon'ble Minister for Women and Child Welfare.

The workshop featured focused discussions on evolving trends in human trafficking, bonded labour and sex trafficking, recognising bonded labour as a hidden and under-reported form of organised crime. Sessions highlighted the need for stronger deterrence mechanisms, improved enforcement of labour laws, strengthened prosecution systems and enhanced role of Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs).

Addressing the participants Sri B. Shivadhar Reddy, IPS, Director Gen-

eral of Police, Telangana emphasized that bonded labour is not merely a labour issue but a coercive organised crime, where victims are lured through false promises, trapped in exploitative conditions and often unable to escape without external intervention.

"The State Police should focus on proactive identification of victims, strong investigations, and ensure convictions using modern technology," said the DGP

Ms. Charu Sinha, IPS, Additional Director General of Police, Women Safety Wing, highlighted that anti-trafficking discourse often overlooks adult bonded labour and stressed three key priorities: recognising debt bondage as a criminal offence, strengthening investigations across the entire chain of exploitation and ensuring a survivor-centric approach focused on dignity and safety.

Bonded labour is not a contract it is coercion. It often overlaps with trafficking offences, where the core issue is not movement, but exploitation through force, fraud, or coercion," said the ADGP.

Smt. Anita Ramachandran, IAS, Secretary, Women and Child Development Department, underscored that rescue alone is insufficient without sustainable rehabilitation, noting that lack of support systems often leads victims back into exploitative conditions. The Member Secretary, Telangana State Legal Services Authority, emphasised

the judiciary's role in enforcing constitutional protections and recognising non-payment of minimum wages as a form of forced labour.

Delivering the keynote address, Smt. Seethakka, Hon'ble Minister for Panchayati Raj & Rural Development, Rural Water Supply, Women & Child Welfare, Government of Telangana outlined that while it is important to have laws what is all the more important is to have effective implementation. Combating bonded labour and trafficking requires coordinated action across departments. Seethakka also stressed on the need to treat victims of bonded labour from other states with equal empathy and dignity. She pressed on the importance of strengthening local livelihoods, Self-Help Groups and community systems to reduce vulnerability to trafficking and bonded labour crimes. The workshop also highlighted the importance of community-level convergence, media engagement, data-driven policy approaches and streamlined rescue and rehabilitation mechanisms.

A defining moment of the workshop was the powerful testimony shared by survivor leader Smt. Shivamma of TRILINGA, underscoring the urgent need for survivor-led interventions and community-based prevention. She also called for the recognition of February 9 as Bonded Labour System Abolition Day in Telangana, to strengthen public awareness and collective action.

The deliberations concluded with a collective emphasis on multi-stakeholder coordination, capacity building and sustained policy engagement, reaffirming Telangana's commitment to eliminating human trafficking and bonded labour through a comprehensive and collaborative approach.

International Justice Mission (IJM) supported the workshop as a technical partner, bringing in global expertise and field experience in addressing human trafficking and bonded labour. IJM works closely with government systems to strengthen prevention, rescue and prosecution.



Sri Adi Shankaracharya Rath Yatra to Begin in Telangana from the 21st of This Month

HYDERABAD

A grand Rath Yatra dedicated to spreading the glory of Sri Adi Shankaracharya across the state of Telangana is set to begin. The yatra aims to reach all mandal centres in the state, widely propagating the message of Sanatana Dharma among the people.

The yatra will be ceremoniously inaugurated on the 21st of this month at the Tadabanda Anjaneya Swamy Temple. Telangana Endowments Minister Konda Surekha and IT & Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu will officially launch the yatra. The program will commence with Vedic blessings by Sri Sri Sri 1008 Vairagya Shikhamani Avadhuta Giri Maharaj.

According to the organizers, including Sri Vedabharati Trustee Dr. Remalla Avadhanulu,

who addressed the media at the Somajiguda Press Club, Telangana State Religious Advisor Govind Hari and Endowments Department Commissioner Hanumantha Rao will attend as guests. The yatra is being organized with the support of the Telangana Government and the Endowments Department.

As part of the yatra

Sri Shankara Jayanti celebrations will be conducted in every village

Books containing the life history, stotras, and important shlokas of Shankaracharya will be distributed to approximately 100,000 students

Distribution of these books in around 500 high schools

Installation of 108 Sri Shankara idols in temples

Events of Vedic assemblies, scholarly conferences, Sanskrit

classes, and competitive exams for students

The organizers stated that several such programs will be conducted.

Satyanani, representing the "Bharateeyam" organization, appealed to the people of Telangana to make this yatra a grand success and to spread the philosophy, way of life, and message of Sanatana Dharma taught by Adi Shankaracharya to every village.

On this occasion, the official website and poster of the Sri Adi Shankaracharya Rath Yatra were also unveiled.

Participants in the event included Praga Bharati organizer Kishnaprasad, GBS Sharma, Saptaparna Foundation organizer Prakash, 108 TV Chairman G. Naveen Reddy, and senior journalist Brahmandabheri Goparaju.



Ponnam, Vakiti launch road safety initiative in Mahabubnagar

HYDERABAD

As part of the 99-day action plan under Praja Palana Pragathi, Ministers Ponnam Prabhakar and Vakiti Srihari participated in the "Arrive Alive" road safety programme in Mahabubnagar district on Saturday.

The Ministers inaugurated a Children's Traffic Awareness Park at Panchavati School, aimed at educating students on traffic rules such as signals, zebra crossings, school and hospital zones, and U-turns.

A bike rally was conducted from Mahabubnagar Degree College to Panchavati School to promote helmet awareness, with active participation from motorists. As part of road safety awareness, a health camp and eye camp were also organized, along with demonstrations on CPR. Students and Ministers formed a human chain, pledging to follow traffic rules and reduce road accidents. Through cultural performances, students highlighted the impact of road accidents on families, especially

ly the hardships faced when a breadwinner is lost.

Minister Ponnam Prabhakar administered a road safety pledge to students, emphasising their responsibility in preventing accidents. The event was attended by MLC Damodar Reddy, MLA Chikkudu Vamshi Krishna, Mayor Mamata, Deputy Mayor Surender Reddy, Transport Commissioner Ilambarthi, RTC MD Nagi Reddy, MUDA Chairman Lakshman Yadav, Minority Finance Corporation Chairman Obedullah Kotwal, District Collector Khushboo Gupta, JTC Chandrasekhar Goud, and other public representatives and officials.

Speaking on the occasion, Ponnam Prabhakar stated that the Transport and Police departments have been jointly conducting "Arrive Alive" awareness programmes for the past week. He pointed out the alarming rise in road accidents, citing recent incidents where 17 people lost their lives.

He stressed the severe impact on families when the primary

earning member dies in an accident and said public participation is essential for the success of such government initiatives.

The Minister called for collective efforts to make Telangana a road accident-free state. He also highlighted the "Rahaveer Award," under which individuals who help accident victims reach hospitals within the golden hour are rewarded with ₹25,000, and can receive the award up to five times a year. The Minister noted that Children's Traffic Awareness Parks are being set up with UNICEF support to instill traffic discipline among students. He added that students will be encouraged to submit written commitments to follow traffic rules at the beginning of the academic year.

He emphasised that road safety should be treated as a responsibility by every citizen and that district-level road safety committee meetings are being conducted monthly under the supervision of the district collector.

Retd principal dies in tragic puja fire accident in Begumpet

HYDERABAD

A 62-year-old retired school principal, Vijayalakshmi, died in a tragic fire accident at her residence in Begumpet here on Saturday. According to reports, her saree accidentally caught fire while she was lighting a lamp during daily prayers. In panic, she ran around, causing the flames to spread rapidly to furniture including sofas and curtains.

Despite attempts by locals who alerted the fire department after noticing smoke, the woman succumbed to severe burn injuries on the spot.

Firefighters later controlled the blaze, while police registered a case and launched an investigation. Vijayalakshmi, who had served as a government school principal, was reportedly living alone in the Shyamal area. The incident has shocked the local community.

Speed up airport works in Telangana

Ponguleti reviews with airport officials

HYDERABAD

State Revenue, Housing, and Information & Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy stated that under the leadership of Honorable Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the government is taking key decisions to move Telangana towards comprehensive development. In this context, he said that the government has prepared an action plan for the construction of airports in Warangal, Adilabad, and Bhadradi Kothagudem districts.

He added that steps are being accelerated for land acquisition, technical approvals, and development of infrastructure to begin these projects as soon as possible.



On Saturday, at his office in the Secretariat, the Minister held a review meeting with Airport Authority Southern Region Executive Director Raj Kishore, Aviation Director Bharat Reddy, and others regarding the proposed airports in Warangal, Adilabad, and Bhadradi Kothagudem districts. During the meeting, the Minister instructed officials to coordinate with the Central Government

and expedite the works. He mentioned that the Telangana Government has already acquired around 953 acres of land for the Warangal Airport and handed it over to the Centre, and that the foundation stone will be laid soon.

He further said that it has been decided to jointly develop the Adilabad Airport by the Defence Ministry, Civil Aviation Ministry, and the Telangana Government, and

directed that a master plan be prepared immediately. The government will take steps for land acquisition required for this airport. Once operational, it will improve transport facilities in North Telangana.

Regarding Bhadradi Kothagudem district, he noted that the previously proposed site was found unsuitable for airport construction by the Central Civil Aviation Ministry.

BRS Leaders KTR, Harish Rao Target BJP, Congress at Jagtial Press Meet

JAGTIAL

At a media interaction held at the Vivekananda Mini Stadium in Jagtial town, BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) and Deputy Floor Leader T. Harish Rao launched a sharp attack on the BJP and Congress while welcoming senior leader Jeevan Reddy into the party.

Harish Rao's Remarks

Harish Rao described Jeevan Reddy as a politician known for value-based politics. He strongly criticised BJP MP Tejasvi Surya for his remarks on Telangana, stating that they were derogatory and hurt the self-respect of the state.

He alleged that Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy supported such statements, and questioned the silence of both BJP and Congress MPs from Telangana. "Despite having eight MPs each, both parties have failed to defend Telangana's dignity," he said.

Demanding an apology, Harish Rao stated that the BJP MP must apologise unconditionally to the people of Telangana. He warned that the BRS would not remain silent on issues affecting the state's self-respect. He further accused



both national parties of playing "political drama" over the Women's Bill and criticised the BJP for calling protests against Congress leaders. He also took a dig at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, alleging proximity with BJP leaders.

Harish Rao asserted that the silence of the Chief Minister over controversial remarks made by Tejaswi Yadav reflects political opportunism. He expressed confidence that BRS would return to power soon, calling Jeevan Reddy's joining a sign of changing political dynamics.

KTR's Comments

KTR said that the atmosphere in

Jagtial resembled a festival ahead of Jeevan Reddy's induction into the BRS. He claimed that political realignment is underway in Telangana.

He stated that whenever BRS chief K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) steps out, political opponents become nervous. KTR criticised Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, questioning his leadership and alleged attempts to block supporters from attending BRS events.

Announcing the launch of the BRS "Jaitra Yatra" from Jagtial, KTR expressed confidence that the party would regain its past glory and that KCR would return as Chief Minister.

"Oppo betrayed women, blocked reform": Kishan Reddy hits out

NEW DELHI

Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy on Saturday accused the opposition parties of committing a "historic blunder" by obstructing the passage of the Delimitation and Women's Reservation Bills in Parliament.

The BJP leader said the Centre had clearly explained that the proposal aimed at expanding legislative representation, dismissing allegations of bias against southern states. He alleged that the opposition had failed to provide consistent reasons for blocking the Bills and accused them of misleading the public. "Their actions amount to a betrayal of women and democratic reform," he remarked. Reddy also charged that political hostility towards the BJP leadership led to the disruption, depriving women and marginalized groups of greater representation in legislatures. Driven by political malice, they have inflicted harm upon the southern region. CM Revanth Reddy and former CM KCR, too, have obstructed the benefits that would have accrued to the state of Telangana.



Book Exhibition Inaugurated at Bharat Ratna Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Memorial Library

HYDERABAD

The Bharat Ratna Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Memorial Library, Osmania University, successfully organized a Book Exhibition on Saturday, 18th April 2026, as part of the Prajapalana Pragathi Pranalika initiative.

The exhibition was formally inaugurated by Sr. Prof. Kumar Molugaram Garu, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University. On this occasion, the Vice-Chancellor appreciated the efforts of the University Library in enriching its collection with the latest academic resources and emphasized the

importance of reading and research in achieving academic excellence.

The exhibition showcased a wide range of newly acquired books purchased during the academic year 2025-2026, covering diverse disciplines and catering to the needs of faculty members, research scholars, and students.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of Prof Sudhakar Reddy, Dean, Social Sciences, Prof Rajender Naik, Dean, students welfare, Prof Mangu Naik, Prof Shandya, Dr S Yadagiri, Dr Achala, Munigal other faculty, research scholars, and students, who explored the

newly added resources and interacted with library staff. Dr. A. S. Chakravarthy, University Librarian I/c, stated that the exhibition aims to create awareness about the latest additions to the library and to encourage greater utilization of library resources for teaching, learning, and research.

The program concluded with a positive response from the academic community, reflecting the library's continued commitment to supporting academic and research activities at Osmania University. Library Staff worked as a team work to organise this event in a successful manner

Raipur Court Orders IAS Vishnoi Property Attachment in Coal Scam

Investigations revealed that Vishnoi acquired immovable properties worth crores in the names of family members and firms.



Raipur court ordered the attachment of properties allegedly linked to IAS officer Sameer Vishnoi. In a significant development in a disproportionate assets case, the Special Court in Raipur has ordered the attachment of properties allegedly linked to IAS officer Sameer Vishnoi, who is accused in a coal levy scam. According to a press release issued by the State Economic Offences Investigation Bureau (EOW), a case (Crime No. 23/2024) was registered under Sections 13(1)(b) and 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (amended in 2018), against Vishnoi for allegedly amassing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

Investigations revealed that Vishnoi had allegedly acquired immovable properties worth crores in the names of his family members and various firms. Earlier, the Enforcement Directorate had provisionally attached five such properties linked to him in connection with the coal levy scam.

During further investigation, the EOW identified additional immovable assets worth approximately Rs 4 crore. Following this, an application was filed before the Special Court under the Prevention of Corruption Act in Raipur seeking attachment of these properties. On April 17, 2026, after hearing the matter, the Special Court approved the attachment of these properties. With this order, any sale or transfer of the attached assets has been prohibited. Officials stated that the action reflects a strong stance against corruption and serves as another example of enforcement agencies tightening the noose around accused public servants. The release also noted that similar action has been carried out in previous cases, including action against other accused officials, and further proceedings are underway in related matters.

Andhra Pradesh leads in Women empowerment:CM

CM criticise Congress party for obstructing Women's Reservation Bill repeatedly

NIDADAVOLU

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu stated that Andhra Pradesh is at forefront in women empowerment and asserted that parties opposing women's reservation cannot sustain in the long run. Participating in Swarna Andhra-Swachh Andhra programme held in Nidadavolu today, the Chief Minister criticized the opposition led by the Indian National Congress for obstructing the Women's Reservation Bill. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said when the Centre introduced a bill to provide 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures, the Congress-led opposition blocked it. We will stand firmly with women until reservation becomes a reality. He recalled that during 1996, when H. D. Deve Gowda was Prime Minister and he himself served as United Front Convenor, the bill had to be withdrawn due to lack of Congress support. He added that even during the tenure of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the bill was introduced multiple times but failed due to opposition from Congress. Chandrababu Naidu also noted that in 2010, during the UPA government, the bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha with support from



the Bharatiya Janata Party but was never taken up in the Lok Sabha. He credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for reintroducing the bill in 2023 with determination to ensure dignity and representation for women. He dismissed concerns raised about delimitation affecting southern states, pointing out that Union Home Minister Amit Shah had assured in Parliament that seats would increase by 50 per cent ensuring no injustice to any region. The Chief Minister emphasised that women excel across all sectors—education, employment, business and family management. He highlighted that under N. T. Rama Rao, reservations for women were first introduced in local bodies, along with equal property rights and the establishment of a women's university. He further noted that during his tenure, DWCR

groups were strengthened to promote women's financial independence. Today, women's self-help groups have availed loans worth Rs 50,000 crore and built savings of Rs 25,000 crore. He added that the NDA government is prioritizing women's welfare through initiatives such as pensions and other welfare schemes. The Chief Minister criticised the opposition, referring to them as a "destructive force" that offers no benefit to the public. He stated that the NDA alliance is focused on good governance, attracting investments worth Rs 20 lakh crore and generating 23 lakh jobs. He assured that the Polavaram Project would be completed with central support before the Godavari Pushkaram and reiterated that Amaravati has received legal status as the state capital. Highlighting the Swachh Andhra initiative, the

Chief Minister said that the government is committed to achieving 100 per cent waste clearance in urban areas by June. He noted that currently, around 8,957 tonnes of waste are generated daily across the state. Of the 153 lakh tonnes accumulated in urban areas, 114 lakh tonnes have already been cleared. He announced the establishment of 107 modern waste processing plants at a cost of Rs 603 crore, expected to be operational by October. Additional initiatives include Swachh Rath vehicles, Green Shops, and Waste-to-Energy projects, with a goal to increase green cover. The Chief Minister presented a detailed development report of the Nidadavolu constituency and assured multiple infrastructure projects, including reconstruction of the Chinna Kashirevu bridge, construction of an indoor stadium, upgrading the government hospital to a 100-bed facility, and development of the RTC bus stand.

