

HYDERABAD HEADLINES

RNI NO.APENG/2010/33328 VOL NO. 16 ISSUE NO.: 355 HYDERABAD PAGES: 12 RS. 1/-
MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2026 WWW.HYDERABADHEADLINES.COM



8 Children Killed in Louisiana Mass Shooting

SPECIAL 02

ALCOHOL TOOKOVER MY LIFE



BOX -OFFICE 12



After four back-to-back rallies across West Bengal on a hectic Sunday, PM Modi took a brief break in Jhargram to savor some spicy puffed rice

Modi Accuses TMC of Betraying Women

Bankura/Purulia, April 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched a sharp attack on the All India Trinamool Congress (TMC), accusing it of "betraying" women by opposing the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, and framing the upcoming West Bengal Assembly elections as a battle to protect the state's identity.

Addressing rallies across Bankura, Purulia, Jhargram and Medinipur, Modi alleged that the TMC, led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, opposed the proposed 33% reservation for women in Parliament and state assemblies. He claimed women voters would hold the ruling party accountable in the elections.

The Prime Minister also accused the TMC of encouraging infiltration, alleging it was altering Bengal's language, culture and social fabric. He said tribal regions such as Purulia, Bankura and Jhargram remained underdeveloped, lacking basic infrastructure and employment opportunities.

Highlighting corruption, Modi referred to recruitment scams and alleged widespread irregularities in governance. He further claimed that unemployment and migration had increased under TMC rule. Modi also promised implementation of the 7th Pay Commission for state employees if the BJP comes to power. He accused the TMC and Congress of opposing women's and tribal empowerment, and of prioritizing vote-bank politics over governance. The rallies focused on issues of women's representation, tribal development, corruption, and regional identity, forming the core of the BJP's campaign in West Bengal.

Political heat goes up in TG with Revanth, KCR's concurrent tours

HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

Political tensions have once again flared up in Telangana.

The simultaneous tours by leaders of both the ruling and opposition parties on the same day have generated considerable interest in the political circle of the state. The situation is creating a sensation as BRS party chief and former chief minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao is set to attend a public meeting in Jagtial on Monday, while on the very same day, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is scheduled to visit and in-



spect the Medigadda Barrage—a key component of the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation Project.

With both the ruling and opposition parties conducting tours in the undivided Karimnagar

district on the same day, a debate has emerged regarding whether a fresh "mind game" has begun between the two political camps in the Telangana state. Former Congress leader Jeevan Reddy

is poised to join the BRS party. Against this backdrop, the BRS party is organising a massive public meeting in Jagtial. Notably, the "pink party chief," KCR, has largely remained out of the public eye since the party's defeat in the 2023 Assembly elections. He is now set to attend a public meeting after a hiatus of nearly a year. KCR's last public appearance was on April 27 of the last year, when he attended the party's silver jubilee celebrations in Warangal; since then, he has not attended any public meetings anywhere.

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Sadhvi Satish Sail of Goa was crowned Femina Miss India World 2026 at a grand finale in Bhubaneswar on Saturday night. She will represent India at the 75th Miss World pageant.

Rajnandini Pawar of Maharashtra was named first runner-up, while Sree Advaita G of Jammu and Kashmir finished second runner-up.

Sail called her win "surreal" and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to represent the country. The event, held in Odisha for the first time, featured 30 contestants who also visited Konark's Sun Temple and Chandrabhaga Beach during their stay.

Revanth urges Governor to clear MLC nominations for Kodandaram, Azharuddin

Hyderabad, April 19: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy met Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla at Raj Bhavan here on Sunday and requested the approval of the names of two individuals nominated under the Governor's quota for MLC seats.

He specifically appealed for the approval of the names of Prof. Kodandaram and Azharuddin. Although Azharuddin is not currently a member of either legislative House, he continues to serve as a Minister.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

CM to inspect Medigadda barrage, release Rythu Bharosa funds today

Hyderabad, April 19: Hyderabad, April 19: Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will visit Jayashankar Bhupalpally district on Monday. He will begin by offering prayers at the Sri Kaleshwara Mukteshwara Swamy Temple and participate in a Bhumi Puja for development works. He will then inspect the Medigadda barrage and hold a review meeting with irrigation officials, followed by a media briefing. Later, he will attend a public meeting at Nasturapalli in Kataram mandal and announce the second installment of funds under the Rythu Bharosa scheme for farmers.

"Congress is all about 'Khandan' politics"

Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje fired sharp remarks.

HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje on Saturday launched a sharp attack on the Congress government in Telangana, accusing Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of failing to deliver on electoral promises and resorting to criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to appease party leadership.

Addressing a press conference in Hyderabad on April 19, Karandlaje alleged that the state government had "cheated" the public by not implementing key welfare commitments, including finan-



cial assistance of ₹2,500 for women, electric scooters for girl students, unemployment allowances, enhanced Aasara pensions, and gold support for married women. She described the administration as deceptive and accused it of betraying public trust.

The Union Minister also targeted Rahul Gandhi, criticizing his conduct in Parliament as

"irresponsible." She claimed that Congress and its INDIA alliance partners had failed to safeguard the interests of women and southern states, alleging that they blocked measures related to women's reservation and delimitation that could have increased parliamentary representation in states like Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

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CM Revanth Reddy is a Modern-day Goebbels: Bandi Sanjay



02

Telangana activist Sattemma passes away; KTR offers last respects



HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

BRS working president KT Rama Rao expressed profound condolences for Jindam Sattemma, 75, who passed away due to health complications in a Karimnagar hospital on Sunday. Affectionately referred to as Telanganam Sattemma, she was instrumental in the movement for a separate Telangana state.

KTR visited her residence in the R&R colony near Agrapharam in Vemulawada mandal to pay his respects. He acknowledged Sattemma's significant contributions during the final stages of the separate state movement, noting that her commitment serves as a source of inspiration for the younger generation.

Originally from Cheerlavancha in Thangallapalli mandal, Sattemma became an ardent supporter of KT Rama Rao in 2009 and regularly attended his meetings. Recently, she had been residing in the R&R colony after being allocated a double-bedroom house.

SHORT TAKES



Explosion in Firecracker Factory – 18 Dead

A tragic accident occurred at a private firecracker manufacturing unit in Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu. A massive explosion took place on Sunday afternoon at a firecracker factory located in Kattunarpatti near Virudhunagar.

NEXT DOOR 05

Hailstorm and Rain Lash Hyderabad

Hyderabad, April 19: A sudden change in weather brought relief from intense heat across Hyderabad on Saturday, as hailstorms, heavy rain, and strong winds affected several parts of the city.

Hailstorms were reported in areas of Secunderabad, including Bowenpally, Tirumalagiri, Alwal, Patny, Paradise, and Maredpally, along with parts of the Secunderabad Cantonment. Gusty winds accompanied the rainfall, disrupting normal activity.

Several localities in the Kukatpally region, such as Moosapet, JNTU, Nizampet, KPBB Colony, Pragathi Nagar, and Bachupally, also witnessed



hailstorms and heavy showers. In Quthbullapur, strong winds and rain caused inconvenience to commuters.

The sudden shift from high temperatures to stormy conditions caught residents off guard, leading to traffic disruptions in multiple areas. The Meteorological Department warned that thunderstorms, gusty winds, and

hailstorms may persist for the next few hours and advised people to remain indoors unless necessary. Meanwhile, strong winds caused damage in some localities. In Chintal and Padmanagar, a large tree was uprooted, bringing down two electric poles and damaging several two-wheelers. Waterlogging was reported on roads, further affecting movement.

Heavy rainfall was also recorded along the Outer Ring Road, contributing to a noticeable drop in temperature. While the showers disrupted daily life, they provided much-needed relief to residents after days of scorching heat.

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Dr. Peruka Raju Secures a Place in the "Talent Book of Records"



Hyderabad, Apr 19: Renowned poet, writer and multilingual scholar Dr. Peruka Raju has been included in the prestigious "Talent Book of Records" in recognition of his literary excellence and socially relevant writings. A special felicitation ceremony was held on Sunday at Tyagaraya Gana Sabha in Hyderabad, where Dr. Raju was honoured with a memento, shawl, medal and an official certificate. The event saw the participation of several dignitaries from literary, academic and film circles, along with a large gathering of students, youth and literature enthusiasts, making the programme a grand success.