He also promised completion of TIDCO housing, construction of bridges, road development and measures to provide safe drinking water to every household.

Ministers including Kurla Durgesh and other senior officials participated.



Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya Jayanti celebrations began...

HYDERABAD, APRIL 18

The celebrations of Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya Jayanti began today in a grand manner at Suvarna Bharati Gosala in LB Nagar. Under the leadership of the founder president of Tattvam Charitable Trust, Brahma Sri Srinivasa Bangaraya Sharma, renowned speaker Dr. Anantha Lakshmi, along with trust members Satish, Srikanth, Pavani, and others, participated in the this event. BJP National Council member and Nari Shakti Vandan in-charge Geetha Murthy attended as the chief guest and took part in the homam (ritual). Vedic scholars Siddhartha Sharma and Ashutosh Sharma first performed Ganapati Homam, followed by Sudarshana Homam, and finally conducted Chandi Homam consisting of 13 chapters.

They stated that this is the 27th year of conducting these celebrations and attributed their success to the blessings of Sringeri Peethadhipatis Sri Sri Bharati Teertha Mahaswami and Sri Sri Sri Vidhushekhar Bharati Swami. It was expressed that the BJP had mistakenly introduced the Women's Reservation Bill in Parliament yesterday, and if it had been introduced today, the Congress would have certainly supported it. However, it was predicted that after the upcoming elections, the BJP government will definitely introduce and pass the Women's Bill. In the evening, a Hari-katha performance on the victory of Shankara was presented. After the homam, President's Award recipient Rangi Satyanarayana spoke and stated that everyone is deserving of the Goddess's grace.



Kamal Haasan Backs Women's Quota, Opposes Delimitation

CHENNAI, APRIL 18

Actor-politician Kamal Haasan has called for the immediate implementation of 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and State Assemblies, strongly opposing any move to link the measure with delimitation. Reacting after the fall of the delimitation-linked 131st Constitutional Amendment Bill, Haasan said a Private Member's Bill has now been introduced by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament P. Wilson to provide women's reservation without tying it to constituency redrawing. In a post on X, Haasan argued that if the country is serious about women's empowerment, the 33 per cent quota must be implemented immediately within the existing strength of the Lok Sabha and State legislatures, without waiting for delimitation. He also backed the proposal to extend the freeze on delimitation till 2051, stating that such a move would allow states adequate time to achieve population stabilisation through meaningful reforms. These include ensuring access to quality education, healthcare, and equal employment opportunities for women, factors he described as essential

to long-term demographic balance. Highlighting regional disparities, Haasan cautioned that linking women's reservation with delimitation could undermine India's federal structure. He pointed out that southern states such as Tamil Nadu, which have prioritised population control and women-centric development, risk being disadvantaged in terms of political representation if delimitation is carried out based purely on population. "States that have taken progressive steps in stabilising population and empowering women should be seen as models, not penalised," he emphasised, warning against any attempt to introduce delimitation "through the back door." The Makkal Needhi Maiam founder further urged the Union government to convene a special session of Parliament after the ongoing Assembly elections to pass the proposed Bill. He also suggested that the Centre could bring in its own legislation to ensure that women's reservation is implemented without further delay. Haasan's remarks add to the growing political debate over the intersection of women's reservation and delimitation, an issue that continues to draw sharp responses from parties across the political spectrum.

Competition within family to loot Tamil Nadu: PM's swipe at MK Stalin, his party

Addressing an NDA election rally, Modi said that over the past five years, two things have risen to record levels in Tamil Nadu — one family's wealth and the state's debt.



DMK's top family is becoming richer, while the debt on each person in Tamil Nadu is increasing. The DMK's policy is 'by the family, of the family, and for the family.' The Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and a prominent MP in Delhi all belong to the same family. Even the film industry

and media houses are controlled by one family. Senior DMK leaders, too, have to defer to younger members of that family," he said. "Whenever I meet people from Tamil Nadu, they tell me there is a competition within the family over who will loot more," he alleged, adding that the state needs "vision in governance, not son or son-in-law-driven politics." Drawing a parallel, Modi said the DMK and its ally in Delhi share similarities, claiming both are marked by the influence of a "son-in-law." "India is fed up with one son-in-law, and Tamil Nadu is fed up with another," he said, alleging corruption linked to both. Highlighting what he described as a contrast, Modi

cited the example of Vice President CP Radhakrishnan, saying he rose through honesty and hard work despite having no political background. He added that during Radhakrishnan's tenure at the Coir Board, exports reached record levels. Under-scoring Tamil Nadu's role as a key growth engine, the Prime Minister outlined the Centre's contribution to the state's development. "In the last eleven years, the Centre has provided over Rs 14 lakh crore to Tamil Nadu through tax devolution, infrastructure, and welfare schemes," he said, adding that this was significantly higher than the support extended during the Congress-DMK regime at the Centre.

Sarma Targets Trinamool Over 'Appeasement' Politics

KOLKATA, APRIL 18

The Trinamool Congress government has kept aside properties for Bangladeshi Muslims, and that is why Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee must be removed from power, said Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma from an election rally in Kalimpong in north Bengal on Saturday.

he Bharatiya Janata Party has made the infiltration issue its main plank against the Trinamool Congress in this Assembly election. Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "Mamata didi has opened the way for Bangladeshi Muslims in West Bengal. That is why Mamata Banerjee must be removed. Otherwise, one day Bangladeshi Muslims will take West Bengal with

them. There will be nothing for us." The Assam Chief Minister alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party government has blocked all avenues for Bangladeshis from northeastern India to enter the state, but West Bengal is encouraging that infiltration. Sarma said, "Mamata Banerjee has an 'I love you' relationship with Bangladeshi Muslims. Mamata Banerjee

tells the Muslims who have infiltrated from Bangladesh to come, but there is only one condition: you have to vote for Trinamool. On the other hand, they say, "Okay, we will vote for Trinamool." But they also have a condition: they want the land of Bengal. They want to enjoy the rights to the land of Bengal. Mamataji says okay. She is selling the country."

Save the Constitution from the attacks of the Sangh forces! – Save the common people!

PITAPURAM, APRIL 18 :

State Secretary Bugatha Bangarraju's call at the district conference

On Saturday, to commemorate the 135th birth anniversary of the architect of the Indian Constitution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a district conference was held at the local Lines Club under the auspices of the CPI (YML) Liberation Party under the chairmanship of the party's district leader Godugu Satyanarayana on the topic "Save the Constitution from the attacks of the Sangh Parivar! Save the common people!". CPI (YML) Liberation State Secretary Comrade Bugatha Bangarraju and AILAJ State Vice President P.S. Ajay Kumar attended the conference as the chief guests. Before the commencement of the conference, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar garlanded the portrait and paid homage. Later, addressing the conference,

Comrade Bangarraju, Ajay Kumar, and B. Samuel said that inequalities, oppression, caste discrimination, and religious hatred are increasing in the country. He said that before independence, MLAs like Bojja Appalaswamy, who were coming to Pitapuram in the joint East Godavari district for education, faced untouchability and filed a complaint against it with the British authorities and fought against caste discrimination. He expressed his regret that the Supreme Court of the country, the Supreme Court, on 24 March 2026, ruled that if a person changes his religion, he will lose his SC status and set aside Article 341. He questioned whether the BJP government will attack the Constitution by amending the Constitution and making Dal-

its BCC. Will caste discrimination go away if they change their religion? He denounced the conspiracy that the Modi government is trying to block the Women's Bill in Parliament and increase the number of MP seats in the states under its control in the name of delimitation in the parliamentary sessions. He said that it is shameful that the ruling and opposition parties in the state approve any anti-people bill introduced by the BJP-Modi government in Parliament. He said that the Delimitation Bill was defeated in Parliament yesterday against the RSS Modi dictatorship. He warned that if the RSS-BJP does not stop attacking the Constitution and abandon its religious fanatical conspiracies now, it will inevitably face public anger in

the coming days. The speakers who spoke later called on all those who want democracy, including the Left, democrats, Ambedkarites, intellectuals and all those who want democracy, to unite in the coming days. In this program, Aiyarla State Secretary Comrade Egupati Arjuna Rao, Party District Secretary K. Janardhan, District President of Mahila Sangam S. Appalaraju, prominent lawyer P.V. Rao Mala Mahanadu Venkatesh, State President of Adivasi Sangam R. Simhachalam, District Secretary of Human Rights Association Thomas, Aiyarla District Secretary Y.M. Lachchababu, District Secretary of DHPS Saka Ramakrishna participated and addressed the people from all over the district.



9 Kerala teachers die in Tamil Nadu after bus veers off road, hits multiple vehicles

The driver suddenly lost control while manoeuvring the 13th hairpin bend. It crashed into a two-wheeler and an autorickshaw.

At least nine people in Tamil Nadu's Salem district died, and several were left injured after a State Transport Corporation bus had a head-on collision with multiple vehicles on the Salem-Coimbatore national highway. All those who lost their lives in the tragedy were teachers by profession, news agency ANI reported.

As per a statement shared by the District Collector's office, the bus, which was heading to Salem from Coimbatore, suddenly veered off the road after the driver lost control while manoeuvring the 13th hairpin bend. It crashed into a two-wheeler and an autorickshaw, which was carrying nearly 10 passengers, and subsequently plunged into the 9th hairpin bend. The bus was carrying 13 tourists from Kerala's Perinthalmanna. Out of these 13, eight people (1 male and seven females) died immediately on the spot. The five injured, which included the driver, two male juveniles aged between 17 and 18 years, and two females, were immediately rescued and taken to the government hospital in

Pollachi. One of the injured later succumbed to their injuries. The state authorities in Tamil Nadu reacted swiftly to the incident. Upon learning about the accident, two senior police officers rushed to the spot and supervised the rescue and relief operations. Fire and Rescue Services personnel were also deployed to ensure a prompt evacuation of the injured.

PM, KERALA CM CONDOLE DEATHS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his grief over the loss of lives.

"Distressed to hear about the mishap in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. I extend my heartfelt condolences to those who have lost their loved ones in the mishap. Prayers for the speedy recovery of those injured," the Prime Minister's office shared on X. Kerala Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan, also expressed his condolences over the death of the Kerala citizens. As per a report by PTI, Vijayan also gave instructions to the authorities to ensure the best possible treatment for all the injured people. On Saturday, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge expressed grief over the loss of lives in the horrific accident. Meanwhile, a spell of grief has cast the Pang-Paliparamba Government Lower Primary School in Malappuram as all the victims were working in that school.

Legal if a parent takes child's custody by force from partner without violating law: Allahabad HC

PRAYAGRAJ (UP): (APR 18)

The Allahabad High Court has dismissed habeas corpus petition moved by mother as non-maintainable observing that a father, being a natural guardian of a Hindu minor, cannot be said to illegally detain a child even if he forcibly takes custody from the mother, unless such an act is in violation of an order of a court. He petitioner's mother had moved to court alleging that

her estranged husband forcibly took away their two minor children at gunpoint in 2022 and had kept them under illegal detention since then. Dismissing the petition, Justice Anil Kumar-X, relying on the Supreme Court's judgment in Tejaswini Gaud and others vs Shekhar Jagdish Prasad Tewari and others, observed that habeas corpus in child custody matters can be invoked only when the custody of a child is illegal or without lawful authority.

EDITORIAL

A SAFEGUARD FOR FEDERALISM:
THE PARLIAMENTARY REJECTION OF
THE 131ST AMENDMENT

In a development that many had anticipated as an inevitable outcome, the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 failed to achieve the mandatory two-thirds majority necessary for a constitutional revision. Although the government managed to secure 298 votes in favor against 230 opposing votes, the legislation fell short of the 352-vote threshold—representing two-thirds of the 528 members present and voting—required for passage. In the wake of this legislative defeat, the Union government made the decision to shelve the accompanying Delimitation Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, asserting that these interconnected pieces of legislation could not be evaluated as separate entities. During his concluding remarks in the debate, Home Minister Amit Shah attempted to provide a verbal assurance that southern states would maintain their relative influence in a proposed 816-member Lok Sabha, suggesting their seat share would grow in exact proportion to their current standing. He even went so far as to offer a one-hour adjournment of the House to restructure the Bill with a 50% uniform increase across all states as an official amendment.

The Opposition, however, dismissed these overtures with skepticism. A glaring and obvious question remains: if a proportional increase was the government's sincere intention from the beginning, why was such language omitted from the original draft of the Bill? The text as officially tabled explicitly mandated that delimitation be conducted based on the most recent Census data—currently the 2011 figures—which would have inevitably diminished the representation of southern, eastern, and northeastern states. This is because those regions have exhibited lower population growth rates compared to the states in the Hindi heartland. Furthermore, the government's haste to bulldoze a highly controversial constitutional amendment while the 2026-27 Census is currently in progress remains inexplicable. There was also no logical or administrative necessity to tether the implementation of women's reservation—a policy that enjoys broad cross-party consensus—to the complex and contentious issue of delimitation. This peculiar "smoke-and-mirrors" strategy was clearly designed to obfuscate the real impact of the Bill and sow discord within the Opposition ranks, ultimately undermining the sanctity of the parliamentary process.

Significant credit belongs to the INDIA bloc, which maintained a unified front against what can only be described as "methodical madness." By prioritizing federal interests over internal friction, parties including the Congress, the Samajwadi Party, the Trinamool Congress, the Left, and the DMK demonstrated effective floor coordination to block the measure. On the other hand, one must point out the political naivety displayed by the Telugu Desam Party and the AIADMK. These parties voiced their support for the Bill based solely on the Home Minister's verbal promises, despite the fact that the actual legal text of the Bill directly contradicted those assurances. Under the Bill's specific terms, Andhra Pradesh was positioned to lose five parliamentary seats, while Tamil Nadu faced a reduction of eleven.

This legislative failure should serve as a sobering lesson for the government. It is now compelled to implement women's reservation through the proper, constitutionally mandated channel: first, the completion of the ongoing 2026-27 Census, and subsequently, the referral of the issues of delimitation and Lok Sabha expansion to a dedicated parliamentary committee to forge a genuine national consensus. The two-thirds voting threshold for constitutional amendments exists as a vital democratic guardrail, specifically intended to prevent profound structural alterations to the Republic from being forced through without widespread agreement. Today, that essential safeguard proved its worth.

Economic Highlights

Rupee Slides, Prices Bite,
India Slips IMF AND THE GDP MYTH

A widening conflict linked to Iran is rippling across the global economy, prompting the International Monetary Fund to cut its 2026 growth forecast and warn of rising financial instability. India, once poised to climb the global rankings, now faces a weaker rupee, elevated oil-driven inflation, and slowing investment momentum, slipping behind the UK in size even as it remains among the fastest-growing major economies. With exports under pressure, equity markets softening, and questions mounting over the quality of growth itself, the gap between headline GDP and lived economic reality is becoming harder to ignore.

The Iran war is hitting many countries beyond they could have imagined. The IMF forecast has subdued global growth. India is no less a sufferer. IMF makes India slip to sixth largest economy as rupee sinks, oil prices hit inflation high and a combination of factors make IPO's lose steam and BSE Sensex thaws.

The IT services revenue declines 0.3 per cent in financial year 2026 and companies like Wipro buys back its shares worth Rs 15000 crore at Rs 250 per share. Many IT and other companies are laying off staff as even US companies are wary of President Donald Trump's fresh tariff plan under Section 301, where the US Trade Representatives launch two investigations. Ford to Delta and Dell fear fresh duties will make it harder for them to compete amid increased cost to consumers. Not a favourable sign for Indian exports. The IMF warned that a prolonged conflict could heighten financial instability, requiring carefully calibrated policy responses. It has downgraded global growth forecast for 2026 from 3.3 to 3.1 per cent, due to the war. It recalibrated global Indian position from fifth largest economy to sixth with GDP at current prices estimated at \$ 3.76 trillion against the UK's \$ 3.7 trillion. The last year India's GDP went up to \$ 3.92 trillion and at \$ 4 trillion the UK overtook it.

However, The IMF projects India's FY27 GDP growth at 6.5 per cent, remaining the fastest-growing major economy. But warns that high oil prices pose risks to inflation (seen at 4.7 per cent), India's strong domestic demand keeps growth above 6 per cent. On the contrary, Goldman Sachs has slashed India's 2026 GDP growth forecast to 5.9 per cent (from an earlier 7 per cent projection) due to risks from

the Iran conflict, high oil prices, and currency depreciation. Goldman Sachs downgraded Indian equities to "market weight" and cut the Nifty 50 12-month target, citing less attractive risk-reward ratios. Increased Brent crude oil prices (expected to average high in March/April 2026) are raising inflationary pressures and widening the current account deficit to 2 per cent of GDP. The calculations are more complex as a new statistical series takes over and the rupee continues to slide. In rupee terms at current prices, GDP was pegged at Rs 318 lakh crore in 2024 and rose to Rs 347 (9 per cent) and to increase to Rs 385 lakh crore (11 per cent) this year. The IMF sees the Indian rupee depreciating from Rs 84.57 to a dollar in 2024 and Rs 88.48 last year and Rs 92.59 this year. It has not taken into calculation its latest fall to Rs 95.04 though for a while. In contrast, the IMF data show that the British pound appreciated against dollar for keeping off the Iran war and sustained growth. Meanwhile, Reuters reports that Indian oil refiners are now paying for Iranian oil using Chinese yuan. Is Yuan emerging as new currency?

GDP Rising?
While the government was expecting India to overtake Japan to the fourth largest economy, it will have to wait longer. The statistics can be deceptive. The impact of the new stats series is yet to be estimated. The GDP as a measure for progress may also be elusive. The GDP growth may not indicate actual progress though statistical graph increases in a cumulative manner. Concerns over India's GDP data stem from a perceived gap between headline growth and ground realities, with critics arguing that the expansion may be more "statistical" than real. A 2026 study by Arvind Subramanian, Abhishek Anand, and Josh Felman sug-

gests GDP growth may have been overstated by 1.5-2 per centage points annually between 2012 and 2023 due to methodological issues.

Key doubts arise from weak manufacturing performance and limited job creation, which do not match high growth claims. GDP estimates may also understate the impact of shocks like demonetisation, GST, and COVID-19 on the vast unorganised sector. The use of Wholesale Price Index (WPI) rather than the Producer Price Index (PPI) for inflation adjustment, reliance on the MCA 21 corporate database, and divergence from indicators like credit growth, exports, and electricity consumption further reinforce concerns about overestimated growth.

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs' MCA21 database has been questioned, as it may use limited, unreliable data for smaller firms, painting a rosier picture of company performance. Various flip-flop policies on carbon, energy, diesel, battery-toy-tech cars that turn junk in four years, dependence on imported fuel and little progress of alternate energy system with 20 per cent efficiency, and ship-to-stove LPG/LNG dependence has thrown the country into a combination of mal-distribution and black-market abyss. It poses threat to India's strategic concerns.

GDP Does Not Count
GDP counts output not reality. GDP doesn't count unpaid domestic work. Women in India contribute an estimated 7.5 per cent of GDP in unpaid labour — childcare, cooking, cleaning, elderly care. If a family hires a cook, GDP goes up. If the mother does the same work, GDP doesn't move. The work is identical. The counting isn't. GDP doesn't subtract environmental damage. India lost 1.36 million hectares of tree cover between 2001 and

2023. Mining, urban sation, infrastructure. Every tree cut generated economic activity that showed up in GDP. The long-term cost — flooding, soil erosion, water table collapse, health impact — doesn't get subtracted. The destruction is counted. The consequence isn't.

Nor does GDP distinguish debt-driven spending from real prosperity. India's household debt crossed 42 per cent of GDP. Personal loans under Rs10,000 have a 44 per cent spike in defaults. When a family borrows to buy a phone or pay a hospital bill, that spending adds to GDP. When they default, the default doesn't subtract from it.

There are alternatives. The UNDP's Human Development Index measures life expectancy, education, and income together. Bhutan uses Gross National Happiness. The OECD has a Better Life Index covering housing, jobs, health, environment, safety, and life satisfaction. India publishes none of these as a primary measure. GDP is useful, but on its own it cannot show whether lives are truly improving. Lower US tariffs on Indian goods and resilient domestic demand are cushioning growth. Even against a slowing global economy hit by energy disruptions, India is still expanding at more than twice the world average. But the outlook isn't risk-free—if the conflict drags on, financial instability could rise, demanding careful, calibrated policy responses.



SHIVAJI SARKAR

I AM NEVER NOT POETRY



I am never not poetry
a seed of sound in the navel of silence,
a pulse no void can pardon or still;
self-born, self-known, self-burning—
the original flame no echo can fill.
Not a pen—
I am time's own ember, artery to ash;
Not a word—
I am the thunder where meanings clash.
When I write—
I descend into alphabetic abysses,
summoning soul from the marrow of signs;
through forests of sense I rise, fire-winged,
a phoenix of hunger no form confines.
When I read—
I become the swan on the stillest lake,
drinking the fragrance no shadows can fake;
unbound by footsteps others have trod,
I move as music—untethered to nod.
When I listen—
I teach even silence its secret song,
I sharpen the hush till it pierces strong;
within me resounds an unborn sea,
an endless echo of what must be.
In my mother's womb—
I breathed as the primal vowel of dawn;
on touching earth—
I rose as a cry the sky leans on;
a question flung at the infinite blue,
a note that knows what is false, what is true.
I bloomed as a home in a rainbow's curve,
I swung as breath with a village nerve;
I wandered as wind through unseen
spheres—
a playful script beyond all fears.
Poetry—
not a craft I gathered, nor skill I earned,
but a scripture within me, sleeping, un-
learned;

a bloodstream singing in secret fire,
a sovereign realm of living lyre.
Alone—yet I surge as a million minds,
a sea of selves no shore confines;
my verse—
no clock can cage, no law can bind,
a tide of light no age can find.
No tyrant bends this diamond will,
no woven deceit can break it still;
my voice—
a march of flame through veils of night,
a banner of truth that refuses blight.
Even in stone—
I carve out breath with chisels of sound,
in lifeless silence, a pulse is found;
a spark that dances, fierce and bright,
a ritual wrought in fearless light.
Through seen and unseen, hidden and vast,
I summon truths from the buried past;
in the dark of being I kindle a blaze,
and lift raw meaning to singing praise.
Poetry is not what the eyes contain—
it is lightning loosed in the human brain,
it is thunder sealed in the wounded chest,
a bell that tolls where truths unrest.
These lines are born of a mother's ache,
yet fall as stars each time they break;
I wove my wounds into lunar grace,
and lit my □□□□ with a dreaming face.
Though life was gifted by mortal breath,
it is poetry that authors death—
not of the body, but of the small,
to rise as resonance, vast and all.
For I—
am never not poetry...
not sound, but the breath that stays,
not word, but the world that sways,
not man—
but the mantra time itself relays.

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

Akshaya Tritiya - 19 April

A Sacred Journey from the Temporal
to the Transcendental Soul

Akshaya Tritiya is a festival of profound significance not only in the Sanatan (Hindu) tradition but also in the Jain tradition. It carries importance on both the worldly (laukik) and transcendental (lokottar) planes. The word Akshaya means "that which never diminishes," symbolizing abundance, hope, happiness, and success, while Tritiya refers to the third lunar day. This festival is also considered an abujh muhurta—an inherently auspicious time when marriages and sacred undertakings can be performed without the need for astrological calculations.

Blending diverse cultural and spiritual traditions, Akshaya Tritiya reflects a unique confluence of Hindu and Jain values. Acts performed on this day—such as meditation, austerity, charity, offerings to ancestors, and spiritual practices—are believed to yield inexhaustible merit. In Jain philosophy, the day holds special importance as it commemorates the tradition of daan (charity), first exemplified by Lord Adinath (Rishabhdev), who emphasized the values of giving. Hence, followers engage in anna daan (food donation), gyan daan (knowledge sharing), and aushadhi daan (medicine donation). Despite differences in paths, the festival conveys a universal message of unity, reverence, and harmony across all communities and faiths.

In today's world—marked by conflict, terrorism, economic competition, and unrest—there is a growing need to embrace the enduring values of restraint, austerity, and spiritual awareness. Akshaya Tritiya is not merely a date on the calendar; it symbolizes the eternal flow of Indian consciousness that elevates life from transience to timelessness. It is not only a day of auspicious beginnings but also a day of inner awakening—an invitation to embark on the journey of the self. Traditionally regarded as a "self-auspicious" moment, this day requires no external validation

of timing. Weddings, housewarmings, and business ventures are commenced freely, reflecting a deep-rooted cultural trust in its sanctity. This belief is not mere superstition but the culmination of centuries of lived spiritual experience that recognizes the day as sarva-siddhi-dayak—capable of fulfilling all noble endeavors.

From a worldly perspective, Akshaya Tritiya is deeply intertwined with India's agrarian economy and labor culture. For farmers, it heralds hope and renewal. In ancient times, kings would honor exemplary farmers by gifting seeds—a gesture that symbolized both respect and recognition of agriculture as the soul of the nation. The belief that such seeds would yield inexhaustible abundance reflects a deeper faith in the harmony between human effort and nature. Artisans, potters, and pastoral communities—especially those dependent on cattle—also find special significance in this day. It reminds us that true prosperity arises from creativity, labor, and gratitude toward nature. Yet, the true beauty of Akshaya Tritiya unfolds in its transcendental dimension, where it becomes a festival of inner purification, austerity, and spiritual fulfillment. In Jain tradition, the day is especially revered as it marks a pivotal moment in the life of the first Tirthankara, Lord Rishabhdev. After renouncing his kingdom and embracing ascetic life, he observed prolonged austerities and remained without proper alms for over a year. This was not merely a material deprivation but a reflection of a society still unaware of the principles of non-violence and disciplined sustenance.

Finally, in Hastinapur, Prince Shreyans offered him sugarcane juice (ikshurasa), thus completing his long-awaited parana (breaking of the fast). The air resounded with the exclamation "Aho Daanam! Aho Daanam!"—a celebration not just of giving, but of the awakening of a new spiritual consciousness centered on charity, restraint, and compassion.

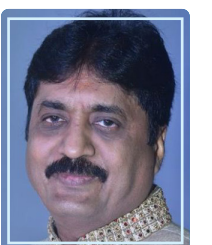
This moment established the foundation of the Jain tradition of almsgiving. For Jain practitioners, Akshaya Tritiya also marks the completion of the rigorous Varsitap—a year-long austerity involving alternate-day fasting. This is not a mere physical discipline but a profound process of inner purification. It teaches that life becomes truly "akshaya" not through indulgence, but through renunciation.

The spiritual message of Akshaya Tritiya is deeply transformative. It reminds us that the true purpose of life lies not in accumulating resources but in purifying the soul. Indian philosophy places the soul at the center of existence, and its realization as the highest pursuit of life. This festival is an invitation to undertake that inward journey—from the external world to the inner self. The life of Rishabhdev beautifully illustrates this balance. The word Rishabh signifies both a bull—symbolizing labor, patience, and resilience—and a Tirthankara—one who shows the path to liberation. He not only guided humanity in practical domains such as agriculture, crafts, and trade but also illuminated the path of spiritual emancipation. This harmony of material and spiritual dimensions lies at the heart of Akshaya Tritiya.

In the modern context, this festival holds even greater relevance. As humanity becomes increasingly entangled in the pursuit of material success, Akshaya Tritiya offers a lesson in balance. It reminds us that external prosperity alone cannot bring fulfillment. Without inner peace, wealth is hollow; with inner contentment, even limited means can become abundant. It also teaches that spirituality is not confined to monasteries or hermitages. It can be practiced in everyday life. A farmer sowing seeds with faith, a potter shaping clay with dedication, or a householder fulfilling duties with honesty—all are engaging in forms of spiritual practice when guided by awareness, discipline, and devotion.

Culturally, Akshaya Tritiya represents India's integrative vision, where materiality and spirituality are not in conflict but complement each other. It honors both food and the soul, labor and meditation. This balance is the hallmark of Indian civilization. On a personal level, the day offers an opportunity for introspection. It encourages us to reflect: Are we merely consuming, or are we also contributing? Are we only accumulating, or are we capable of letting go? Are we nurturing only the outer world, or are we also illuminating the inner self?

Akshaya Tritiya ultimately conveys that if we embrace austerity, discipline, and service, our lives too can become "akshaya"—not in terms of wealth, but in terms of virtue, peace, and spiritual fulfillment. This inexhaustible richness is eternal. Therefore, it is essential that we do not reduce this festival to mere ritual. Instead, we must internalize its deeper message. If on this day we take a sincere vow—of self-restraint, service, or spiritual practice—it can become a turning point in our lives. In essence, Akshaya Tritiya is like a sacred river in which flow the streams of austerity, culture, labor, and purity of the soul. Those who immerse themselves in this current are cleansed not only outwardly but inwardly. This is its highest attainment and eternal message: to make life inexhaustible, it must be illuminated by renunciation, awareness, and self-realization.



LALIT GARG
Writer, Journalist,
Columnist

Government Condemns Killing of Civilians; Case to Be Handed Over to NIA

IMPHAL, 18 APRIL 2026:

The Manipur government has strongly condemned the killing of two civilians in a militant attack at T.M. Kasom village in Ukhrul district on Saturday.



The incident occurred around 2:30 pm when suspected militants opened fire on five vehicles travelling along the Imphal-Ukhrul road, resulting in the deaths of two persons.

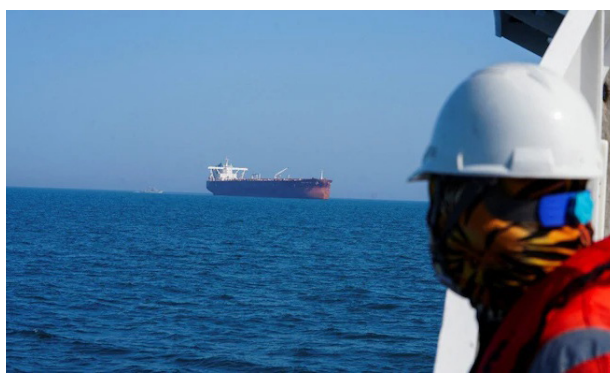
According to initial reports, unidentified miscreants, suspected to be armed Kukli militants, ambushed a convoy of four-wheeler vehicles travelling from Imphal towards Ukhrul. The attack took place between Litan and T.M. Kasom village under Litan Police Station. The sudden firing created panic among commuters along the route. Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh said a case has been registered at Litan Police Station and an investigation is underway. He announced that the case will be handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for further probe. Expressing deep condolences, the Chief Minister shared the grief of the bereaved families and described the incident as a direct assault on peace and communal harmony in the state. He termed the attack a "heinous and cowardly act" against unarmed civilians, adding that such violence has no place in a civilised society.

He further informed that security forces have rushed to the area and launched operations to apprehend

those responsible and ensure they are brought to justice at the earliest. The Chief Minister, along with Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam, is personally monitoring the situation. A high-level meeting was convened to review the prevailing security arrangements. Appealing for public cooperation, the Home Minister urged citizens to assist security agencies in their efforts to nab the perpetrators. Reiterating the government's commitment to safeguarding lives, the Chief Minister assured that all necessary measures would be taken to prevent such incidents in the future. He also appealed to all communities to remain calm and not fall prey to provocations aimed at disturbing the prevailing peace. The attack comes a day after Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh visited Ukhrul district via the Imphal-Ukhrul road and assured steps towards restoring peace. On Saturday afternoon, suspected armed militants opened fire on civilian vehicles along the same route, leaving at least one person dead and two others critically injured.

Bird's eye view: Moment Iran navy fired at Indian Vessels in Hormuz

Two India-bound vessels — Jag Arnav and Sanmar Herald — turned back north of Oman after the Iranian navy fired on ships attempting to cross the Strait of Hormuz.



After briefly declaring the Strait of Hormuz open during the ceasefire, Iran said it had shut the waterway again, blaming the move on the continued U.S. blockade of Iranian ports. Two India-bound vessels — Jag Arnav and Sanmar Herald — turned back north of Oman after the Iranian navy fired on ships attempting to cross the Strait of Hormuz. Only one appears to have been directly targeted. TankerTrackers said the vessel under attack was likely an Indian-flagged VLCC carrying about 2 million barrels of Iraqi oil, likely Sanmar Herald. On tracking platforms, the vessel changed its destination and display name to "INDIASHIPINDIACREW", while its IMO number — the unique ship identification number issued under the International Maritime Organisation

system — stayed the same. The change appears to have been an attempt to signal its Indian identity during the attack. After Iran briefly reopened the strait, Desh Garima, an Indian crude oil tanker with a deadweight of 114,790 tonnes, crossed into the Gulf of Oman. Next in line were Sanmar Herald and Jag Arnav, the two India-bound vessels later reported to have come under fire. According to government sources, a bullet hit a window of the India-flagged vessel in the Strait of Hormuz, though no injuries were reported. India Today tracked other Indian vessels in the area and found that at least eight of the

20 ships stranded in the Persian Gulf attempted to cross the strait soon after Iran's foreign minister declared it open yesterday. Except for Desh Garima, seven other vessels turned back and stayed stranded behind the chokepoint. Among them was BW Loyalty, an LPG tanker that still appeared stuck in Hormuz. It had remained near Qatar through the last two weeks of a conflict that has now lasted for 50 days. In the last 24 hours, it moved toward the strait and reached the U-bend off Khasab, before real-time marine tracking suggested it had turned back. Three Indian crude tankers, Desh Vaibhav, Desh Vibhor

and Desh Suraksha, also reversed course after the incident. Their earlier positions showed them lined up behind Jag Arnav and Sanmar Herald to cross the strait. Soon after, they veered sharply west, back into the Gulf. The remaining Indian-flagged vessels — VOLVOX OLYMPIA, SM KAVERI, SSL KAVERI, APJ PRITI 2, SANMAR SUPARNA, JAG PAVITRA, MARAFI 1, SAN DOMINO, BALTIC HIGHWAY, TAG 22 and TELO — have so far remained stationary. Their positions hint at a fleet in wait, holding back rather than risking a passage through an increasingly volatile chokepoint.