Among those present were cinema director Dr. Ranjith, Supreme Court judge Burugula Madhusudhan, film director-producer G. Vijay Kumar, industrialist Rajashekar and actor Varmita, among others.

Dr. Raju, hailed as a distinguished son of Telangana, is currently serving as a junior officer in the Army under the Ministry of Defence. He is widely recognised as a national poet, lyricist, writer and translator, known for bridging ideas and cultures across multiple Indian languages.

He is also the founder of the voluntary organisation "My Gift", which focuses on uplifting underprivileged communities. His guiding philosophy, "Encouragement is the greatest gift," has inspired many. In addition to literary honours, Dr. Raju has received seven awards this year, including the Swarna Kankanam, Nandi Award and National Best Poetry Award. He also contributes regularly to English newspapers through daily columns.

The recognition highlights his contribution to literature, social service and cultural unity at the national level.



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy attended the wedding reception of MLC Balmuri Venkat held at a convention in Janwada and blessed the newlywed couple.

DiLSeY Train-the-Trainer Program on Cyber Awareness Concludes in Hyd



HYDERABAD, APR 19

The DiLSeY (Digital Literacy to Secure Yourself) Cyber-crimes Awareness Train-the-Trainer program, organised by the Society for Cyberabad Security Council (SCSC) in collaboration with Cyberabad Police, concluded successfully after two days of intensive sessions on cyber safety and digital awareness.

The program, led by Ragu Kannan, Joint Secretary - Cyber Security Forum, SCSC, brought together trainers and volunteers for interactive discussions on emerging cyber threats and practical safety measures.

On Day 1, DCP Sai Mano-

har shared insights on rising financial cybercrimes through real-life cases. SCSC CEO Naved Khan highlighted the positive use of the internet, while Bhanu Murthy conducted a session on cyberbullying, social media crimes and sextortion. Sessions on digital parenting and AI-related risks, including deepfakes, were also held.

Day 2 focused on digital footprints, fake news, online gaming risks and social engineering scams. Cyber experts also explained cyber laws and the importance of reporting frauds through the 1930 cybercrime helpline.

Cyberabad Police Commissioner Dr. M. Ramesh advised

the public to avoid clicking on unknown links or downloading untrusted APK files, warning that cybercriminals often operate in organised networks. He stressed immediate reporting of cyber frauds within the "golden hour" for better recovery chances and urged citizens to spread awareness.

SCSC Secretary General Ramesh Kaza highlighted safe smartphone practices and the organisation's public-private partnership model. The program concluded with a Q&A session, certificate distribution and felicitation of outstanding volunteers, reinforcing efforts to build cyber-safe digital citizens.

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Political heat goes up in TG with Revanth, KCR's concurrent tours

FROM PAGE 1

With the exception of highly critical engagements, he has been conducting all the party affairs and administrative matters from his farmhouse in Erravalli. In this context, KCR's return to the public stage for the Jagtial meeting—after a year-long absence—has become a focal point of interest in state politics.

As he prepares to attend the public meeting after a prolonged break, KCR is expected to use this platform to provide direction and guidance

to the party cadres. However, after remaining silent for so long despite the ruling party's intense attacks on his party, it has become a matter of great anticipation to see what kind of counter-attack KCR will launch against his rivals through the Jagtial public meeting. It remains a suspenseful question whether his primary target in Monday's meeting will be Chief Minister Revanth Reddy or Prime Minister Modi.

Furthermore, given the prevailing political developments in the Telugu states, it

remains to be seen whether he will instead direct his criticism towards Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu.

Meanwhile, the fact that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is embarking on a tour of Medigadda on the very day of KCR's meeting has become a hot topic of discussion. It appears that Revanth Reddy's strategy is to not only showcase the failures at Medigadda at the ground level but also to deliver an immediate counter-response to the BRS party and KCR right from that very

location.

The state government recently decided to undertake repair works at the Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages constructed under the Kaleshwaram project. As part of this initiative, the Chief Minister is scheduled to inspect the Medigadda barrage, accompanied by irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy.

There is considerable interest in observing how intense the Chief Minister's offensive regarding the Kaleshwaram issue will be this time around.

US Envoys Head to Islamabad for Iran Talks

FROM PAGE 1

Citing media reports, US officials said Kushner and Witkoff are expected to begin meetings on Tuesday morning. Trump, however, simultaneously issued sharp warnings to Iran, accusing it of violating ceasefire understandings following reported incidents in the Strait of Hormuz, where vessels were allegedly targeted. Tehran has not yet confirmed participation in the upcoming talks.

Calling Iran's actions a "violation," Trump threatened strong retaliatory measures, including strikes on infrastructure if a deal is not reached. He also reiterated that the US proposal was "fair and reasonable," urging Iran to accept it.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has stepped up security in anticipation of high-level foreign delegations. Islamabad police said the Red Zone and surrounding areas would remain closed to traffic, advising citizens to use alternative routes.

More than 10,000 police personnel have been deployed across Rawalpindi and Islamabad, with over 600 checkpoints established, according to officials cited by local media.

Security has been further tightened around Nur Khan Airbase and Islamabad International Airport, with drone activity, aerial firing, and other activities banned in sensitive areas.

Authorities have also suspended public and heavy transport in the capital and urged citizens to report suspicious activity.

Diplomatic efforts by Pakistan continue in parallel, with Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar speaking to his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi on Sunday, stressing the need for sustained dialogue to restore regional stability.

Weekend-Special Drunk & Drive Checking's by Cyberabad Traffic Police

Hyderabad, April 19 (NSS): Cyberabad Traffic Police (CTP) has conducted a special drunk driving enforcement drive over the weekend, resulting in the apprehension of 315 offenders. The total cases booked 268 two wheelers, 15 three wheelers, 28 four wheelers and 4 heavy vehicles Based on the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) levels, 277 offenders had BAC levels ranging from 36 mg/100 ml to 200 mg/100 ml, 27 offenders had BAC levels ranging from 201 mg/100 ml to 300 mg/100 ml, 11 offenders had BAC levels ranging from 301 mg/100 ml to 550 mg/100 ml All the offenders will be produced before the Court.

Cyberabad Police reiterate that driving under the influence of alcohol is a serious offence. If anyone is found to be driving in an inebriated condition and causes a fatal accident, such individuals will be booked under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Culpable Homicide Not Amounting to Murder). The maximum punishment under this section is 10 years of imprisonment along with a fine.

In the last week (April 13 to 18) a total 120 drunk driving cases were disposed in the courts, in which One per got fine and jail and 119 persons got fine only.

CM Revanth is a Modern-day Goebbels: Bandi Sanjay

HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Sunday ridiculed Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for relying solely on falsehoods and deception and labelled him as the "Modern-day Goebbels." He criticized Revanth Reddy for having publicly declared that people only trust those, who tell lies and engage in deceit, noting that the Chief Minister himself rose to power upon precisely such foundations of the falsehood. He lashed out at the Chief Minister while pointing out that he came to power by promising to implement six guarantees within 100 days—including a monthly payment of ₹2,500 to every woman in the state, a tola of gold and a scooter—only to renege on these promises after assuming office.

In a statement, Sanjay mocked that it appeared as though Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is under a curse wherein his head would shatter into a thousand pieces if he were ever to speak the truth. "Much like former Chief Minister KCR, he continues to govern by hoodwinking the public with hollow promises and blatant lies. Slandering leaders, who work with integrity has become a habit for him. When the NDA government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, earnestly introduced a bill in Parliament—aimed at providing 33 percent reservation for the women in legislative bodies through the Women's Reservation Bill and ensuring justice for the Southern states by increasing MP and MLA seats by 50 percent in every state—leaders of the 'INDIA' alliance obstructed its passage. In this matter, Revanth Reddy played a pivotal role in blocking the Women's Reservation Bill by engaging in malicious and baseless propaganda. He instigated a false propaganda campaign claim-

ing that the delimitation would cause harm to the South thereby conspiring to prevent any increase in MP and MLA seats," he alleged.