IRAN IMPOSES STRICT CONTROL

Iran's joint military command said "control of the Strait of Hormuz has returned to its previous state" under strict armed forces management, warning it would continue to block transit as long as the US blockade on Iranian ports remained in place. Iran had earlier allowed limited, regulated passage for oil tankers and commercial vessels following negotiations, describing it as a move made "in good faith".

Fire at Ghaziabad Police Station Burns 15-20 Seized Vehicles

Fire broke out at Loni police station in Ghaziabad, engulfing 15-20 seized vehicles. Fire tenders controlled the blaze in about an hour and no casualties were reported.



Three fire tenders were rushed to the spot and firefighters managed to bring the flames under control. A fire broke out at the Loni police station in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad on Saturday night, engulfing around 15 to 20 seized vehicles parked within the

premises, officials said. According to the police, the blaze rapidly spread through the yard where impounded vehicles were

kept, damaging multiple cars and two-wheelers. No loss of lives or injuries had been reported in the incident by the time of filing

this story. Three fire tenders were rushed to the spot and firefighters managed to bring the flames under control after nearly an hour of effort. Visuals from the spot showed police personnel and firefighters carrying out intensive efforts to douse the flames. Additional police teams were also deployed and reached the location to assist in the operation. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained. Fire department officials have launched an investigation into the incident.

Congress Assigns Mohammed Azharuddin West Bengal Campaign Role

KOLKATA, APRIL 18:



In a significant political development, the Congress high command has entrusted senior leader Shri Mohammed Azharuddin with a key responsibility for the upcoming election campaign in West Bengal, signaling the party's renewed focus on strengthening its grassroots presence in the state. Launching his extensive outreach tour today, Shri Azharuddin began his campaign with a clear and powerful message — that this election is about the "voice of the people and the future of West Bengal." His appointment reflects the party leadership's confidence in his mass connect, administrative experience, and ability to energize cadres across regions. The campaign witnessed high-energy roadshows and public meetings across Murshidabad and Malda districts, drawing strong public participation and enthusiasm. From Brahmapur and Beldanga to Raninagar, Bharatpur, and Sujapur, Shri Azharuddin directly

engaged with citizens, listening to their concerns and emphasizing inclusive development, social justice, and unity. Party insiders view this move as a strategic step by the Congress leadership to revive its political momentum in West Bengal by placing experienced and dynamic leadership at the forefront. Shri Azharuddin's people-centric approach and direct interaction model are expected to play a crucial role in mobilizing support at the grassroots level. With this responsibility, Shri Mohammed Azharuddin has set a strong tone for an energetic and determined campaign, reinforcing the Congress party's commitment to democratic values, development, and the aspirations of every citizen in West Bengal.

NE Railway making efforts to provide passengers with a clear and healthy environment

GORAKHPUR, APRIL 18, 2026:

The railway administration is continuously making efforts to provide passengers with a clean and healthy environment. In this regard, cleanliness in trains during travel is ensured through Clean Train Stations (CTS) and On Board Housekeeping Services (OBHS). Under the Clean Train Station scheme, as soon as trains arrive at designated stations, toilets are cleaned using mechanized methods (jet vacuum buffing), and window glass is also cleaned using modern techniques. Special attention is given to cleaning and disinfecting toilets. Gorakhpur, Aishbagh, and Chhapra stations of the North Eastern Railway have been designat-

ed as Clean Train Stations, where a total of 81 trains are cleaned daily. This includes 42 trains at Gorakhpur station, 15 at Aishbagh station, and 24 at Chhapra station.

In addition, to ensure cleanliness during the journey, On Board Housekeeping Services have been arranged in trains. This facility is available in a total of 178 trains, including 46 trains in the Varanasi division, 38 in the Izzatnagar division, and 94 in the Lucknow division of North Eastern Railway. OBHS staff carry all necessary cleaning equipment such as wipers, cloths, dusters, disposal bags, commode brushes, chemicals, etc., enabling them to maintain cleanliness in coaches from time to time or as per passengers' requirements.



Cement Transport on Northeast Frontier Railway Sees Rapid Growth in 2025-26

MALIGAON, 18 APRIL, 2026:

The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has achieved unprecedented progress in transportation of cement cargo by rail and loading & unloading of cement traffic across its terminal during financial year 2025-26.

Cement traffic recorded a growth of 7.8% in inward movement, increasing from 9.05 million tonnes in 2024-25 to 9.76 million tonnes in 2025-26. On the loading front, Cement witnessed a remarkable rise of 152.7%. These achievements reflect NFR's sustained efforts to enhance freight efficiency and support infrastructure development across the Northeast region. One of the most notable achievements was the successful unloading of the first ever cement rake at Teliamarka a historic moment under the Agartala-Akhaura New Rail Link Project, further strengthening freight connectivity in Tripura and the Northeast.

freight cargo train to be operated over the newly constructed Bairabi - Sairang rail route marking a major boost to regional connectivity. Further strengthening cement cargo operations, NFR achieved the milestone of unloading the first-ever cement rake at Molvom Railway Station in Nagaland on 24th September 2025. The rake consisted of 41 wagons loaded with cement from M/s My Home Industries Pvt. Ltd., Telangana. The Railway also placed its first goods train with an electric locomotive at the busy Star Cement Siding at Tetelia on 11th March 2025, which had handled 50 rakes in the month of February, 2025. In another landmark development, the first-ever goods train containing cement was successfully placed at Nischintapur terminal near Agartala on 24th March 2025. The consignment from Star Cement siding at Teteliemarked a historic moment under the Agartala-Akhaura New Rail Link Project, further strengthening freight connectivity in Tripura and the Northeast.



New low in politics: Kapil Sibal slams PM Modi for his address to nation

NEW DELHI: (APR 18)

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Saturday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of violating the Model Code of Conduct by giving an "election speech" while speaking as the PM, and said this was "a new low in politics". Sibal claimed that such remarks lower the dignity of the office of the prime minister and no other PM had indulged in such acts in the past.

On the death anniversary of Rashtrakavi Ramdhari Singh Dinkar

LUCKNOW, APRIL 18:

On the death anniversary of Rashtrakavi Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, the Uttar Pradesh government will organize a three-day "Rashmirathi Festival." The festival will be held from April 24 to April 26 at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan in Lucknow, beginning on April 24, which marks Dinkar Ji's death anniversary. The event will feature the staging of three plays and one dance drama. State Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi shared this information during a press conference at Lok Bhavan on Saturday.

This program is being organized to mark the diamond

a three-day "Rashmirathi Festival" will be organized
From April 24 to 26, three plays and one dance drama will be staged at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan in Lucknow
Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be the chief guest, and Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will be the keynote speaker

jubilee (75 years) of Dinkar's famous work Rashmirathi. During the press conference, Minister Surya Pratap Shahi also announced that a commemorative publication titled 'Rashmirathi Samvad' will be released. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will attend as the chief guest, while Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will be the keynote speaker. The event is being coordinated by Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi, and Rajya Sabha MP Dr. Dinesh Sharma will preside over it.



Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh will attend as a special guest, and BJP leader Neeraj Singh will serve as co-coordinator.

Schedule of Events
April 24 (Indira Gandhi Pratishthan):
● 6:15 PM- Release of the

'Rashmirathi Samvad' commemorative publication
● 6:20 PM- National seminar: 'Rashmirathi- A Source of Light and Inspiration'
● 7:05 PM- Staging of the play 'Rashmirathi'
April 25:
● 6:10 PM- National seminar on the contribution of Swami Vivekananda to the making of cultural India
● 7:05 PM- Staging of the play "Swami Vivekananda"
● Chief guest: Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, along with other

dignitaries
April 26:
● 6:00 PM- National seminar on the contributions of Lokmanya Tilak and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to nation-building
● 7:05 PM- Musical dance drama "Atal Swarajali" based on 10 poems by Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee
● 8:00 PM- Staging of the play "Lokmanya Tilak"
● **Chief guest:** Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak

CM Nayab Singh Saini reviews major infrastructure projects

CHANDIGARH, APRIL 18

Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini today chaired a high-level PRAGATI review meeting to assess the progress of major ongoing development projects costing over ₹75 crore each across the state. Emphasizing timely execution, the Chief Minister directed all departments to expedite work and resolve bottlenecks on priority. During the review, the Chief Minister took stock of key projects in urban development, health infrastructure, tourism, archaeology, and emergency services. Reviewing the ₹217 crore Augmentation Scheme for Master Water Supply in Faridabad, which involves the installation of 12 Ranney Wells along the Yamuna river floodplains, the Chief Minister was informed that overall physical progress has reached 67 percent. Two Ranney Wells have already

Haryana will develop world-class spiritual & cultural centres: CM

been completed and work is progressing on the remaining sites in a phased manner. Sh. Nayab Singh Saini directed officials to adhere strictly to the revised timelines and ensure expeditious completion of all components of the project. He also sought detailed inputs on water quality parameters and emphasized that the project must deliver safe and clean drinking water. Regarding road infrastructure, the Chief Minister instructed the HSVP to expedite the construction of the 120-meter wide road from Bye-Pass Road to NH-8 in Rewari, which is currently at 65% physical progress. On the proposed World-Class Shooting Range in Panchkula, the Chief Minister was informed that tender negotiations have been completed and allotment will be finalized soon. He directed officials to



ensure early commencement of work. The Chief Minister also reviewed the Integrated Aqua Park Centre of Excellence in Bhiwani and was informed that the construction will begin shortly following tender approvals. The foundation stone for the project has already been laid. Focusing on strengthening healthcare infrastructure as a top priority, the Chief Minister reviewed the progress of multiple hospital projects across the State. These included the 200-bedded hospital at Fatehabad, the

100-bedded hospital at Tohana, the upgradation of Civil Hospital in Gurugram from 100 to 200 beds, and the establishment of a Critical Care Block at Ambala Cantt. He directed the officials to ensure that there is no compromise on construction quality and medical infrastructure standards. In the cultural sector, the progress of key heritage projects was reviewed in detail. The Chief Minister was informed that the Rakhigarhi Site Museum is nearing completion, with around 80% of

the civil work already completed, and is expected to be ready for inauguration shortly. Emphasizing the importance of heritage awareness, the Chief Minister directed that special educational visits be organized for school students so they can gain first-hand exposure to the state's rich historical legacy and develop a deeper understanding of India's ancient civilisation. Sh. Nayab Singh Saini also reviewed the progress of the Sikh Museum and the Guru Ravidas Bhawan and Museum. He instructed the concerned departments to fast-track all pending administrative approvals, finalize architectural and design components at the earliest, and ensure adherence to timelines. He said these institutions should be developed as world-class centres reflect-

ing the state's cultural and spiritual heritage. In addition, the Chief Minister reviewed procurement-related projects under the Fire and Emergency Services Department, including foam tenders and high-rise turntable ladders. He directed officials to complete all procedural requirements swiftly and ensure that modern firefighting infrastructure is made available at the earliest. Haryana Chief Secretary, Sh. Anurag Rastogi, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Sh. Arun Kumar Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary, Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Sumita Misra, Additional Chief Secretary, PW (B&R), Sh. Apoorva Kumar Singh, Additional Chief Secretary, Town & Country Planning, Sh. Anurag Agarwal, Commissioner & Secretary, Heritage & Tourism Department, Dr. Amit Kumar Agrawal and other senior officers were present in the meeting.

India conveys deep concern over Hormuz incident, urges Iran to facilitate India-bound ships across Strait

HYDERABAD, MARCH 22

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday said that Amaravati would be developed to surpass Hyderabad.

He said the coalition government in Andhra Pradesh was rebuilding Amaravati after five years of neglect. "Amaravati is poised to emerge as a capital city that surpasses even Hyderabad," he said.

Naidu said by integrating technology, the government is undertaking the construction of a "Smart City" and a "Blue-Green" capital city. The Chief Minister was addressing the South Asian Learning Summit 2026-Transforming AI at the Indian School of Business (ISB) here.

Chandrababu Naidu recalled the initiatives he had taken as the Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh between 1995 and 2004 for the development of Hyderabad as the IT hub.

"I visualised what the future



I thought the knowledge economy was the future, and that was the decision in 1995. We had so many problems. I built brick by brick. I had several meetings, brainstorming sessions with industrialists and academicians," he said, recalling his meeting with Bill Gates, which helped attract Microsoft to Hyderabad. "We constructed the 'Cyber Towers'

as a symbolic landmark for the IT revolution.

This decision was driven solely by the objective of benefiting the public. Microsoft chose to establish its presence in Hyderabad, bypassing cities like Bengaluru and Chennai. For three decades now, we have been witnessing the tangible results of those initiatives. As part of this broader vision, we

also secured the establishment of the Indian School of Business (ISB)," he said Naidu noted that ISB has earned a stellar reputation as an exceptional business school. The 'Genome Valley' project also came into existence through a similar process. "It is precisely because of the decisions taken back then that both Telugu states currently hold the number one

position in the pharmaceutical sector. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Hyderabad's Genome Valley supplied vaccines to the entire world," he said. "The ecosystem of Hyderabad emerged as a result of the reforms introduced in the past across sectors such as IT, pharmaceuticals, and infrastructure. Hyderabad evolved into one of the most livable cities in the world.

This did not happen overnight; rather, a combination of factors—ranging from early-morning inspections to various policy decisions—paved the way for this transformation," he added. Naidu stated that although Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated into two separate states due to political reasons, the decisions taken in the past have successfully boosted the per capita income of the Telugu people. "By the time we returned to power in Andhra Pradesh in 2024, the entire state had been left in ruins. The state's brand image was

tarnished, and its institutional frameworks were completely dismantled," he said and claimed that the coalition government took several steps to put the state back on the path of progress.

The Chief Minister claimed that Andhra Pradesh now stands at the forefront in attracting investments. Realising that future technologies will revolve around fields such as Quantum Computing, Artificial Intelligence, and Drones, the state government embarked on establishing dedicated hubs for Space, Electronics, and Drone technologies, he said. The government also started focusing on Green Hydrogen and Green Ammonia, which are set to dominate the energy landscape. With sustainable power generation, there will be no need to increase electricity tariffs in the future, he said. He stated that Andhra Pradesh is poised to lead the entire South Indian region in the production of green energy.



Japan, Australia sign contract to jointly deliver three frigates

MELBOURNE

Japan and Australia on Saturday said that they have signed the contracts to jointly deliver three of the 11 ships for the Australian Navy. These ships are based on the upgraded Mogami-class frigate of Japan, as reported by a Japanese news outlet.

Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi and his Australian counterpart Richard Marles, who also doubles as Deputy Prime Minister, announced this deal in Melbourne, Kyodo news reported. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd., which produces the Mogami-class vessels, also signed the contract.

After the talks, in a joint press conference aboard the Mogami-class Kumano frigate, Marles said that these vessels will be built in Japan and delivered to Australia in December 2029.

Over 10 years, the government of Australia will invest up to AU\$20 billion (\$14.4 billion) for the development of a new fleet, the report mentioned. These upgraded Mogami-class frigates come with 32-cell Vertical Launch

and a range of 10,000 nautical miles. According to the government of Australia, the vessels will be equipped with surface-to-air and anti-ship missiles, crewed by 92 Royal Australian Navy sailors and officers, and capable of operating an MH-60R Seahawk maritime combat helicopter.

The Kyodo report stated that Australia's military is grappling with a personnel shortage, and this frigate adds a significant advantage as it can operate with half the crew required for a conventional frigate.

"Japan is an indispensable partner to Australia. As Special Strategic Partners, we have one of the closest and most enduring partnerships in the Indo-Pacific, underpinned by deep mutual trust, shared values and a high level of strategic alignment built over decades of cooperation," Australia's Defence Ministry stated. "This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Australia and Japan, and our partnership continues to go from strength to strength," said Marles.

Bangladesh's 'foreign policy bankruptcy' laid bare amid global crisis: Report

LONDON

Bangladesh is grappling with fuel shortages, rising prices, and diplomatic uncertainty while attempting to avoid offending any major power. The government's carefully worded statements during the recent conflict in West Asia have drawn criticism at home and scrutiny abroad, a report stated on Saturday.

According to the UK-based Middle East Monitor, at a deeper level, the situation reflects a more fundamental issue – the absence of a coherent foreign policy strategy in Bangladesh.

A reactive, risk-averse posture shaped more by dependency than principle is, the report stated, a condition that can be described as foreign policy bankruptcy.

"The US-Israel war on Iran has shaken the whole world. The surprising air attacks on February 28, amid ongoing diplomatic negotiations, came as a shocking development, drawing condemnations and muted responses from around the world. Bangladesh's reactions to the war, crafted in measured words, condemned violations of sovereignty of the Gulf states by Iranian counterstrikes, but not Iran's sovereignty violated by the US and Israel," the report detailed.

"The reference to Iran as the primary victim was mis-



ing, exposing not just economic vulnerability, which is widely acknowledged, but a deeper, structural weakness in Bangladesh's foreign policy. The war has not created this weakness; it has simply revealed it," it added.

The report underscored that while the Iran war remains geographically distant, its repercussions are immediate, leaving Bangladesh affected despite not being a participant – a reflection of the "paradox of globalisation" for smaller states. "The Strait of Hormuz carries roughly a fifth of the world's oil supply, and any disruption there sends shockwaves through energy markets. When conflict escalates in the Strait of Hormuz corridor, Bangladesh feels it almost instantly through fuel prices, shipping disruptions, and inflation," the report mentioned.

Given the gravity of the crisis, it said, one might expect a clear diplomatic stance, yet Bangladesh appears to have opted for neutrality.

South Korean President's India visit to mark new phase in bilateral ties

SEOUL

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung's three-day visit to India starting Sunday is likely to serve as a significant milestone in enhancing India-South Korea bilateral relationship, extending beyond the economic sphere to include security, culture, and people-to-people connections, a report said on Saturday.

According to international magazine "The Diplomat", unlike 2023 and 2025, the year 2026 is likely to be remembered as a landmark year for ushering in a new phase in the second decade of the Special Strategic Partnership.

The last State Visit by the South Korean President to India took place in July 2018, while the Indian Prime Minister last visited South Korea in February 2019, over seven years ago. Since then, interactions between the two leaders



have largely been limited to brief encounters at multilateral forums.

"This lack of energy is puzzling, considering that India's strategic position has skyrocketed over the past decade. Amid rising global instability, countries' and companies' search for a reliable partner has led them to India. India has surpassed France and the United Kingdom to become the world's fifth-largest economy

and is expected to overtake Japan and Germany to become the third-largest by the end of this decade," the report detailed.

"The world's most populous country and the largest democracy have also improved their business environment by investing heavily in infrastructure and liberalising foreign direct investment rules," it added. The report stressed that India and South Korea

Trump signs order to fast-track psychedelic therapies

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump on Saturday signed an executive order to accelerate research, approval, and access to experimental mental health treatments based on psychedelic drugs, describing the move as a "historic reform" aimed in part at tackling a growing suicide crisis among military veterans.

Announcing the decision at a White House event, Trump said



the order would "dramatically accelerate access to new medical research and treatments" that have shown "life-changing potential for those suffering from severe mental illness and

depression." "The suicide epidemic among veterans is a national tragedy," he said, noting that "since 9/11, we've lost over 21 times more veteran lives to suicide than on the battlefield."

The executive order directs the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to expedite its review of certain psychedelic therapies already designated as breakthrough treatments. It also seeks to remove regulatory hurdles, improve data-sharing across federal agencies, and

enable faster rescheduling of approved drugs.

Trump said the treatments were already in advanced clinical trials and could be made available more quickly if proven safe and effective. "Why would we wait three or four years... or 10 years frankly? Let's get it done immediately," he said. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said the order was aimed at addressing a widening mental health crisis.

Pakistan faces drug, infant formula shortages amid US-Iran conflict

NEW DELHI

The US-Iran conflict has disrupted supplies of life-saving medicines and infant milk formula in Pakistan, exposing gaps in the country's healthcare preparedness and policy framework, a report has said.

According to a report published in Pakistan Observer, the supply shock has led to shortages and rising prices, causing distress among patients, particularly those dependent on critical drugs and imported nutritional products.

Mohammad Atif Hanif Baloch, President of the Wholesale Chemists Council of Pakistan, was quoted as saying that the government lacks a clear policy to ensure uninterrupted availability of essential medicines or mechanisms to control prices.

"If the conflict in the Gulf region continues, prices of medicines, including those used for cancer, diabetes, insulin and heart diseases could rise sharply," he added.

He further stated that there



could also be a severe shortage of infant formula, which is entirely imported, and the burden would fall disproportionately on low-income groups.

Moreover, the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has flagged concerns over medicine availability as the crisis disrupts global supply chains.

In addition, Pakistan relies heavily on imports for both finished drugs and raw materials, known as Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), with industry estimates suggesting nearly 90 per cent of APIs are sourced through Gulf

ports. Additionally, a Health Ministry official said that existing medicine stocks may not last beyond two months if supply disruptions persist.

Dr Akram Sultan, a former health official, said Pakistan's failure to develop domestic API production could severely impact the availability of medicines, vaccines and essential raw materials.

"Pakistan currently has no effective strategy to produce pharmaceutical raw materials locally, and the private sector has not invested adequately in this area," he said.

Kinahan arrest under lens for possible links to Khalistan funding networks

NEW DELHI

The arrest of alleged organised crime figure Daniel Kinahan in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) could impact funding channels linked to Khalistan elements, with Indian agencies closely monitoring the developments, sources said.

Officials have long maintained that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has attempted to leverage global drug cartels to channel funds towards activities linked to the Khalistan movement. While the Dawood Ibrahim syndicate is believed to route a significant portion of its funds to the ISI, only a small fraction is suspected to be linked to Khalistan-related activities.

Indian intelligence agencies have been closely tracking alleged links between Khalistani elements and international drug cartels. In this context, officials are also examining develop-



ments following Kinahan's arrest in the UAE.

Kinahan has been arrested in connection with cases related to organised crime and has been named before the High Court in Dublin as the head of a drug cartel.

Investigators are also revisiting the case of Opinder Singh, an Indo-Canadian gangster who was arrested by the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) for allegedly operating a global methamphetamine and fentanyl trafficking network.

Singh, also known by the alias Thanos, had links to the Brothers Keepers gang, a British Columbia-based criminal outfit with several members of Punjab origin. The group has been linked to large-scale narcotics smuggling, arms trafficking, murder, robbery, and extortion.

The gang has also publicly expressed support for the Khalistan movement and participated in events commemorating Talwinder Singh Parmar, accused of masterminding the 1985 Air

Nepal govt's move to control purchases from bordering Indian towns draws flak

KATHMANDU

The Nepal government's decision to levy customs duty on goods valued above NPR 100 brought from bordering Indian towns has drawn criticism from stakeholders in Nepal's border areas, where nearby Indian markets have long served as a source of affordable goods.

The government has strictly enforced the rule requiring customs duties on goods exceeding NPR 100 over the past few days. Although the provision was introduced several years ago, it had not been implemented due to practical difficulties faced by residents of border regions. The newly elected government's decision to enforce the rule has now sparked backlash from local stakeholders.

The Nepal-India Open Border Interaction Group, a civil society organisation, on Sat-

urday urged the government to immediately revise its customs policy, warning that the current provisions are placing undue hardship on people living in border areas.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the group highlighted the centuries-old social, cultural, and economic ties between Nepal and India, calling on authorities to adopt practical and people-friendly measures to ease cross-border movement and strengthen grassroots relations.

A key demand put forward by the group is the immediate repeal of the provision requiring customs duties on goods exceeding NPR 100 brought through border points. It argued that the rule disproportionately affects low-income households in border regions and is impractical to enforce.

Instead, the group called for zero customs duty on goods meant for household use.

Iranian gunboats fire on tanker in Strait of Hormuz: UK authority

LONDON

The UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) Centre said on Saturday that a tanker came under fire from two gunboats of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). The UKMTO published a warning on their website saying, "Master UKMTO has received a report of an incident 20NM northeast of OMAN. The Master of a Tanker reports being approached by 2 IRGC gun boats, no VHF challenge that then fired upon the tanker. Tanker and crew are reported safe. Authorities are investigating."

Iran announced on Saturday that the control of the Strait has "reverted to its previous state" amid the continuing US naval blockade of Iranian ports. Iran's Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters' spokesman was quoted as saying by the country's semi-official Tasnim news agency that the Strait of Hormuz is under "strict control" of the Iranian Armed Forces and will remain in its previous operational state.

Cabinet Approves DA Hike for Employees, DR Boost for Pensioners

NEW DELHI, APRIL 18



The union Cabinet on Saturday approved an additional installment of Dearness Allowance (DA) for central government employees and Dearness Relief (DR) for pensioners, offering relief amid rising prices. Chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Cabinet cleared a 2 per cent increase over the existing rate of 58 per cent of basic pay and pension, raising the total DA/DR to 60 per cent with effect from January 1, 2026, the Ministry of Finance statement said here. The decision will benefit about 50.46 lakh central government employees and 68.27 lakh pensioners across the country. The combined financial impact on the exchequer on

account of the increase in both DA and DR is estimated at Rs 6,791.24 crore per annum, according to the official release.

The increase follows the accepted formula based on the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission and is aimed at compensating employees and pensioners for price rise.

The move is expected to provide additional financial support to government staff and retirees, while also supporting consumption demand in the economy.

Govt Clears Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool with ₹12,980 Cr Guarantee

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw addressing the media on the Cabinet decisions at the National Media Centre in New Delhi on April 18, 2026. | Photo Credit: Sushil Kumar Verma



The Union Cabinet on Saturday (April 18, 2026) approved the proposal for the creation of a domestic insurance pool, namely the 'Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool' (BMI pool), with a sovereign guarantee of ₹12,980 crore to facilitate continuous maritime insurance coverages, according to an official statement. The statement said the Domestic Insurance Pool addresses global volatility and geopolitical instability and reduces external insurance dependency of Indian vessels.

transiting volatile maritime corridors," it added.

The statement said the pool will ensure that Indian trade continues to have access to affordable insurance for vessels carrying cargo from any international origin to Indian ports and vice versa, even when transiting volatile maritime corridors.

With increased global volatility and geopolitical instability, maritime trade has been impacted with an increased risk of losses for cargo and vessels, resulting in increased insurance costs and uncertainty in continuous availability of insurance.

Further, there is high dependence of Indian vessels on the International Group of Protection and Indemnity (IGPI) Club for P&I insurance covering third-party liabilities like Oil pollution liability, Wreck removal, Cargo damage, Crew injury and repatriation, Collision liabilities and so on. Accordingly, the statement said there was a need for a domestic maritime risk-covering pool to maintain sovereignty and continuity of trade in the face of withdrawal of coverage due to sanctions or due to geopolitical tensions.

"In the above backdrop, the government has approved the

formation of the 'Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool' (BMI pool) for Indian-flagged or controlled vessels or vessels destined to or starting from India, backed by a sovereign guarantee," it said. The policies will be issued by insurers that are Pool members, using the combined underwriting capacity of the Pool, which would be around ₹950 crore.

The statement said that the Pool will help to manage liability insurance locally, tailored to Indian Shipping conditions and regulatory requirements; develop specialized Marine underwriting, claims management and legal expertise within India.

Further, it said a Governing Body Constituted for this pool would oversee the formation and functioning of the pool.

The rationale for providing a sovereign guarantee to the proposed domestic insurance entity is rooted in the objectives of strengthening self-reliance and sanctions resilience and ensuring greater sovereign control.

BHEL Registers Strong Revenue Growth in FY 2025-26

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17:

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), India's foremost engineering and manufacturing enterprise in the power and infrastructure sector, has registered a turnover of around Rs. 32,350 crore (provisional and unaudited) for FY 2025-26, marking a growth of 18% over the previous year. The company secured total order inflows of around Rs. 75,000 crore during the year. With this, BHEL's total outstanding order book at the end of FY 2025-26 stands at around Rs. 2.4 lakh crore.

Key highlights of the year include:

- In the power sector, BHEL continued to maintain a strong market position with significant order wins of around Rs. 59,000 crore during the year.

- The industrial segment recorded fresh orders of around Rs. 16,000 crore across diverse sectors such as transportation, transmission, defence, process industries, and industrial equipment, reflecting the company's broad-based presence.
- On the execution front, BHEL commissioned/synchronised around 8.9 GW of power capacity, demonstrating its continued focus on project delivery and operational efficiency.

With healthy revenue growth, a strong order book, and a sustained execution pipeline, BHEL enters FY 2026-27 with solid momentum. The company remains committed to delivering high-impact infrastructure, driving indigenousation, and enhancing stakeholder value.

Volatile markets push SIP stoppage ratio above 100% for first time in 11 months

The Systematic Investment Plan stoppage ratio last month crossed 100 per cent for the first time in the last 11 months, as volatile markets made investors jittery, with one- and two-year SIP returns turning negative in the last few months.



over a one- to two-year time frame.

Investors should stay calm and aim to accumulate more units during bad times to reap the real benefit of compounding in inevitable bear markets, he added.

Annual trends and regulatory impact

In the financial year ending March, the stoppage ratio has hit a new high of 95 per cent, as the industry closed 162.32 lakh accounts last April, as per SEBI's direction to shut down accounts that had remained paused for three consecutive months. In FY25, the stoppage ratio in the industry was 76 per cent, with 514.17 lakh accounts closed and 679.85 lakh accounts opened. Despite the stoppage, SIP inflows increased 21 per cent last fiscal to ₹3.50 lakh crore, up from ₹2.89 lakh crore in FY'25.

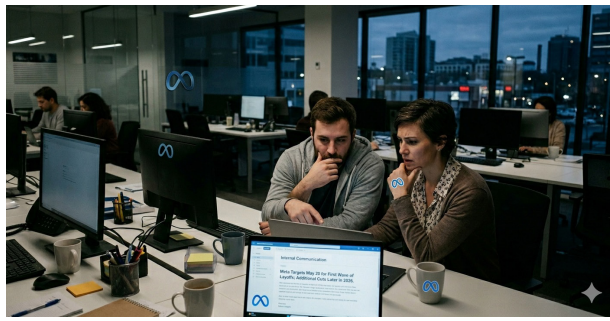
The number of SIP accounts stopped or matured increased to 53.38 lakh, against 52.82 lakh new SIP accounts opened last month, according to Association of Mutual Funds of India data. Interestingly, the SIP stoppage ratio in February was 76 per cent, with 49.70 lakh accounts stopped, while 65.72 lakh new accounts opened.

Market fall triggers investor panic

Jeevan Kumar KC, Head - Investment Advisory Services, Geojit Financial Services, said markets over the last two months have dipped 16 per cent, leading to widespread SIP stoppages as investors panicked amid returns from popular SIP categories such as small, mid and flexi caps dwindling

Meta targets May 20 for first wave of layoffs; additional cuts later in 2026

Meta intends to conduct a first wave of sweeping layoffs planned for this year on May 20, with more coming later, three sources familiar with the plans told Reuters.



The Facebook and Instagram owner will lay off about 10% of its global workforce, or close to 8,000 employees, in that initial round, one of the sources said.

The company is planning further layoffs in the second half of the year, the three sources said, although details of those cuts, including date and size, were not yet settled. Executives may adjust their plans as they observe developments in artificial intelligence capabilities, the sources added. Reuters reported last month that the company was planning to lay off 20% or more of its global workforce.

Meta declined to comment on the timing or scope of planned cuts.

CEO Mark Zuckerberg is

pumping hundreds of billions of dollars into AI as he seeks to dramatically reshape his company's inner workings around the technology, reflecting a broader pattern among major U.S. companies this year, particularly in the tech sector. Amazon.com similarly has trimmed 30,000 corporate employees in recent months, representing nearly 10% of its white-collar workers, while in February the fintech company Block chopped nearly half of its staff. In both of those cases, executives tied the cuts to efficiency gains from artificial intelligence. Layoffs.fyi, a website tracking tech job cuts

around the world, reported that 73,212 employees have lost their jobs so far this year. For all of 2024, the figure was 153,000. Meta's layoffs this year will be the social media giant's most significant since a restructuring in late 2022 and early 2023 that it dubbed the "year of efficiency," when it eliminated about 21,000 jobs. At that time, Meta's stock was in freefall and the company was struggling to correct for COVID-era growth assumptions that ultimately proved unsustainable. The company is in a more comfortable financial position this time, but executives envision a future

of fewer management layers and greater efficiency brought about by AI-assisted workers.

Meta's shares are up 3.68% since the start of the year, although they are down from a record high achieved last summer. Last year, it generated more than \$200 billion of revenue and achieved a \$60 billion profit despite outsized spending on artificial intelligence. Menlo Park, California-based Meta employed nearly 79,000 people as of December 31, according to its latest filing. In recent weeks, Meta has reorganized teams in its Reality Labs division and transferred engineers from throughout the company into a new "Applied AI" organization tasked with accelerating the development of AI agents that can write code and carry out complex tasks autonomously. One of the sources said some staffers also would be transferred into Meta Small Business, a unit set up last month, as part of the restructuring.

FPIs Turn Net Buyers, Invest ₹4,794 Cr in Equities

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) turned net buyers in Indian equities during the four-day trading week ending April 17, 2026, infusing a net ₹4,794.28 crore into Indian stocks, according to data on the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL). Markets were closed on Tuesday, April 14, on account of Ambedkar Jayanti.

The week saw a sharp swing in FPI sentiment. On April 13, FPIs were net buyers in equities to the tune of ₹1,509.37 crore. However, the trend reversed on April 15, when they turned net sellers, off-loading equities worth ₹1,435.44 crore. The reversal proved short-lived — FPIs returned aggressively as buyers on April 16, recording the week's highest single-day net

equity inflow of ₹3,098.97 crore, followed by a further ₹1,621.38 crore on April 17. Across all asset classes — including equity, debt, hybrid, and mutual funds — FPIs recorded a cumulative net inflow of ₹3,717.44 crore for the week, as per NSDL data. This compares against a largely negative trend in the broader month-to-date picture: Dr V K Vijayakumar, Chief

Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments, noted that "FPIs continued selling in April taking the total sell figure for April through 17 to ₹44,929 crore," adding that "the total FPI selling in 2026, so far, now stands at ₹1,86,070 crore."