Sanjay noted that it was, in fact, true that increasing the seats solely on the basis of population would result in a grave injustice to the South. "Keeping this reality in mind, the Narendra Modi government decided to benefit the South by proposing a uniform 50 percent increase in the seats for every state. However, the Congress leaders—operating under the banner of the 'I.N.D.I.A.' alliance—obstructed the introduction of this Constitutional Amendment Bill and they will inevitably have to pay a heavy price for their actions. By blocking this bill, the leaders of the I.N.D.I.A. alliance—including Revanth Reddy and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Stalin—have sabotaged the opportunities available to the South, inflicting irreparable damage upon the region. Most notably, through their deceitful politics, they have shattered the dreams of the women. Having successfully obstructed the Women's Reservation Bill, they are now celebrating as if they have achieved a great victory," he criticised.

He claimed that Neither the women of Telangana nor the 700 million women across the country would ever forget the insult inflicted upon them by the I.N.D.I.A. alliance and predicted that the leaders of the I.N.D.I.A. alliance including CM Revanth Reddy would be made to pay the appropriate price while noting that it is inevitable that women will unite to dethrone the Revanth Reddy government. Sanjay said that Under the leadership of State BJP President N. Ramchander Rao, the party leadership was gearing up to take the message regarding the Congress party's deceit to every single village across Telangana.

Revanth urges Governor to clear MLC nominations for Kodandaram, Azharuddin



FROM PAGE 1

Former cricketer Azharuddin, who assumed responsibilities as a Minister in the Telangana Cabinet, is facing technical hurdles regarding his position.

According to constitutional provisions, an individual who has taken the oath as a Minister must be elected as a member of one of the Legislative Houses (either the Assembly or the Council) within six months of assuming office. By April 30 of this month, Azharuddin will have completed exactly six months since taking charge as a Minister. This means that if he is not elected as a Member of the legislature

within the next ten days, he will be required to relinquish his Ministerial post.

The file sent by the government regarding the MLC seats to be filled under the Governor's quota has been pending at the Raj Bhavan for some time now. Azharuddin's name is also included in this file. Azharuddin stands a chance of continuing as a Minister only if the Governor approves this file and a gazette notification is issued by April 30. Against this backdrop, it is understood that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has met the Governor to apprise him of the latest political developments.

"Congress is all about 'Khandan' politics"

FROM PAGE 1

Karandlaje reiterated the BJP's long-standing criticism of Congress, accusing it of promoting dynastic politics centered around a single family, citing leaders such as Indira Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi. In contrast, she said, the BJP provides opportunities to women based on merit rather than lineage.

Referring to recent political developments, she termed April 17 a "black day" for Indian women, alleging that the failure of key legislative proposals reflected a lack of commitment by opposition parties. She also claimed that proposals to increase parliamentary seats, including those affecting southern states, were opposed for political reasons, potentially deepening regional divisions.

Highlighting the central government's initiatives,

Karandlaje said that over the past decade, women's empowerment has been prioritized through schemes such as Mudra loans and MSME support, with a significant proportion of beneficiaries being women. She added that initiatives like the "Lakhpati Didi" program have contributed to financial independence among women.

Emphasizing the growing role of women in leadership, she pointed to examples of grassroots governance and increasing participation in sectors such as defense. However, she alleged that opposition parties continue to hinder broader political opportunities for women.

Several BJP leaders were present at the press conference, including N. Ramchander Rao, D. K. Aruna, Banda Karthika Reddy, Vijayalakshmi, Dr. Mekala Shilpa Reddy, and Dr. Prabha Goud.

8 CHILDREN KILLED IN LOUISIANA MASS SHOOTING

SHREVEPORT (US), APR 19

A gunman in Louisiana killed eight children in shootings at two different homes early Sunday in the nation's deadliest mass shooting in more than two years, police in Shreveport said. The victims ranged in age from one to about 14 years old, said Shreveport police spokesperson Chris Bordelon. A total of 10 were shot and some of the children were related to the suspect, Bordelon said. The gunman later died after a chase with officers who fired at the suspect, Bordelon said. The suspect stole a car while leaving the scene of the shootings and

was followed by police, according to Bordelon. Police did not release the name of the suspect but did say he was an adult male. The shootings were the result of a "domestic disturbance," Bordelon said. Officials said they were still gathering details at the crime scenes south of downtown Shreveport - the two homes and a third location. "This is an extensive scene unlike anything most of us have ever seen," he said. It was the deadliest mass shooting in the US since eight people were killed in a Chicago suburb in January 2024, according to a database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in partnership with North-

eastern University. At a news conference outside the residence where one of the shootings occurred, officials appeared stunned, requesting patience and prayers from the community as they sorted through multiple crime scenes. "I just don't know what to say, my heart is just taken back," Shreveport Police Chief Wayne Smith said. "I cannot begin to imagine how such an event could occur." "This is a tragic situation - maybe the worst tragic situation we've ever had," said Tom Arceneaux, mayor of the city in northwestern Louisiana with about 180,000 residents. "It's a terrible morning." Louisiana State

Police say their detectives have been asked by Shreveport police to investigate. In a statement, state police say no officers were harmed in the shooting that involved an officer after a police pursuit into Bossier City on Sunday morning. State police are asking anyone with pictures, video or information to share it with state police detectives. Louisiana Gov Jeff Landry said in a statement that he and his wife were heartbroken. "We're deeply grateful to the law enforcement officers and first responders working tirelessly on the scene," he added.



Oakwood International School Hosts Grand "Crescendo-2026"

■ Graduation Ceremony in Hyderabad
 ■ A Celebration of Achievement, Growth, and New Beginnings

HYDERABAD

Oakwood International School celebrated its "Crescendo-2026" Graduation Ceremony in a grand and impressive manner, creating a memorable experience for students, parents, and faculty alike. The event reflected students' academic progress, personality development, and future aspirations in a vibrant and joyful atmosphere.

Distinguished Guests Inspire Young Minds

The was graced by Chairman Sri Laxma Reddy, Vice Chairman & TRSMA National Advisor Dr. Komati Reddy Gopal Reddy, Directors Smt. Sarada Reddy and Sri Srinivas Reddy, Principal Shirisha, and Academic In-charges. Their presence added prestige to the occasion and motivated students to aim higher in life.

Milestone Moments for PP2, Grade 5 & Grade 10 Students

The ceremony marked a significant milestone for students of PP2, Grade 5, and Grade 10. Notably, the inclusion of Grade 10 graduation for the first time made the event even more special, filling students and parents with pride and excitement as they celebrated their academic journey.

Grand Academic Procession & Lamp Lighting Ceremony

The program began with a dignified academic procession, where students in graduation gowns and caps walked with pride, creating an inspiring atmosphere. The traditional lamp lighting ceremony symbolized knowledge, wisdom, and guidance towards a brighter future, followed by a meaningful welcome address.

Cultural Performances Show-



case Talent & Creativity
 Students captivated the audience with vibrant cultural performances including music, dance, skits, and communication-based presentations. Their confidence, coordination, and creativity reflected the school's commitment to holistic education.

Emotional Graduation Oath & Certificate Distribution
 One of the most touching moments was the Graduation Oath and Certifi-

cate Distribution. Students received their certificates on stage, blessed by teachers and cheered by emotional parents, marking a proud transition to the next phase of their lives.

Visionary Speeches Emphasize Holistic Education

Dr. Komati Reddy Gopal Reddy highlighted the importance of strong foundational learning and the role of FYP, PYP, and SYP stages in nurturing values, discipline, creativity, and social

responsibility. Chairman Sri Laxma Reddy emphasized that success in today's world requires more than academic excellence—it demands ethics, discipline, and character, supported by dedicated teachers and parents.

Gratitude to Teachers & Parents

The school management expressed sincere appreciation to teachers for their dedication and to parents for their continuous trust and support, acknowledging their vital role in students' success.

A Memorable Conclusion Filled with Pride & Emotion

The ceremony concluded on an emotional yet celebratory note, as students bid farewell to their teachers and friends, stepping confidently into their future.