Rupee hopes, macro triggers Despite the monthly outflow trend, the week's reversal in equity

flows signals a possible turning point. Vijayakumar pointed to currency dynamics as a key factor, noting that "RBI's strong action curbing excessive speculative activity in the currency markets has reversed the trend of sustained rupee depreciation," and that "in anticipation of stability in the rupee, FPIs turned buyers, though marginally, in the

last three trading days." Geopolitical developments in West Asia served as the dominant macro trigger shaping FPI behaviour through the week. Himanshu Srivastava, Principal Research at Morningstar Investment Research India, attributed the shift to "easing of geopolitical tensions following the announcement of a ceasefire in the West Asia,"

Economic Giants, Governance Dwarves

MOUNT ABU, RAJASTHAN:

India's largest metropolitan centres—Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata—together account for nearly 75 million residents and rank among the world's most populous urban regions. Yet, according to the Union government's Economic Survey 2025-26, their vast population scale has not translated into proportionate gains in urban productivity, liveability, or global economic influence. The Survey describes Indian cities as "engines of growth, magnets for talent, and crucibles of innovation," while simultaneously calling them "sites of daily strain marked by long commutes, uneven services, and shared spaces that often fall short of collective expectations." A recent report by Janaagraha and the Jana Urban Space Foundation highlights that despite more than ₹8.36 lakh crore allocated to urban local bodies over the past decade through the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and Finance Commissions, Indian cities continue to rank low

on liveability indices.

Experts attribute this gap primarily to fragmented governance structures, where urban responsibilities are divided among municipal bodies, development authorities, state departments, and parastatal agencies. This fragmentation, they argue, has prevented effective decentralisation and weakened local governance. India's urban population, currently estimated at 522 million, is projected to rise to 723 million by 2050. Without structural reform, analysts warn that cities may face worsening crises including water scarcity, public health challenges, and economic inefficiencies.

Rise of gated communities reflects governance deficit

A growing consequence of these challenges is the rapid expansion of gated communities and integrated townships. Data from Redseer Strategy Consultants suggests that nearly two in five households in India's top 50 cities now prefer gated residential complexes, up from one in three five years ago. Industry ex-



perts say this trend is especially visible in cities such as Bengaluru, Gurugram, Hyderabad, Pune, Lucknow, Indore, and Jaipur, where demand for managed, amenity-rich housing continues to rise. While developers and consultants attribute this shift partly to lifestyle aspirations and post-pandemic hybrid work preferences, urban analysts argue that poor municipal service delivery remains a major driver. Residents of gated complexes often cite better maintenance, security, and infrastructure reli-

ability compared to surrounding city areas, where issues such as pothole-ridden roads, inconsistent water supply, and delayed civic repairs persist. However, experts caution that this trend has deeper social implications. By shifting to privately managed enclaves, wealthier residents may be withdrawing from civic engagement, reducing pressure for broader municipal reform and worsening service inequality for lower-income groups.

Unequal access and widening urban divides

Urban scholars also warn that gated developments risk reinforcing socio-spatial segregation along class, caste, and religious lines. In several major cities, informal screening practices in housing societies have been reported, limiting access for marginalised groups. Critics argue that such developments effectively privatise urban space, restricting access to shared infrastructure such as roads, parks, and public amenities. The financial divide is also stark. Estimates suggest residents of gated communities earn significantly higher incomes than the national average, enabling them to pay for both municipal services and private maintenance systems—options unavailable to large sections of the urban population.

Structural weaknesses in urban governance

A Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit of urban local bodies across 18 states highlights major gaps in decentralisation. While municipalities are formally assigned multiple

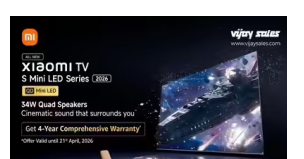
functions under the 74th Constitutional Amendment, only a few operate with full autonomy. Urban planning, considered critical for sustainable development, remains one of the least developed functions. Staffing shortages are also severe, with vacancy levels averaging 37% in municipal bodies. Financial constraints further limit urban governance. Municipal revenues account for less than 1% of India's GDP, significantly lower than comparable economies. Property tax recovery remains weak, and cities continue to depend heavily on state and central transfers. Experts point out that the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017 further reduced local revenue streams by subsuming several municipal taxes into the central pool.

Call for reform and stronger decentralisation

Urban policy experts argue that meaningful reform requires genuine devolution of powers to municipal bodies, including authority over staffing, budgeting, and planning.

Vijay Sales Opens Pre-Orders for Xiaomi TV S Mini LED Series in India

HYDERABAD, APRIL 17, 2026:



Vijay Sales, a leading omni-channel electronics retail chain in India, has announced the commencement of pre-orders for the newly launched Xiaomi TV S Mini LED Series across its website and retail outlets nationwide. Strengthening its collaboration with Xiaomi, Vijay Sales will serve as the exclusive retail partner for the S Mini LED television range across all cities where it operates physical stores. Customers can pre-book the new television series for a token amount of ₹2,000 through www.vijaysales.com

or at Vijay Sales stores until April 21, 2026. As part of a limited-period launch offer, customers who pre-book the TVs will receive a 4-year comprehensive warranty, compared to the standard coverage of 2 years. Post the pre-order window, warranty coverage will revert to 3 years. The Xiaomi TV S Mini LED Series features advanced display technology, offering improved brightness, deeper contrast, and enhanced colour accuracy. The lineup is available in 55-inch, 65-inch, and 75-inch variants. Key specifications include 4K Ultra HD resolution, Dolby Vision, HDR10+,

Filmmaker Mode, a 34W Quad-Speaker system with Dolby Atmos and DTS:X support, and gaming features such as 120Hz refresh rate, MEMC, and Auto Low Latency Mode (ALLM). The series also supports multiple connectivity options, including AirPlay 2, Google Cast, and Miracast, enabling seamless content sharing across devices. As part of the launch offers, customers can avail up to ₹10,000 instant bank cashback on select bank cards along with No-Cost EMI options. Effective prices are set at ₹48,999 for the 55-inch model, ₹66,999 for the 65-inch model, and ₹89,999 for the 75-inch variant. After the pre-order phase, the Xiaomi TV S Mini LED Series will be available across Vijay Sales' retail stores and online platform. Commenting on the launch, Vijay Sales Director Nilesh Gupta said the partnership with Xiaomi reflects a shared commitment to bringing advanced, future-ready technology to Indian consumers, while ensuring early access through its omni-channel retail network.

Do Men Get Breast Cancer?

The Silent Risk Factors Most Males Ignore



When most people think of breast cancer, they associate it almost entirely with women. But the truth is far less discussed and often overlooked, men can develop breast cancer too. While rare, the condition carries serious risks, especially because it is frequently detected late. According to Dr Mohit Agarwal, Principal Director and Head of Medical Oncology at Fortis Hospital Shalimar Bagh, awareness remains the biggest gap. "Male breast cancer is a rare but important clinical entity, accounting for less than 1% of all breast cancers. Unfortunately, it is often detected at a later stage compared to female breast cancer," he explains.

Why Male Breast Cancer Often Goes Unnoticed

One of the primary reasons for delayed diagnosis is a widespread misconception, that breast cancer is exclusively a female disease. This belief, combined with social stigma, discourages men from seeking timely medical advice. Dr Agarwal points out that many men tend to ignore early warning signs. "This delay is primarily due to low awareness, social stigma, and the misconception that breast cancer is exclusively a female disease," he says.

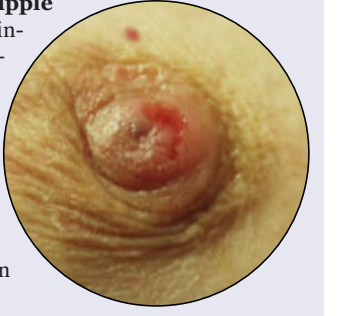
Unlike women, men do not undergo routine screening for breast cancer. This means the disease is usually identified only after symptoms become noticeable, often when it has already progressed.

Early Signs Men Should Not Ignore..

The symptoms of male breast cancer can be subtle, but they should never be dismissed. The most common sign is a painless lump beneath the nipple. However, other symptoms may include

Nipple retraction Skin changes or ulceration Unusual discharge from the nipple

"Men typically present with a painless lump beneath the nipple, sometimes associated with nipple retraction, ulceration, or discharge. However, these symptoms are frequently ignored or misinterpreted," Dr Agarwal notes. Because these signs may not cause immediate discomfort, many men delay consulting a doctor, which can significantly impact outcomes.



Who Is At Risk?

Although rare, certain factors can increase a man's risk of developing breast cancer. Age is one of the most significant contributors, with most cases occurring in older men. Dr Agarwal highlights several key risk factors:

- Family history of breast cancer
- Genetic mutations, particularly BRCA2
- Hormonal imbalances
- Obesity
- Liver disease
- Prior radiation exposure to the chest

"Genetic predisposition plays a more prominent role in men compared to women, making genetic counselling an important aspect of management in selected cases," he explains. "This means men with a strong family history should be particularly vigilant and may benefit from medical guidance even before symptoms appear."

How Is Male Breast Cancer Treated?

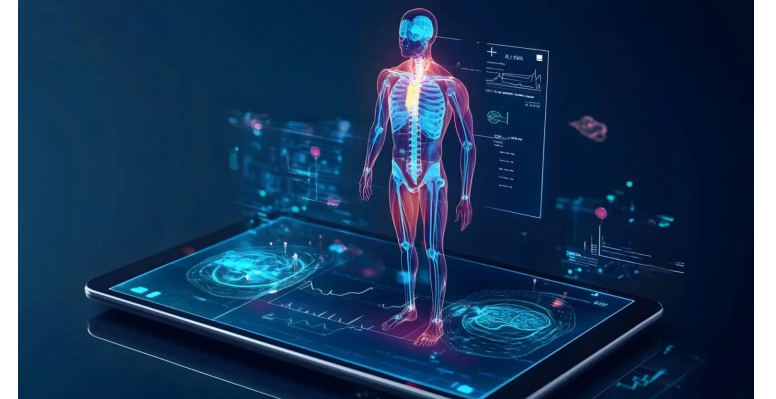
The good news is that treatment for male breast cancer is largely similar to that for women, and can be very effective, especially when diagnosed early. "Surgery, most commonly modified radical mastectomy, remains the mainstay for localised disease," says Dr Agarwal. Depending on the stage and characteristics of the cancer, additional treatments may include:

Chemotherapy Radiation therapy Hormonal therapy, particularly with tamoxifen

Hormonal therapy is especially relevant because many male breast cancers are hormone receptor-positive, meaning they respond well to such treatments.

Why Awareness Is Crucial

Despite being uncommon, male breast cancer is not negligible. The lack of awareness continues to be a major barrier to early diagnosis. Dr Agarwal stresses the importance of recognising symptoms and acting promptly. "Any persistent breast lump in a male should be promptly evaluated with appropriate imaging and biopsy. Early diagnosis can significantly improve survival outcomes," he advises. This is especially important in a society where men may hesitate to speak about or seek help for such conditions due to embarrassment or stigma.



Does Early Detection Improve Survival?

The answer is a clear yes. Early detection can make a significant difference in outcomes. "Outcomes in male breast cancer can be comparable to female breast cancer when diagnosed early. However, delayed detection often results in more advanced disease at presentation, adversely impacting prognosis," Dr Agarwal explains. In simple terms, the earlier the cancer is identified, the better the chances of successful treatment and survival.



Brain Injuries Linked To Increased Risk Of Anxiety And Depression In Children, Finds Study

Brain injuries in children, often caused by falls, sports accidents, car crashes, or abuse, can lead to lasting effects beyond physical healing. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) disrupts normal brain function and affects how children think, feel, and behave, sometimes for years. A new study has found that school-age children and teenagers with medically diagnosed TBI show much higher rates of anxiety and depression compared to those without such injuries. The study was conducted by researchers at the Center for Injury Research and Policy of the Abigail Wexner Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital, The Ohio State University, and University of Washington. Published in the JAMA Network Open, the study highlights that these mental health challenges, along with physical issues like frequent headaches and chronic pain, emphasize the need for ongoing care and family support in recovery.

How Brain Injuries Affect Mental Health

TBI damages brain areas that regulate emotions, such as the frontal lobe and limbic system, leading to mood swings, fear, or sadness. In children, whose brains are still developing, this can disrupt learning emotional control, making anxiety feel overwhelming or depression cause withdrawal from friends and school.

Anxiety might show as constant worry, trouble sleeping, or avoiding activities once enjoyed, while depression can appear as irritability, low energy, or loss of interest in play. Studies confirm new-onset disorders emerge months after injury, with older children (10-13 years) at higher risk for depression. Brain scans in prior research link lesions in the left inferior frontal gyrus or right frontal white matter to these issues, explaining why even mild TBIs raise risks by 25% for affective disorders like PTSD or acute stress.



Study Findings

For the study, researchers examined data from over 100,000 US children aged 6-17 using the 2022-2023 National Survey of Children's Health. They found children with TBI had significantly higher chances of current anxiety, about 1.5 to 2 times more likely, and depression compared to peers without brain injuries. Family resilience played a protective role, lowering depression risks after TBI by helping families handle stress, communicate better, and draw on strengths during crises. Strong support from parents and siblings can buffer mental health risks, showing recovery involves the whole family. Physical symptoms like frequent headaches and chronic pain were also more common in TBI children. The study stresses routine mental health screenings and long-term follow-up, as effects tend to linger long after the initial injury. Henry Xiang, MD, MPH, PhD, MBA, principal investigator in the Center for Injury Research and Policy and senior author of the study, said, "Our study shows that the impact of traumatic brain injury in children often extends well beyond the initial injury. Children who experience TBI face increased risks of mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression, highlighting the importance of routine mental health screening and long-term follow-up care."

Risk Factors and Warning Signs

Severity plays a very important role. Mild TBIs (like concussions) double anxiety short-term, while severe ones can cause long-term problems. Other risks include older age at injury, family history of anxiety, pre-injury mental health issues, and poor coping skills. Parents might notice changes like sudden fearfulness, clinginess, frequent tears, headaches, or school struggles. Early signs often appear 3-6 months post-injury.

Role of Family and Support

Family resilience reduces depression risks. Supportive homes help children rebuild confidence and process trauma. Experts recommend caregivers join therapy to boost their own resilience, as recovery happens in daily environments like home and school. Programs teaching coping skills strengthen family bonds. Xiang said, "One of the most encouraging findings from our research is that family resilience appears to play an important role in a TBI patient's recovery. Children recovering from traumatic brain injury who grow up in supportive families may have lower risks of long-term mental health problems. Strengthening family support systems and resilience may be an important pathway to improving TBI patients' long-term outcomes."

Experts have called for the adoption of national standard treatment guidelines for haemophilia to standardise its care across India, improve early diagnosis and expand access to preventive therapies. Haemophilia, a rare genetic bleeding disorder in which blood does not clot properly, continues to remain underdiagnosed in the country, with fewer than one in five patients identified, experts said. That leaves nearly 80 per cent of cases undetected, highlighting the urgent need to strengthen awareness and screening systems, they said on World Haemophilia Day.

The condition is caused by a deficiency of clotting factor proteins, "factor VIII in haemophilia A and factor IX in haemophilia B", leading to prolonged bleeding even from minor injuries, they said. While it is often inherited, nearly one-third of cases arise due to spontaneous genetic mutations, making early detection more challenging. "In mild cases of haemophilia, sometimes a person may not be aware that they have a deficiency, and when they go for a tooth extraction or surgery, they may have a problem. It is important to know your family history and report prolonged bleeding to your doctor," said Dr Tulika Seth, Professor of Haematology at AIIMS, Delhi.

Standard Guidelines Urged for Haemophilia Care in India



- Experts noted that haemophilia is frequently misdiagnosed, with children sometimes incorrectly treated for arthritis, resulting in avoidable joint damage and, in severe cases, the need for joint replacement surgeries.
- Treatment approaches in India have traditionally been reactive, with patients seeking care only after a bleeding episode, Dr Seth said.
- However, recent advances have shifted the focus towards prevention. Newer non-factor therapies, administered subcutaneously, have significantly reduced bleed-

- ing frequency and long-term complications.
- "These non-factor therapies are easier to administer and well accepted by patients. While gene therapy is still not widely available in India, some state governments have begun providing non-factor therapies," Dr Seth added.
- Despite these advances, access to preventive treatment remains limited, with only about 4 per cent of patients in India receiving prophylaxis, compared to 80-90 per cent in high-income countries.
- Dr Parul Bhatt, Professor and Head, Department of Medicine at

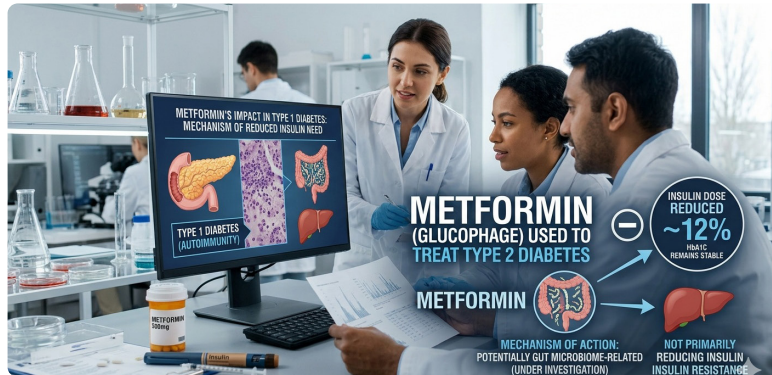
- Gujarat Medical Education & Research Society, Sola, said there is a pressing need for Indian guidelines that make prophylaxis the standard of care.
- "There should be no reliance on on-demand treatment. In Gujarat, we are already practising this approach, with very few patients remaining on on-demand therapy," she said.
- Experts emphasised that India-specific Standard Treatment Guidelines (STGs) would provide a uniform framework for diagnosis, treatment and long-term management, while accounting for re-

- source constraints.
- "Standardisation of care has to be based on geographic and social context. Global guidelines cannot be fully applied unless resources are equal. Prophylaxis, in any form, remains the best option to curb this problem," said Dr Joseph John, Professor and Head of Clinical Haematology at Christian Medical College, Ludhiana.
- They said the adoption of STGs could significantly reduce disability, improve quality of life and ensure equitable access to care for haemophilia patients across the country.

Type 1 diabetes affects millions of people across the globe. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition wherein your body prevents the pancreas from making insulin. When your body doesn't have enough insulin, it can't process the sugar that you eat and this leads to sugar buildup in the blood. This leads to high blood sugar levels. If the condition is not treated, it can lead to serious health issues and in severe cases, even death. Hence, people suffering from Type 1 diabetes tend to rely on lifelong insulin injections because their immune system destroys the pancreas's insulin-producing cells.

Dr. Jennifer Snaith, endocrinologist and co-lead of the study, said, "Insulin resistance is a growing problem in type 1 diabetes. Not only does it make regulating blood sugar levels difficult, but it is an underappreciated risk factor for heart disease, which is one of the biggest causes of health complications and deaths in those with type 1 diabetes." Now, a new study from the Garvan Institute of Medical Research offers hope through metformin, which is a drug that has been used for decades to treat type 2 diabetes.

Metformin.. A Century-Old Secret Weapon for Type 1 Diabetes?



Researchers tested the drug on 40 adults with long-term type 1 diabetes in the Insulin Resistance in Type 1 Diabetes Managed with Metformin (INTIMET) study, giving half of them metformin and half a placebo for six months. They used advanced 'clamp' tests to measure insulin resistance in the liver, muscles, and fat. Surprisingly, metformin did not reduce insulin resistance as expected, but those taking it used about 12% less insulin daily while keeping blood sugar levels stable, with no changes in average glucose or HbA1c levels. The study was published in Nature Communications.

Why Does Metformin Help?

Metformin's main job in type 2 diabetes is lowering liver glucose output and boosting insulin sensitivity, but it acted differently in this case. Since insulin resistance stayed the same yet less insulin worked, scientists suspect other paths. One top theory points to the gut microbiome. Professor Jerry Greenfield, Faculty at Garvan Institute of Medical Research, said, "Metformin has been available in various forms for around 100 years, but its mechanism of action remains unknown. We would have expected that the observed reductions in insulin dose induced by metformin in our study would be due to the body becoming more sensitive to insulin, that is, becoming less insulin resistant. But we have shown that is not the case. Our priority is now working out how metformin is achieving this effect."

Study Overview And Key Findings

The INTIMET trial was a randomised study, the first of its kind to test metformin's effects on insulin resistance in type 1 diabetes adults. Participants had established type 1 diabetes and some insulin resistance. They continued their usual insulin but added 1,500-2,000 mg of metformin daily or placebo. After 26 weeks, clamp studies showed no drop in hepatic, muscle, or adipose insulin resistance, but total daily insulin dose fell by 0.10 units/kg/day in the metformin group versus a slight rise in placebo. Dr. Snaith said, "Although we didn't find changes to insulin resistance from the use of metformin, we did show that people taking it used around 12% less insulin than those on placebo. This is an important result."



Eshan Malinga picks three wickets as SRH beat CSK by 10 runs



HYDERABAD

Sri Lankan pacer Eshan Malinga picked three wickets as Sunrisers Hyderabad restricted five-time champions Chennai Super Kings (CSK) to just 184/8 in 20 overs and won their third match in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 by 10 runs at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad on Saturday.

Earlier, opener Abhishek Sharma and Heinrich Klaasen scored half-centuries as Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) posted 194/9 in 20 overs despite a great comeback by CSK bowlers.

Chasing a challenging target, CSK made a brisk start, scoring 15 runs in the opening over. However, they suffered an early setback when Sanju Samson was dismissed for seven in the second over by Nitish Kumar Reddy.

Despite the early blow, Ayush Mhatre counterattacked aggressively, smashing 24 runs in the third over. He looked in fine touch but was forced off after pulling a hamstring and was eventually dismissed for a quick 30 off 13 balls.

SRH tightened their grip when Malinga removed CSK captain Ruturaj Gaikwad for 19. Sarfaraz Khan and Matthew Short then steadied the innings with a 46-run partnership, guiding CSK to 111/3 at the halfway mark. The stand was broken in the 11th over when Malinga dismissed Sarfaraz for 25. SRH struck again soon after as Shivam Kumar removed Dewald Brevis for a duck. With the pressure building, Short struggled to accelerate and was dismissed for 34 off 30 balls, giving Malinga his third wicket. Shivam Dube tried to revive the chase but was bowled by Sakib Hussain for 21.

Late efforts from Jamie Overton and Anshul Kamboj were not enough, as CSK failed to chase down 18 runs in the final over, finishing on 184/8. Malinga was the standout performer with figures of 3/29, while Nitish Kumar Reddy chipped in with two wickets to secure a 10-run win for SRH.

Asked to bat first, SRH began cautiously before accelerating in the power-play. Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head looked in control, finding boundaries regularly.

Abhishek's explosive hitting in the fifth over, where he smashed Matthew Short for 25 runs, powered SRH to 63/0 in five overs.

CSK responded immediately as Mukesh Choudhary dismissed Head for 23, and Ishan Kishan fell for a duck on the next ball, leaving SRH at 75/2 after the powerplay. Abhishek's innings ended in the eighth over when Jamie Overton induced an edge, caught by Sanju Samson. He made a rapid 59 off 22 balls, including six fours and four sixes.

SRH lost another wicket in the 11th over, but Klaasen and Nitish Kumar Reddy added a quick 35-run partnership to stabilise the innings. Reddy scored 12 before departing, while Klaasen continued to attack, bringing up his fifty in 32 balls.

Klaasen was eventually bowled by Anshul Kamboj for 59 off 39 balls. Late cameo, including 12 off 8 from Shivam Kumar, helped SRH reach 194, though they fell short of 200.

For CSK, Overton and Kamboj picked up three wickets each, while Mukesh Choudhary claimed one.



Mohun Bagan SG look to stay in title with win over NorthEast

GUWAHATI

Defending champions Mohun Bagan Super Giant will face NorthEast United FC to keep the pressure on the top of the table in Indian Super League (ISL) 2025-26 at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium in Guwahati on Sunday.

NorthEast United FC will aim to leverage their home advantage following a hard-earned 1-1 draw on the road against Kerala Blasters FC. Currently sitting 11th in the standings with seven points, the Guwahati-based outfit would reach 10 points with a victory on Sunday.

Adopting a fearless approach ahead of the demanding fixture, NorthEast United FC head coach Juan Pedro Benali embraced the challenge. "What do we have to lose? It is a game of 11 against 11," Benali stated. "We know Mohun Bagan is one of the strongest teams in the league, but I am confident in my players. We have absolutely no pressure, and we are ready to compete." NorthEast United FC midfielder Jairo Samperio highlighted the physical dynamics of the encounter. "It's never easy to come back from injury. I'm still getting my form back. But in the last two games, I felt very good. My body responded well. The team has done a great job, and we are ready for the next challenge. It will be a tough game, but we are prepared and motivated."

Mohun Bagan Super Giant travel to Guwahati seeking a win and maintain their push for the League Shield. The Mariners recently returned to winning ways with a

3-2 home victory over Punjab FC, where a stoppage-time free-kick from Jason Cummings secured the result following earlier equalisers from Jamie Maclaren and Sahal Abdul Samad.

Currently sitting second in the standings with 17 points, an away victory would propel them to 20 points, which would temporarily see them move above Mumbai City, who have 18 points.

For Mohun Bagan Super Giant, head coach Sergio Lobera dismissed any title-race pressure, viewing it instead as fuel for his squad. "It is always a motivation. With five games remaining, we are in a position to fight for our target, which is to win the trophy," Lobera explained. "We are not under pressure; we are excited by the opportunity to get three very important points against NorthEast United."

The head-to-head record heavily favours the Mariners. In their 12 previous ISL encounters, Mohun Bagan have claimed nine victories compared to NorthEast United FC's two, with just one match ending in a draw. The Mariners have also outscored the Highlanders 26 to 14 across these meetings. Their most recent clash in December 2024 saw Mohun Bagan secure a 2-0 away victory in Guwahati.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant midfielder Sahal Abdul Samad, fresh off his stunning strike in the previous match, expressed his desire to contribute further. "I always work hard in training, and I believe I can do more to help the team," Samad noted. "The goal was important, and it helped us win and change the momentum."

Golf: Pranavi makes cut in Joburg, Diksha, Tvesa miss out



JOHANNESBURG: Pranavi Urs was the only Indian golfer to advance to the weekend rounds at the Joburg Ladies Open, narrowly making the cut at Randpark Golf Club in Johannesburg, on Saturday. After an impressive opening round of 3-under 70, she followed up with a 1-over 74 in the second round to finish right on the outline. Despite a tense finish, Pranavi managed to hold her position and was placed tied 52nd. Her second round was a mixed performance. She started steadily, going 1-under through the front nine, but encountered difficulties later with four bogeys offset by just two birdies. A bogey on her final hole, the ninth, put her qualification in doubt, but she ultimately scraped through by the narrowest margin. The rest of the Indian contingent failed to progress beyond the cut. Tvesa Malik and Diksha Dagar both fell short by a single stroke, each posting rounds of 72 and 73. Avani Prashanth (75-74) and Hitaashree Bakshi (77-74) were further behind and missed the cut by wider margins. At the top of the leaderboard, France's Celine Herbin and the United States' Brianna Navarrosa shared the lead after two rounds, both sitting at 11-under par.

IPL 2025-26: Shillong Lajong hit Aizawl FC for six in a dominant display



SHILLONG

Tremiki Lamurong scored a brace as eShillong Lajong hit six past Aizawl FC for a crushing 6-1 victory in Match 42 of the Star Cement Indian Football League 2025-26 at the SSA Stadium in Shillong on Saturday. Lamurong scored twice in the 87th and 90+3rd minutes for the home side, while Phrangki Buam, Everbrightson Sana, Gladly Kharbuli, and Lamalian Vaiphei scored the other goals. Lalhratpuia scored the consolation goal for Aizawl.

Shillong Lajong moved into second place in the table, temporarily, with 17 points from nine matches. Meanwhile, Aizawl, with the defeat, have slipped to seventh, which has confirmed their place in the relegation phase.

Shillong Lajong head coach Birendra Thapa made just one change to his starting XI, with

Gladly Kharbuli coming into midfield in place of Abelson Jachi. Meanwhile, R. Lalruatfela made three changes to the Aizawl lineup, bringing in Lalawmpuia Sailo, Malsawmzuala Tlangte, and Lalhratpuia in place of Zomuansanga, Vanlalawmpuia, and Vincent Lalduhawmna.

Aizawl dominated the opening 15 minutes with quick, incisive passing that kept the Lajong defence on the back foot. They created several chances but lacked the finishing touch, with goalkeeper Ranit Sarkar producing key saves while the defenders put their bodies on the line to block efforts on goal.

The home side gradually grew into the game and took the lead in the 26th minute. Left-back Saveme Tariang delivered a curling cross towards the back post, and goalkeeper Lalhratpuia hesitated to come out and claim it.

Indian women's hockey team stages a solid comeback to level series

BUENOS AIRES

The Indian women's hockey team showed immense grit to finish their four-match tour of Argentina with a 2-2 draw. After a difficult start to the series, the Indian side fought back brilliantly, winning their final two matches to finish the tour on a high.

The tour began with a competitive opening match on April 13, where Navneet Kaur (22) and Annu (29) found the net for India. While Argentina eventually won 4-2, with Maria Emilia Larsen (11), Victoria Granato (18), and Julieta

Jankunas (42', 55') among the scorers—India showed strong attacking intent throughout. In the second match, played on April 14, Ishika (22') gave India an early lead before the hosts secured a narrow 2-1 win behind a brace from Agustina Gorzelany (34', 48').

India found their rhythm in the third match on April 16, securing a 2-1 victory to stay alive in the series. Navneet Kaur (26') and Neha (37') both scored from penalty corners to give India a comfortable 2-0 lead. Despite a late goal from Argentina's Agustina Gorzelany (52'), the Indian



side stayed composed to secure the win and set up the final day drama.

On April 17, the series finale was a hard-fought encounter that ended

0-0 in regulation time. Both teams had chances to score, but the Indian defenders stood tall to keep a clean sheet throughout the match. In the

shootout, India held their nerve to win 3-2 and ensure the series ended level.

The team will now return home to continue their training camp and build on these positive results. This tour has been a vital part of their preparation, providing the squad with important experience against a top-tier opponent away soil.

Reflecting on the tour, stand-in Captain Navneet Kaur said, "I am incredibly proud of how the team responded after the first two matches. It isn't easy to trail 0-2 against a world-class team like Argentina."

Golf: Bhatia fires day's best round to surge into top 20 at RBC Heritage

HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Akshay Bhatia delivered a sensational performance in the second round of the RBC Heritage, carding an impressive 8-under 63 — the lowest score of the day — to vault into a tie for 19th place heading into the weekend.

The 24-year-old showed remarkable improvement after an opening-round 73, gaining 46 spots on the leaderboard. His two-day total now stands at 6-under par, putting him in strong contention as the tournament progresses.

Fellow golfer Sahith Theegala also climbed into T-19 after posting a solid 4-under 67 in the second round, add-



ing to his first-round 69. Theegala's round featured a mix of brilliance and recovery, including two eagles, three birdies, and three bogeys, highlighting his aggressive yet resilient approach.

Meanwhile, Sudarshan Yellamaraju delivered a commendable 5-under 66 to move to T-46 at 2-under overall. His round included a strong finish with four con-

secutive birdies, underscoring his growing confidence on the course.

Bhatia's standout round included 11 birdies, though it was not without setbacks. He recorded one bogey and a double bogey, but his ability to bounce back with consistent birdie-making proved decisive. After a mixed front nine, he surged on the back nine with six birdies to seal the day's best score.

At the top of the leaderboard, Matt Fitzpatrick, the 2023 champion, was in front with a flawless 8-under 63, bringing his total to 14-under par. He holds a narrow one-shot lead over Viktor Hovland, who sits at 13-under after rounds of 64 and 65.

Bowlers, Stubbs, Miller power Delhi Capitals to tense six-wicket win over RCB

BENGALURU

David Miller clobbered two massive sixes in a final-over heist as Delhi Capitals broke their two-game losing streak in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 with a tense six-wicket victory over defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Previously, RCB's aggressive intent only yielded 175/8 as their middle order struggled against DC's fantastic death overs bowling masterclass. Chasing 176 on a surface that grew increasingly sluggish, DC reached the target with a ball to spare, exorcising the ghosts of that one-run loss they suffered to the Gujarat Titans earlier this month.

While birthday boy KL Rahul (57) and Tristan Stubbs (60 no out) laid the foundation, it was Miller who provided the finishing flourish by smashing Romario Shepherd for two sixes and a four in the 20th over when 15 runs were required. The result also ends RCB's two-game winning run, with this also being their first loss at home in the season.

The chase began disastrously for DC as Bhuvneshwar Kumar produced a powerplay masterclass. He trapped Pathum Nissanka plumb lbw in the first over before returning to remove Karun Nair and Sameer Rizvi with outswingers. Reduced to 18/3, DC looked down and out before local hero Rahul took charge.

Rahul, who boasts a stagger-



ing average of 69.9 against RCB, carted Josh Hazlewood for 14 runs in the fifth over — with a flick of the wrists to clip over mid-wicket for six and ramping over the keeper for four being standout shots. Alongside a composed Stubbs, Rahul rebuilt the innings with a 76-run stand and reached his half-century off 30 balls.

But he fell shortly after by holing out to long-off against Krunal Pandya, leaving DC in the face of potential trouble. Stubbs took charge after Rahul's fall by hitting Rasikh Salam Dar and Suyash Sharma for two fours each down the ground. Captain Axar Patel played a vital cameo of 26 to keep the asking rate in check, but was forced to retire hurt due to severe cramps.