Committed to Excellence & Leadership Development

Oakwood International School continues to nurture not only academic excellence but also personality development and leadership qualities, preparing students to face future challenges with confidence and responsibility.

IS ENDING HUNGER AN IMPOSSIBLE DREAM?

"Hunger is sharper than a sword, and its truth is more bitter than any reality."



While modern civilization races ahead with technological wonders, a haunting shadow remains unchanged: the hollowed eyes and empty stomachs of millions. It is a grotesque paradox of our social progress that in an era of abundance, the most basic human need "food" remains a luxury for many. Hunger is not merely a biological pang, it is a systemic failure, fueled by the "four horsemen" of modern crisis: war, climate catastrophe, economic instability, and deep-seated inequality. The earth yields enough to feed everyone, yet hunger continues to act as a wildfire, charring the physical, mental, and social fabric of humanity.

A Global Tragedy - The Cold Testimony of Statistics

The statistics are not just numbers; they are a staggering indictment of our collective conscience. Behind every digit is a broken dream and a struggling family. As of mid-2026, the world is caught in a "perfect storm" of crises. Global food insecurity has hit record highs, with those facing "IPC Phase 3" (acute hunger) or worse fluctuating between 318 to 363 million, nearly double the figures from 2019. According to the FAO, approximately 42% of the global population cannot afford a healthy diet. When more than half of humanity is priced out of basic nutrition, it is a "stain on the soul" of modern civilization.

The Naked Truth of Hunger in India:

In India, a land of vast agricultural bounty, hunger and malnutrition remain "festering wounds." Despite being a global food hub, the Global Hunger Index and NFHS-5 data paint a grim picture. Nearly 16% of our population is undernourished.

ing floods in East and West Africa, have "reaped a whirlwind" of crop failures. Climate change is no longer a distant threat; it is a daily battle for farmers who are being pushed into a spiral of debt and starvation.

The Path Forward - Structural Reforms:

The "Right to Food" is a fundamental human right, not a charitable handout. To breathe life back into our food systems, we must build resilient supply chains and promote sustainable agriculture. We must empower the backbone of our farms: women. Studies show that providing women farmers equal access to resources could increase agricultural output by up to 30%. In India, we must "plug the leaks" in the Public Distribution System (PDS), Mid-day Meal schemes, and ICDS. Fortifying food with iron, protein, and micronutrients in remote and tribal belts is essential. The private sector must also step up to the plate, investing in nutritional products and drastically reducing food waste.

A Collective Crusade for a Hunger-Free Tomorrow:

Ending hunger requires more than just seeds and water; it requires political will and social justice. We must equip farmers with climate-resilient seeds, drip irrigation, and robust insurance covers to shield them from nature's whims. We must bridge the gap between the farm and the market, eliminating exploitative middlemen. Hunger is a symptom of poverty, and poverty is a result of inequality. We must break this "Gordian knot." Hunger anywhere is a threat to humanity everywhere. Let us commit to a future where no child goes to bed crying, no mother suffers in weakness, and no farmer fights alone. It is time to turn the "bitter truth" of hunger into a forgotten history.

"The war against hunger is the only war worth fighting to the end."

The statistics for children under five are particularly heartbreaking: 35.5% are stunted, 19.3% are wasted, and 32.1% are underweight. This is an "invisible tragedy" unfolding in broad daylight. With millions of women and adolescent girls suffering from nutritional deficiencies, we are trapped in a vicious cycle. A malnourished mother cannot give birth to a healthy child. This cycle accounts for nearly 45% of deaths in children under five, proving that hunger is the silent killer we refuse to see.

The Triple Shock - Crises Fueling the Fire:

The current global food emergency is driven by three major "shocks." In early 2026, military tensions in Central Asia led to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, "choking off" a third of the world's fertilizer trade. Urea prices skyrocketed by 28-46% in a single month, leaving South Asian and Sub-Saharan African farmers, who depend 90% on imports in the lurch. Furthermore, armed conflict has become the primary driver of hunger in 12 of the world's most critical regions. For the first time this century, we are witnessing simultaneous famine conditions in both Gaza and Sudan. Coupled with this, record droughts in the Americas and Central Asia, alongside devastat-

VHP demands strict implementation of Cow protection laws

HYDERABAD

The right wing organisation Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Under the aegis of the Go Raksha Vibhag (Cow Protection Wing), held a meeting of lawyers and a cow protection assembly were today at the Bhagyanagar Goshala (Cow Shelter) at Lower Tank Bund. Speaking at this gathering, the Central Joint Secretary and All-India Co-Convenor of the Go Raksha Vibhag Akarapu Keshava Raju stated that despite the existence of numerous laws for the cow protection, these laws had effectively be-

come "allies" to those, who consume beef, today.

He expressed deep anguish and noted that the cow slaughter in Telangana state was deeply hurting the sentiments of Hindus. He remarked that although the 1977 Act exists specifically to protect the Cow, both the government and the police machinery consistently failed to implement it. He emphasized that today's lawyers' meeting was convened with the specific objective of ensuring the strict enforcement of the cow protection laws. The convenor of VHP's Gau Raksha Telangana unit Sub-

hash Chander tated that the lawyers' meeting held would evolve into a massive movement in the days to come and added that their goal was to ensure that not a single cow is slaughtered in the city during the upcoming Bakrid festival. He stated that the responsibility to address this matter lies with the government and the police administration. Alongside the lawyers, various Swamijis, heads of Maths (monasteries) and spiritual pontiffs (Peethadhipatis) collectively demanded that the cow protection laws be strictly and compulsorily implemented

throughout the Telangana state. They warned that if the anti-cow slaughter laws are not enforced, the karmic sin associated with the cow slaughter would turn into a curse upon the Chief Minister of the state and the entire government machinery.

They asserted that the curse of the cow slaughter would haunt the government administration for the next seven generations. They demanded that the State Government wake up to this reality at least now and implement the anti-cow slaughter laws in a comprehensive and watertight manner.

Ministers review progress of final-phase works at Medaram temple

HYDERABAD

Minister for Revenue, Housing, Information & Public Relations Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy directed officials and contractors to expedite the final-phase development and reconstruction works of the Medaram Sammakka-Saralamma temple and transform the premises into a grand space for devotees.

Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, along with Minister for Panchayati Raj Danasari Anasuya Seethakka and MLAs, including Tellam Venkata Rao, Payam Venkateswarlu, Koram Kanakaiah, and Jare Adinarayana, visited Medaram in Mulugu district and offered special prayers to the deities.

Later, a review meeting was held at the

Haritha Hotel with officials. District Collector Divakar T.S. presented a detailed report on the progress of the ongoing final-phase development works.

On the occasion, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy instructed the officials to complete all pending works as per quality standards within the stipulated time. Officials were directed to ensure all main arches approved in the master plan are completed quickly.

Minister Seethakka stated that all works should be completed with high quality standards, ensuring a pleasant and rich environment for devotees coming from distant places. Later, the Ministers inaugurated an Indiramma house at Narlapur village belonging to Avula Lakshmi and Raju.(NSS)



Jeevanadi Foundation Yamuna Nadi Pushkarala poster unveiled by Umar Alisha

HYDERABAD

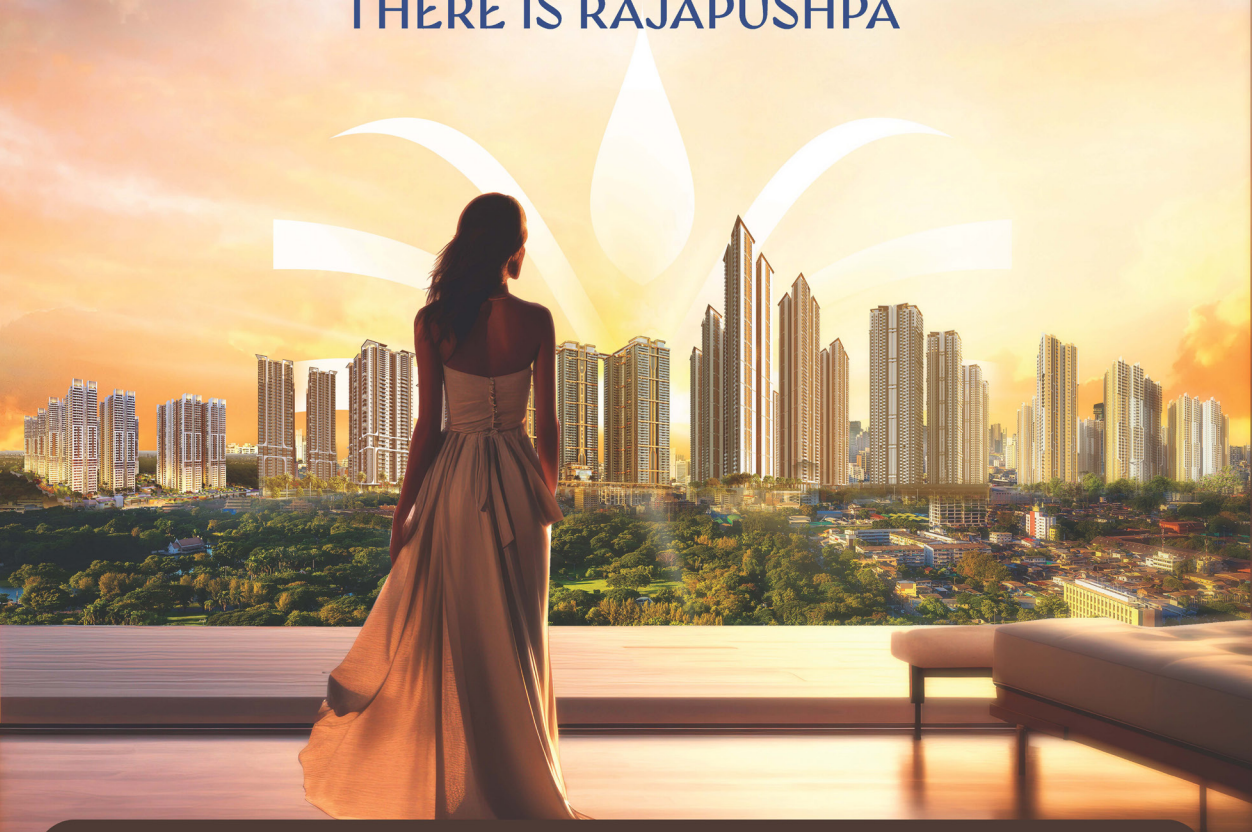
Under the joint auspices of Umar Alisha Rural Development Trust and Jeevanadi Foundation, Yamuna River was designed by Inti Lakshmi Durga, founder president of Jeevanadi Foundation, on the occasion of the upcoming Yamuna river Pushkaras. The poster of Pushkaras was unveiled by Dr. Umar Alisha Swamy, the ninth head of Sri Vishwa Vigyan Vidya Adhyathmika Peetham. On this occasion, he said that the members of Jeevanadi Foundation will clean the rivers as part of environmental protection. He asked to ban the use of plastic. Gidugu Kanthi Krishna, founder president of Gidugu Rammurthy Foundation, Dr. Suneel Kumar Yandra, National Media Coordinator of Jeevanadi Foundation participated in this program.





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SHORT TAKES

Revanth meets Governor to discuss education, drug control



HYDERABAD: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy paid a courtesy call on Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla at Lok Bhavan in Hyderabad on Sunday. On the occasion, the Chief Minister discussed various matters related to the education sector, as well as an awareness programmes to be conducted under the aegis of the Governor at an event scheduled for June 12 at LB Stadium in Hyderabad. During the interaction, the Governor suggested that awareness regarding drug control be primarily fostered within educational institutions. To this end, he advised organising programmes wherein students take a pledge. The Governor further recommended that, during the admission process at schools and colleges, an undertaking be obtained from students affirming that they will stay away from drugs. The Chief Minister stated that necessary measures would be taken, taking into consideration the Governor's suggestions. Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu and Rajya Sabha Member Vem Narendar Reddy accompanied the Chief Minister. (NSS)

Scrap Earnings, Non-Fare Revenue Boost Station Experience Without Fare Hike

Indian Railways is strengthening its financial resilience while enhancing passenger experience through sustained earnings from scrap monetisation and a steady rise in non-fare revenue streams, without increasing passenger ticket fares. By unlocking value from idle assets and expanding innovative revenue avenues beyond fares, the Railways is ensuring that improvements in station amenities, cleanliness, digital services, and passenger facilities are achieved in a financially sustainable manner. This balanced approach reflects a strategic focus on efficient asset management, customer-centric investments, and environmentally sustainable practices, reinforcing the Railways' commitment to delivering a more comfortable, modern, and reliable travel experience.



contributes significantly to environmental sustainability by promoting recycling and reducing waste accumulation.

Non-Fare Revenue Strengthening Railways and Enhancing Passenger Experience

Non-Fare Revenue (NFR) has emerged as an important pillar in strengthening the financial sustainability of Indian Railways, directly benefiting passengers across the network. By generating revenue through avenues such as station redevelopment, advertising, commercial utilization of railway assets, and other innovative initiatives, NFR reduces excessive dependence on passenger fares and freight earnings. This additional income enables Indian Railways to reinvest in modern infrastructure, upgrade station amenities, enhance cleanliness and passenger facilities, improve digital services, and introduce better trains and safety systems. This ultimately delivers a more comfortable, convenient, and reliable travel experience for passengers.

The steady growth in NFR earnings—from approximately ₹290 crore in FY 2021-22 to ₹777.76 crore in FY 2025-26—reflects a robust upward trajectory, registering an overall increase of about 168%

over five years. For FY 2025-26, the estimated NFR target was ₹720.85 crore, which has already been surpassed with actual earnings reaching ₹777.76 crore, translating to an achievement of about 107.9%. In comparison, NFR earnings in FY 2024-25 stood at ₹686.86 crore. This trend underscores the growing importance of strategic monetization initiatives in strengthening the financial position of Indian Railways.

In this connection, following initiatives have been taken:

Premium Brand Outlets
Guidelines have been issued to Zonal Railways to award contracts for setting up of company owned single brand premium outlets, to boost NFR. Railways have opened some innovative branded outlets under this policy and other branded stores will also be opened on similar lines to enhance passenger experience. 22 Premium brands are allotted through NFR across all Indian Railways.

Opening of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendra

In the pursuit to enhance wellness and welfare of passengers passing through railway stations, Indian Railways had conceptualized and implemented a policy framework to establish 50 Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras (PMBJKs) in railway stations premises. The PMBJK stalls function as per the guidelines issued by Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India. On 12th of March 2024, all 50 PMBJKs were inaugurated by Hon'ble Prime Minister. Further, based on the success of the initiative and to further expand the welfare scheme, instructions have been issued to set up additional 100 PMBJKs over Indian Railways. Out of these additional

Notable initiatives by Zonal Railways

Railways have consistently made efforts to enhance passenger experience and boost Non-Fare Revenue (NFR) through innovative ideas and their effective implementation. Some of the notable initiatives undertaken include: Multi Level Car parking, Medical Care Centre, Nursing pods, Wagon Cleaning contracts, Facility for E-wheel chair as paid service, Health Kiosk, Gaming Zone, Plastic Bottle Crushing Machine, Platform Branding, Utilization of Vacant Space for Passenger amenity and public facility, etc.

A new innovation of Premium Co-working Space/Digital Lounge has been designed by Western Railway to enhance passenger amenities by offering high-speed Wi-Fi, workstations, charging points, conference facilities, and comfortable seating. Additional services include printing, scanning, refreshments, and flexible usage plans such as hourly workspace access and bundled packages. This initiative marks a significant step towards providing a modern, comfortable and productive waiting experience at railway stations. To proliferate such good ideas over other Railways, necessary directions were given to other Zonal Railways.