His departure triggered a sensational 'squeeze' from the RCB bowlers, as Krunal, Bhuvneshwar, and Hazlewood combined to concede just 13 runs across overs 15, 16, and 17, leaving DC needing 37 off the final 18 balls. Stubbs kept DC alive by reaching

his fifty off 41 balls, but the equation narrowed to 15 runs needed off the final over, via him carting Bhuvneshwar and Rasikh for boundaries each.

Patidar handed the ball to Romario Shepherd for his first over of the match. After a single and a leg-bye, Miller launched a low full-toss into the mid-wicket stand for six. He followed it with a magnificent lofted drive over extra-cover for another maximum, before finishing the game with a flick to the deep mid-wicket fence, fetching him the winning four and taking DC to victory under extreme pressure.

Earlier, a disciplined death-overs bowling masterclass by DC ensured RCB were restricted to a competitive but under-par score. Despite a blistering 63 off 38 balls from opener Phil Salt, RCB's innings stalled significantly in the second half, as DC conceded only 29 runs in the last five overs, with Lungi Ngidi, T Natarajan, and Mukesh Kumar being sensational.

India eye strong comeback against South Africa after defeat

DURBAN

India women's cricket team will be eager to bounce back when they take on South Africa in the second T20I of the five-match series to be played at the Kingsmead Cricket Ground on Sunday, after suffering a six-wicket defeat in the series opener.

Despite a promising start in the first match, India failed to capitalise on key moments. Contributions from Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur helped them reach a competitive total of 157 in 20



overs, but a late-innings slow-down proved costly. Managing just 38 runs in the final phase exposed concerns around finishing ability, an area the

visitors will look to address urgently.

India's bowling unit also had an off day, struggling with consistency and leaking extras

at crucial stages. While Shreyanka Patil and Shree Charani picked up wickets, the attack lacked control, allowing South Africa to chase the total comfortably in just 19.1 overs while losing only four wickets.

On the other hand, South Africa will take confidence from a well-rounded performance. Laura Wolvaardt led the charge with a composed half-century, while Annerie Dercksen and Chloe Tryon ensured there were no late hiccups in the chase.

Their bowling unit, spearheaded by Ayabonga Khaka, was equally impressive. Kha-

ka's ability to vary pace and execute under pressure played a crucial role in restricting India to a below-par total, and she will once again be key on a surface that could assist seamers.

Heading into the second match, India will need a more disciplined effort with the ball and sharper execution at the death with the bat as they aim to level the series.

South Africa, meanwhile, will aim to continue their momentum and tighten their grip on the five-match series with another strong showing at home.

SAMANTHA'S 'BANGARAM' FACES MAKE-OR-BREAK MOMENT

Samantha Ruth Prabhu's upcoming film *Bangaram* is gearing up for release on May 15, but the promotional momentum appears to be underwhelming so far. The recently released song *Thassadiya* received a decent response, but it failed to create a strong buzz on social media, which is crucial in today's market.

While the feedback has been positive in parts, the reach has remained limited, raising concerns about the film's visibility ahead of release. With competition increasing and audience attention spans shrinking, strong promotions have become essential to pull crowds into theatres.

There is also a growing discussion around Samantha's current market pull in Telugu, with some trade circles feeling that her fan following isn't as strong as it once was because of the long gaps. This makes it even more important for the team to step up their promotional strategies in the coming days.

Well, as we already know, Samantha still has a strong goodwill among Telugu audiences, which can quickly turn attention in favour of her films when used effectively. Going forward, the team may need to explore more aggressive and creative promotional strategies to build instant buzz, which has now become essential for a strong box office performance.

Directed by Nandini Reddy, the film also features Sreemukhi in a key role. With less than a month to go, *Bangaram* needs to ramp up its promotions to create the required hype and ensure a strong opening at the box office.



BHAGYASHRI FEVER TAKES OVER THE INTERNET AGAIN

Bhagyashri Borse is once again taking over the internet, thanks to the latest song from *Lenin*. The track showcases her in a refreshing rural avatar, and her energetic dance moves combined with natural charm have quickly grabbed attention across social media.

Interestingly, the buzz has gone beyond the original song. Many youngsters are now remixing and editing her dance steps with different tracks, making the visuals go viral in a big way. This unexpected trend has further amplified her reach and popularity online.

Bhagyashri seems to have found a strong connection with the youth, as her songs consistently generate traction and discussion upon release. Each new appearance is turning into a moment, helping her stay in the spotlight.

The film, starring Akhil Akkineni in the lead, is slated for release on June 25. For Bhagyashri, this project holds significant importance, especially as she looks to bounce back after a string of unsuccessful films. A solid hit here could be a much-needed turning point in her career.



Shannon Elizabeth Says Enough to Hollywood, Launches OnlyFans

The actress, who became a prominent sex symbol of the 1990s and 2000s with her roles in *American Pie* and *Scary Movie*, among others, recently told *People* that she's launching an OnlyFans account to reclaim control of her narrative after working in Hollywood.

"I've spent my entire career working in Hollywood, where other people controlled the narrative and the outcome of my career. This new chapter is about changing that, showing off a more sexy side no one has seen, and being closer to my fans," Elizabeth said of her reasoning for joining the platform primarily known for adult content.

She added, "I'm choosing OnlyFans because it allows me to connect directly with my audience, create on my own terms, and just be free. I really

do think this is the future." Though Elizabeth didn't feel in control of her career when she was younger, she previously told *Entertainment Tonight* that she's still grateful for all the doors that *American Pie* opened for her. However, starring in a raunchy franchise like that also came with misconceptions about who she was in real life. Elizabeth played Nadia, an attractive Eastern European exchange student whom Jim Levenstein (Jason Biggs) has a crush on, in the 1999 film.

"For me, it was a role, it was playing a character," she explained to *ET*. "But even in my real life, I'm just not the girl who likes to be naked, ever. ... That was never me, but because that was kind of my coming out, everyone assumed I was that girl." Elizabeth also reprised her role in 2001's *American Pie 2* and 2012's *American Reunion*.



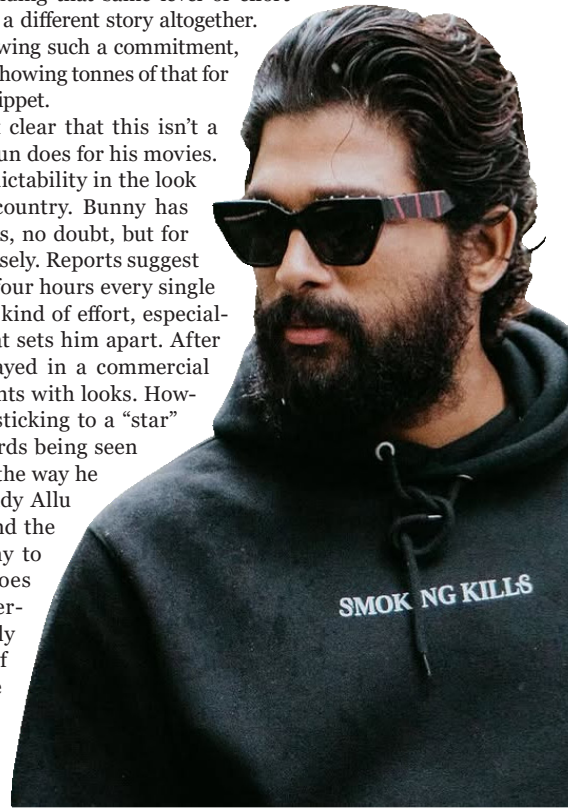
This Is Allu Arjun's Commitment

Struggle in the early phase of a career is common. Every actor works hard to reach stardom. But continuing that same level of effort even after becoming a star is a different story altogether.

If there's one star who is showing such a commitment, it's none other than Allu Arjun, who is showing tonnes of that for "Raaka". Here comes an interesting snippet.

The first look of "Raaka" made it clear that this isn't a regular transformation that Allu Arjun does for his movies.

There's a rawness, a certain unpredictability in the look that instantly clicked across the country. Bunny has experimented before with his looks, no doubt, but for Raaka he's doing things more intensely. Reports suggest Allu Arjun is spending more than four hours every single day just to get into that look. That kind of effort, especially at this stage of his career, is what sets him apart. After *Pushpa 2*, he could have easily stayed in a commercial zone, where he needed no experiments with looks. However, he didn't do that. Instead of sticking to a "star" template, he is clearly pushing towards being seen as an "actor". That shift is visible in the way he is taking Raaka forward. Well, already Allu Arjun proved himself as an actor, and the National Award sweep is a testimony to that. In a time where many star heroes are still playing within safe commercial formulas, Allu Arjun is clearly exploring newer worlds, like some of his peers. Now that he's putting more sweat, blood, and time into Raaka's variations, surely it looks like he's on the path to win one more such thing.



'Minions & Monsters' Gets Musical Boost with John Powell



John Powell, the two-time Academy Award nominee for his work on *How to Train Your Dragon* and *Wicked*, is set to score Illumination's *Minions & Monsters*.

The move reunites the music meister with Illumination, for whom he composed the score to 2023's *Migration* and 2012's *The Lorax*. Coming out of the *Despicable Me* movies, which is the biggest global animated franchise in history, *Minions & Monsters* in the third spin-off that focuses on the excitable small, yellow little creatures that seem to only exist to serve an evil master.

This one is being billed as "ram-bunctious, ridiculous and totally true story" of how the Minions conquered Hollywood, became movie stars, lost everything, unleashed monsters onto the world and then banded together to try and save the planet from the mayhem they had just created.

It is also being described as a love letter to classic Hollywood, which will allow Powell to let loose a variety of styles. But he better get a move on as the movie opens July 1. *Minions &*

Monsters is directed by Academy Award nominee Pierre Coffin, a director of the first three *Despicable Me* films and the first *Minions* film. Coffin has also provided the voice for the Minions since their film debut in 2010. The voice cast includes Allison Janney, Christoph Waltz, Jeff Bridges, Jesse Eisenberg, Zoey Deutch and Trey Parker, as well as Bobby Moynihan and Phil LaMarr.

Brian Lynch, who worked on *Minions* as well as Illumination's *The Secret Life of Pets* movies, and Coffin wrote the script. Illumination founder and CEO Chris Meledandri and Bill Ryan produce.

Powell began his career writing music for commercials and assisting composer Patrick Doyle before moving to the U.S., where he was mentored by Hans Zimmer and worked alongside Stephen Schwartz on the songs for *The Prince of Egypt*. His first film was *John Woo's Face/Off*.

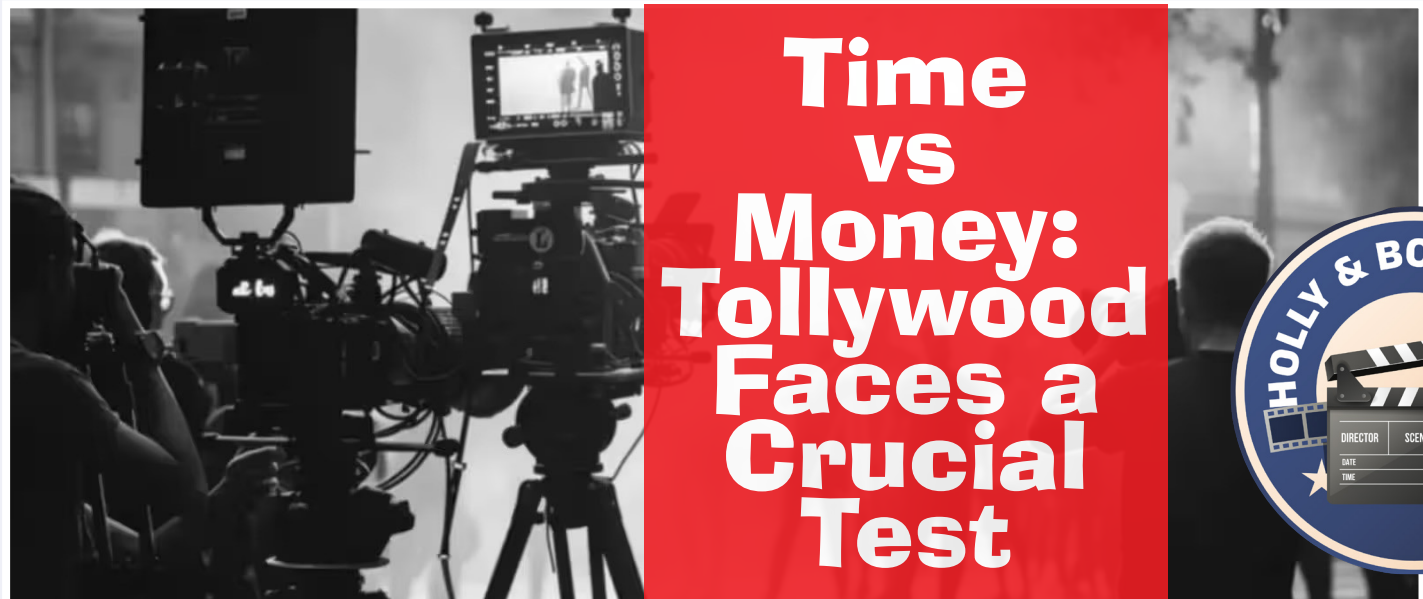
His numerous credits range from *The Bourne Identity* and *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* to *Solo: A Star Wars Story* and *Don't Worry Darling* on the live-action side and from *Kung Fu Panda* and *Bolt* to the *Ice Age* movies on the animation side. He is noted for having written more music for animation than any modern composer, 25 in all (and counting).

Salman commences shoot for Vamshi's big actioner



Salman Khan and Nayanthara have joined forces on a grand scale for director Vamshi Paidipally's upcoming movie, and the regular shoot has officially begun in Mumbai. Setting the internet abuzz, director Vamshi shared an exciting update and a photo on X to mark the beginning of this incredible journey. This fresh lead pairing has already captured the attention of movie lovers across the nation.

The production design team has constructed a huge, highly detailed set in Mumbai to accommodate the grand scale of the script. This current phase of filming is slated to be a rigorous one-month schedule. During this extended period, the unit is entirely focused on executing several high-octane action sequences that are expected to be the major highlights of the movie.



Time vs Money: Tollywood Faces a Crucial Test

Lately, a popular view is gaining traction: true filmmakers wrap up their projects swiftly, without dragging on endlessly. This sentiment is especially aimed at Telugu cinema, where standard commercial blockbusters often stretch to 200, 250, or even 300 shooting days. Unfortunately, the final product frequently falls short, plagued by uneven visuals, overstretched stories, and subpar graphics—issues common in these drawn-out, high-budget productions. That said, not all directors follow this pattern; some visionaries buck the trend with smarter, more efficient approaches.

Consider standout examples: Ram Gopal Varma's *Satya* was shot

A DEBATE IS GROWING IN TELUGU CINEMA OVER LONG SHOOTING SCHEDULES, WITH MANY COMMERCIAL FILMS REPORTEDLY TAKING 200-300 DAYS YET STILL FACING ISSUES IN STORYTELLING AND VISUALS. IN CONTRAST, FILMS LIKE *SATYA*, *POKIRI*, AND *ANIMAL* ARE OFTEN CITED AS EXAMPLES OF TIGHTER, MORE EFFICIENT FILMMAKING.

in tight schedules totaling under 35 days, *Pokiri* wrapped in less than 75 days, and even the massive *Animal* clocked in around 100 days. On the global stage, ambitious epics like Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey* are being filmed within disciplined timelines of under 90 days. The core point is straightforward—if you're a master of your craft, you don't require infinite time on set. This naturally leads to pointed comparisons within the industry.

Critics argue that too many modern directors prioritize spectacle over substance, leaning heavily on grandeur instead of sharp storytelling. Proper production planning often gets sidelined. In certain cases, these films seem crafted primarily to glorify the hero, thrill fans, and generate buzz, rather than delivering genuine cinematic merit.

Of course, today's filmmaking

landscape has evolved dramatically from 10-15 years ago. Expectations for scale have skyrocketed, with heightened technical requirements across the board. VFX-heavy sequences, multi-language dubs, pan-India distributions, and adherence to international benchmarks all demand extended time on location for the majority of projects. Long shooting periods aren't inherently a sign of inefficiency; the real key lies in prioritizing robust scripting to ensure those extended days pay off when the movie finally reaches audiences. Ultimately, raw speed isn't a guaranteed marker of excellence—just as every quick shoot doesn't produce a masterpiece. Tollywood's path forward calls for striking the right 'balance.'



David Harbour Joins Cast of 'John Rambo' in Key Role

David Harbour, known for *Stranger Things*, has joined the upcoming action film *John Rambo*, an origin story directed by Jalmari Helander. Noah Centineo plays a young Rambo, while Harbour takes on Major Trautman, a role originally played by Richard Crenna. Set before *First Blood*, the story explores Rambo as a young soldier in the jungle, long before he becomes the battle-scarred loner audiences

know. The film wrapped production in Thailand and is backed by Lionsgate and Millennium Media, with Sylvester Stallone serving as executive producer. Harbour, meanwhile, continues a busy run with multiple projects lined up, including *Avengers: Doomsday*, *Violent Night 2*, and *Evil Genius*. He has also collaborated with AGBO before on *Extraction* and is currently filming *A Head Full of Ghosts*, further expanding his action-heavy portfolio.