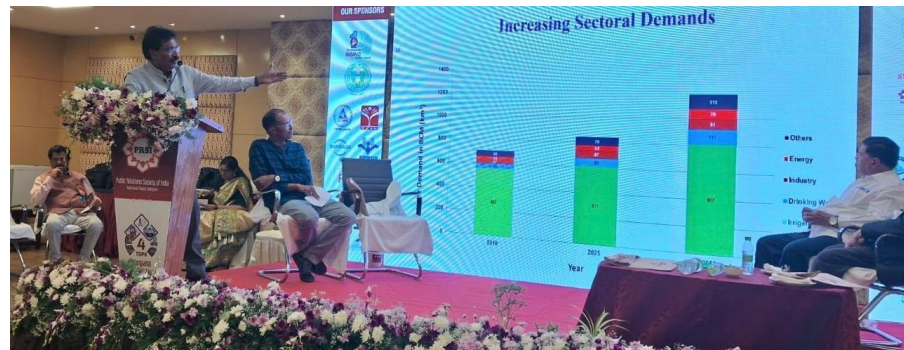


"April 18, 2026 - A dark day for democracy in Parliament"

Geetha Murthy BJP National Council Member and Former Mahila Morcha President, Telangana
HYDERABAD

It was a dark day for democracy in Parliament. It was an unforgivable betrayal of women across the country—specifically the betrayal of the Women's Reservation Bill by the Indian National Congress. For nearly 30 years, this bill was kept pending, and now it has been obstructed by opposition parties in the INDIA alliance, including the Indian National Congress, All India Trinamool Congress, and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. These parties fear that women may surpass them politically. At a time when a bill aimed at empowering their own mothers, sisters, and daughters was being weakened, celebrating instead of supporting it is shameful. During the discussion in Parliament, every round of applause by Congress members appeared as an insult to women across the country.

She stated that these opposition parties—especially Congress, TMC, and DMK—fail to realize that women are closely watching how they oppose the Women's Reservation Bill. Women, she said, have decided not to vote for these parties in the upcoming parliamentary elections, and they will soon face defeat. Speaking to the media, Geeta Murthy, BJP National Council member, former State President of Mahila Morcha, co-convenor of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam, and in-charge of the Nari Shakti Sammelan, made these remarks. She added that in the coming days, women will "teach a lesson" to Congress and other opposition parties.



4th Telangana PRSI Conference organised by Hyderabad Chapter

HYDERABAD

Dr. G. Rameshwar Rao, Director, Engineering Staff College of India (ESCI), emphasized that safe drinking water supply plays a critical role in urban development, alongside roads, transportation, and industries. He stated that without reliable water supply, development would come to a standstill.

He was speaking at the 4th Telangana Public Relations Conference organized by the Public Relations Society of India (PRSI), Hyderabad Chapter, held on Sunday, April 19, 2026, at Hotel Tourism Plaza, Begumpet, during the session on "Innovation, Industry, Urban Development."

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Rao highlighted that, considering the growing population of Hyderabad, the city currently receives water from Osman Sagar, Himayat Sagar, Manjeera, and Singur reservoirs, along with supplies from the Krishna River (in three phases) and the Godavari River (Phase I). He further noted that the government is working towards

augmenting supply through Godavari Phase II and additional releases from the Kaleshwaram Project in the future.

On this occasion, he also delivered a Power-Point presentation on India's water scenario, outlining key challenges and future strategies.

Dr. Rao also spoke about the capacity-building and training programs being conducted by ESCI. He expressed happiness over the ESCI Newsletter receiving the First Prize from PRSI, and informed that ESCI, in collaboration with PRSI Hyderabad Chapter, will organize training programs on current and emerging topics for students of various colleges in the coming days. The conference was attended by PRSI Hyderabad Chapter Chairman Dr. Kambhampati Yadagiri, Conference Director Y. Babji, U.S. Sharma, Chapter Secretary Rajesh Kalyan, V. Madhusudan, and others.

In the first session of the conference, K. Srinivas Reddy, Chairman of the Media Academy, C.H. Priyanka, Commissioner of Information & Public Relations, and Prof. Nageshwar, among others, participated.

City police arrests 32 bank officials for committing cyber crimes

HYDERABAD

The city Police successfully dismantled a Pan-India cyber fraud network involving bank officials in a major operation Octopus 2.0. It has t 52 Accused arrested across 9 States. Of these accused 32 are Bank officials, 15 are Mule account holders, five are Middlemen.

The Police, under the leadership of DCP (Cybercrimes) V. Aravind Babu, ACP (Cyber Crime PS, Hyderabad) R. G. Siva Maruthi conducted a coordinated multi-state operation across nine states to crack down on the cybercrime syndicates operating nationwide.

The initiative, titled Operation Octopus 2.0, was launched to dismantle the organised cyber fraud networks involving the bank officials. "There has been a significant rise in investment scams, trading frauds, and "digital arrest" scams, wherein fraudsters exploit victims through manipulation, intimidation and emotional coercion leading to substantial financial losses.

Recognising the seriousness of the situation, Operation Octopus-1 was conceptualised to deliver a decisive strike against these illegal networks. Through an intensive investigation into the surge of such frauds, the Cyber Crime Police Station (CCPS) of Hyderabad uncovered a nexus of 350 bank accounts used to siphon off the victims' funds. These accounts were linked to approximately 850 cases across

India, involving transactions amounting to nearly ₹150 crores.

Accordingly, in February 2026, Operation Octopus-1 was executed across 16 states by 32 police teams, resulting in the arrest of 117 accused persons.

Building on the outcomes of the Operation Octopus-1, Operation Octopus 2.0 was launched this week with a focused objective of targeting the bank officials. The operation led to the successful arrest of the bank officials, who were found to be in connivance in the opening of the mule bank accounts. These accounts were used to facilitate the cyber frauds registered at the Cyber Crime Police Station of Hyderabad," Hyderabad CP VC Sajjanar said in a statement.

He also said that to dismantle this network, 16 Special Teams comprising seasoned investigators were constituted and added that the operation Octopus 2.0 was executed simultaneously across 9 states over a span of 7 days. He said that they seized 26 Mobile Phones, 14 Cheque books, two Pen drives, one Laptops and 21 Shell company Stamps. The CP made it clear that the Hyderabad City Police had adopted a strict Zero Tolerance policy towards the cybercrime in all its forms and added that As part of this approach, Operation Octopus was being carried out as an ongoing initiative to dismantle the organised cyber fraud syndicates operating across the country.

405th "Prakash Purab" of Guru Teg Bahadur Sahebji celebrated with gaiety and devotion

HYDERABAD

The 405th Prakash Purab (Birth Anniversary) of Ninth Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Sahibji who made supreme sacrifices for the country at the altar of Dharma and who spread the message of peace and communal harmony across the world was celebrated with religious fervour, gaiety and devotion by offering prayers to Guru Granth Sahibji at Gurudwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Sitafulmandi, Secunderabad on Sunday.

The event was organised under the aegis of Prabhanda Committee, Gurudwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Sitafulmandi, Secunderabad where hundreds of Sikh devotees and other community faith participated in the "Vishal Deewan" (Mass Congregation) at Chikalguda, Sitafulmandi by offering prayers to Sri Guru Granth Sahibji (Holy Scripture of Sikhs).

The GSGS Sitafulmandi, Prabhanda Committee, President, S Partap Singh Osahan and General Secretary S Ranjeet Singh and other committee members said that congregation began this morning at 10.30 AM

continued up to 4.30 PM and was marked by the recitations of Gurbani Keertans and Kathas (Holy Hymns) by renowned and reputed Ragi Jathas (Sikh Preachers).

Well known Ragi Jathas, Bhai Kulwinder Singhji Kharar wale, Kaishar Bhai Sukhbir Singhji, Bhai Jaskirat Singhji and other reputed Ragi Jathas who were specially invited for the important occasion recited Gurbani Keertans (Holy Hymns) and delivered Gurbani Vichar (Sermons) that stressed on imbuing the higher values of life and communal harmony for which Guru Teg Bahadur Sahibji strived.

They also have thrown light on the teachings of Sikh Gurus who stood for national integration, peace, brotherhood and communal harmony. They asked devotees to follow the teachings of Guru Teg Bahadur Sahibji which are very relevant these days.

After the culmination of the congregation, the traditional Guru Ka Langar (free community kitchen) was served to all the devotees where devotees sit in the same row with great discipline promoting the feelings of togetherness.

32 bank officials among 52 held for cyber fraud by Hyd Police in 9 states

HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad City Police have dismantled a pan-India cyber fraud network with the arrest of 52 accused, including 32 bank officials in nine states.

Hyderabad Police Commissioner V. C. Sajjanar said on Sunday that a major operation titled Operation Octopus 2.0 was launched to dismantle an organised cyber fraud network.

Sixteen special teams comprising seasoned investigators conducted the operation simultaneously across nine states over a span of seven days.

The Commissioner said 52 individuals, including 32 bank officials who played pivotal roles in the execution of the fraud, were apprehended.

Six officials from Indusind Bank, five officials each from Bandhan Bank and Bank of Baroda, four each from Federal Bank and IDFC First Bank, two each from Karnataka Bank, Karur Vysya Bank and AU Small Finance Bank and one each from Equitas Small Finance Bank and HDFC Bank have been apprehended.

Fifteen mule account holders who knowingly permitted their bank accounts to be used for layering and laundering illicit funds have also been



arrested. The police also arrested five account suppliers/aggregators, key middlemen responsible for procuring these accounts and facilitating the movement of funds to the masterminds.

The police teams seized 26 mobile phones, 14 cheque books, two pen drives, one laptop and 21 shell company stamps.

According to the Commissioner, there has been a significant rise in investment scams, trading frauds, and "digital arrest" scams, wherein fraudsters exploit victims through manipulation, intimidation, and emotional coercion, leading

to substantial financial losses. Recognising the seriousness of the situation, Operation Octopus-1 was conceptualised to deliver a decisive strike against these illegal networks. Cyber Crime Police Station (CCPS), Hyderabad, uncovered a nexus of 350 bank accounts used to siphon off victims' funds. These accounts were linked to approximately 850 cases across India, involving transactions amounting to nearly Rs 150 crore.

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the arrest of 117 accused persons.

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The operation led to the successful arrest of bank officials who were found to be in connivance in the opening of mule bank accounts. These accounts were used to facilitate cyber fraud registered at CCPS.

The scale of Operation Octopus 2.0 has been unprecedented, covering a wide geographical expanse across India. To execute this large-scale operation, 16 special teams were constituted, each led by an officer of Inspector rank. These teams were simultaneously deployed to identify bank official targets in Maharashtra, Delhi, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Bihar, said the Commissioner.

Despite diverse operational challenges across multiple states, the teams successfully coordinated with local law enforcement agencies and carried out targeted and precision-based actions. Their efforts reflect a high level of professionalism, coordination, and unwavering commitment to duty, Police Commissioner Sajjanar said.



"The dream of BC (Backward Classes) political empowerment will be fulfilled: Etela Rajender"

HYDERABAD

Etela Rajender, Member of Parliament from Malkajgiri, attended the BC Jana Jata program organized under the leadership of the Mana Alochana Sadhana Samithi. Speaking at the meeting held at Nampally Exhibition Grounds, he said: "In the Telangana movement, all intellectuals came together on one platform—today,

this stage reflects that unity. Mr. Narsing Rao, congratulations on the efforts you are making. I extend my full support to the spirit and objective of this gathering. The movement of the BCs has been continuing for many years. Everyone carries it in their hearts and expresses it when the right time and opportunity come. The political power we have dreamed of will certainly be achieved."

ED raids Kolkata Police Deputy Commissioner, businessman in extortion-linked probe

ED searched the premises of Kolkata Police Deputy Commissioner Shantanu Sinha Biswas and businessman Jay Kamdar in connection with a money laundering probe linked to alleged extortion syndicate operator Sona Pappu.



central probe agency's scrutiny. He has previously been summoned by the ED's Delhi office in connection with an illegal coal mining case but did not appear.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Sunday carried out searches at the residence of Kolkata Police Deputy Commissioner and a city-based businessman as part of an ongoing money laundering investigation linked to an alleged extortion syndicate.

Officials reached the Ballygunge residence of Deputy Commissioner Shantanu Sinha Biswas around 6 am and began searches and questioning. Two premises linked to Biswas, including his Fern Road flat, are being searched. Simultaneously, the agency conducted raids at a property associated with businessman Jay Kamdar, Managing Director of Sun Enterprise, in Behala.

The action is tied to the alleged operations of Biswajit Podder, also known as "Sona Pappu", a suspected criminal accused in multiple cases of attempted murder and extortion. Officials suspect that funds generated through the syndicate's activities were routed through various channels, with a portion allegedly reaching individuals linked to the case. Kamdar has been taken to the ED office for questioning, while Biswas was not present at one of the raided locations at the time of the searches, officials said. This is not the first time Biswas has come under the

The senior Kolkata Police official is also under the scanner in multiple ongoing probes, including cases linked to coal smuggling, the Sona Pappu network, and an alleged irregularities case involving admissions under the NRI quota in private medical colleges, including KPC Medical College.

The current probe stems from a Kolkata Police FIR against Podder, who has been booked for rioting, attempt to murder, criminal conspiracy and violations under the Arms Act. According to the ED, Podder and his associates operated an organised criminal syndicate that generated proceeds of crime through extortion and other illegal activities. The agency had conducted its first round of searches in the case on April 1, during which it seized Rs 1.47 crore in cash, along with gold and silver valuables worth over Rs 67 lakh, and a country-made revolver. Podder is also wanted in connection with a violent incident near Golpark in south Kolkata and is currently absconding. Despite the summons issued by the ED, he has not joined the investigation so far. The fresh raids come days ahead of West Bengal's two-phase polling scheduled for April 23 and April 29.

Surrender or you won't be spared: PM's last warning to 'TMC goons, syndicates'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned Trinamool Congress "goons and syndicates" to surrender by April 29, while promising welfare schemes for women ahead of the West Bengal polls.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched a sharp attack on the Trinamool Congress (TMC) over allegations of corruption, issuing what he described as a "last chance" to "goons and syndicates" ahead of the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections.

Addressing a BJP rally in Bishnupur, Modi said, "I am giving one last chance to all TMC goons, syndicates, and corrupt elements. Surrender at your nearest police station before April 29. No one will be spared after May 4. The mafia of Bishnupur and TMC's syndicate, listen carefully, this will no longer be tolerated."

The Prime Minister also

outlined promises targeted at women voters in the state. He said women would receive free rations and Rs 36,000 annually through the proposed 'Maatri Shakti Bharosa Card' if the BJP forms the government in West Bengal.

"The safety of sisters and your prosperity are the priorities of the BJP. Even now, due to the corruption of the TMC government, the women of Bengal do not receive the benefits they receive under the BJP government in

neighbouring states of Assam, Tripura, Odisha and Bihar. If the BJP government is formed in Bengal, poor women will receive free rations, and no one will be able to steal their rations," Modi said.

He added that a BJP government would provide assistance of up to Rs 1.5 lakh to women under PM Awas Yojana for building permanent homes. Referring to the proposed welfare scheme, he said, "There's a lot of buzz right now about the 'Maatri

Shakti Bharosa Card.' Every sister in Bengal is very happy about it; through this, every sister in Bengal will receive Rs 36,000 every year."

Women constitute a significant voter base for Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's TMC, with both the BJP and TMC focusing on appealing to women voters ahead of the polls. The TMC has announced its own welfare scheme, Lakshmi Bhandar, under which women in the general category receive Rs 1,500 per month, while SC/ST women receive Rs 1,700. The party has also promised Rs 1,500 monthly assistance for unemployed youth.

The West Bengal Assembly elections are scheduled to be held in two phases on April 23 and April 29, with counting of votes set for May 4. Mamata Banerjee is seeking a fourth consecutive term, while the BJP, which won 77 seats in the previous election, is making a renewed push to form the government in the state.



If you have physical needs: Woman details months of harassment at TCS Nashik

In her police complaint accessed by India Today TV, a woman employee has alleged months of harassment, stalking and religious slurs by five colleagues at Tata Consultancy Services' (TCS) Nashik BPO unit.

A woman employee at Tata Consultancy Services' (TCS) Nashik BPO unit has alleged months of sexual harassment, stalking, inappropriate touching and derogatory remarks against her religion by five colleagues, according to a detailed police complaint accessed by India Today TV.

In her statement, the complainant said she joined TCS as an associate on June 20, 2025, and began training on June 24 under Shahrugh Qureshi and another colleague. During this period, she alleged that Raza Memon, a team leader in the loans department, would frequently enter the training room despite having no formal role and make personal and suggestive remarks.

"He would ask, 'Since your husband is out of town, how do you manage everything all alone? Don't you feel scared? If you need anything, I am ready to help anytime,'" she stated. She further alleged that both Raza Memon and Shahrugh Qureshi questioned her marriage, asking whether it was "arranged or love", and made insinuations about her personal life. Memon allegedly gave her a nickname, 'Player', and repeatedly addressed her by it in the office.

According to the complaint, Memon also made remarks such as, "If I were in your husband's place, I wouldn't have left you alone," while standing in close proximity to her. After completing training, the complainant moved to on-the-job training in September 2025 and later into a production role. During this period, she alleged that Asif Ansari, an associate from another team, began approaching her frequently

and sitting beside her without invitation. She accused Ansari of repeated physical advances and inappropriate touching. "He would deliberately touch my body, try to hold my hand, place his hand on my thigh or shoulder," she stated, adding that he once hugged her 'forcefully'. The complainant further alleged that Ansari propositioned her despite knowing she was married. "Don't you like me? I am more handsome than your husband. Come out with me... even if something happens, no one will know," he allegedly told her. She said he continued to approach her during lunch breaks, sit close to her, and make remarks such as, "If you have any physical needs, I will fulfil them". She also alleged that Ansari made offensive comments targeting her religion. According to her statement, he said that "in your religion, women get raped because they don't wear a burqa" and made derogatory remarks about Hindu gods, which she said hurt her religious sentiments. In January 2026, during Makar Sankranti, she alleged that Ansari commented on her saree, saying, "Your blouse design is nice. If the lace is removed, there will be a whole show". The complainant also named Tausif Attar, alleging that he would visit her desk daily despite not being part of her team, bring food and make sexually suggestive remarks. She alleged that he used double-meaning comments while looking at her in an obscene manner. According to her, Attar would come physically close, touch her inappropriately and, under the pretext of teaching her telecalling work after office hours, "put his cheek on mine, place his hand on my shoulder and run his hand over my arm and thigh". The complainant further alleged that on the occasion of Gudi Padwa in March 2026, Raza Memon pulled her saree from behind. "When I turned around, he was holding it and smiling at me in a dirty manner," she stated.

23 dead in blast at firecracker factory in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu firecracker unit blast: A preliminary probe suggested that the factory was operating in violation of regulations by functioning on Sunday, a designated rest day. Four special teams have been constituted to trace and apprehend those responsible.



At least 23 people were killed and six injured in a blast at a firecracker manufacturing unit in Kattannarpatti village in Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar district. The fire has since been brought under control. Virudhunagar District Collector Dr N.O. Sukhaputra said that 19 bodies have been identified so far, including 16 women and three men. He added that 13 people involved in the rescue operations have been hospitalized with minor

injuries. Six of the injured are currently in the ICU, he said. "A senior IAS officer has been appointed to assist the district administration and oversee rescue and related operations. An FIR has been registered, and an investigation into the exact cause of the accident is underway," he said. A preliminary probe suggested that the factory was operating in violation of regulations by functioning on Sunday, a designated rest

day. Four special teams have been constituted to trace and apprehend those responsible. Meanwhile, political leaders cutting across party lines condoled the deaths. PM Narendra Modi and President Droupadi Murmu called the mishap "deeply distressing" and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. Home Minister Amit Shah and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi too expressed similar sentiments. Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin,

on the other hand, instructed authorities to provide necessary assistance to the victims. Following Stalin's orders, state Finance Minister Thangam Thennarasu reached the village to monitor the relief efforts.

Virudhunagar, a major hub for the manufacturing of firecrackers, has seen several fire mishaps in the last few years. On April 13, 2026, a massive explosion occurred at an Excel fireworks factory in Madathupatti near Sattur in Virudhunagar district.

On February 17, 2024, a fire broke out after an explosion at a firecracker factory in Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar district, killing ten people and injuring more than seven others. On June 29, 2024, an explosion at another firecracker unit resulted in four deaths and left one person injured.

Mamata Banerjee Alleges Misuse by Narendra Modi

KOLKATA, APRIL 19

Claiming that Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) downfall has started, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of misusing government machinery for political campaigns. Addressing an election rally in Hooghly district's Tarakeswar, Chief Minister Banerjee alleged that

PM Modi indulged in an illegal campaign for the BJP through his address to the nation regarding the women's quota bill. "They (BJP) misused the government machinery yesterday for political campaigns. We condemn this and will file a complaint with the Election Commission. It is a violation of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for election," the Chief Minister said. In an address to the na-

tion on Saturday, Prime Minister Modi warned the Congress and its allies that the women of India will severely punish them for the sin of foeticide. Targeting the Prime Minister for attacking the Opposition, Chief Minister Banerjee said, "You (Prime Minister Modi) have to answer to the people of India that you are doing an illegal campaign for your party. The Women's Reservation Bill

was passed in September 2023. Why the Central government has not yet implemented it?"

She noted that the BJP-led Union government clubbed the Delimitation Bill with the women's quota legislation tabled in the Lok Sabha. "They (BJP) had the audacity to bring the bill in the Lok Sabha despite not having the requisite numbers to pass it. They suffered a defeat in the Lok Sabha.

Govt delivers 53.5 lakh LPG cylinders in a day, 98 pc bookings go digital

NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

Even as geopolitical tensions in West Asia raise concerns over global energy supply chains, the Centre on Sunday said domestic LPG cylinder deliveries continue smoothly, with more than 53.5 lakh cylinders delivered in a single day, assuring citizens of uninterrupted fuel availability. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said that despite global uncertainties, domestic LPG deliveries remain normal against bookings. According to official data, over 53.5 lakh domestic LPG cylinders were delivered on April 18, 2026, with no reports of dry-outs at LPG distributorships. The gov-

ernment has prioritised supply to households to ensure that essential cooking fuel remains accessible during the ongoing crisis. Digital adoption has also increased significantly, with nearly 98 per cent of LPG bookings being made online, while over 93 per cent of deliveries are now authenticated through Delivery Authentication Codes (DAC) to prevent diversion. On the supply side, the government has ensured 100 per cent availability for domestic LPG, PNG and CNG segments. For commercial LPG, priority allocation has been given to critical sectors such as hospitals, educational institutions, pharmaceuticals, steel, automobiles and agriculture.

"Modi, Amit Shah's actions are destructive to democracy"

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 19

Ramakrishna, National Secretary of the Communist Party of India, expressed concern that decisions taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah are undermining the democratic system.

He criticized that while Modi and Amit Shah are allegedly taking secular and unconstitutional actions causing harm to the country and states, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar, who play key roles in the NDA, have been reduced to "extra players" by supporting them.

Press Meet in Vijayawada
Speaking at a press conference held at Dasari Bhavan in Vijayawada, Ramakrishna said that Prime Minister Modi's claims that opposition parties are obstructing the Women's Bill are false. He pointed out that opposition parties objected because the delimitation bill was introduced along with the Women's Bill, not the bill itself.



He alleged that the Women's Reservation Bill is being used purely for political advantage. He also stated that the central government is surviving with the support of Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu, and despite strong objections from leaders of southern states regarding delimitation, both leaders have remained silent, which he termed "shameful".

Criticism of Leadership and Policies

Ramakrishna criticized Narendra Modi for allegedly lowering the dignity of the Prime Minister's office. He said that former Prime Ministers like Jawaharlal Nehru, Manmohan Singh, and even

ing its implementation to conditions such as the census and delimitation, which he said are creating obstacles. He demanded that these conditions be removed and the law implemented immediately.

Concerns Over Delimitation

Ramakrishna expressed concern that the proposed delimitation process could disturb the political balance of the country. He said that if seat redistribution is based on the 2011 census, southern states that successfully implemented population control would suffer losses, while northern, Hindi-speaking states would gain greater representation, increasing regional inequality.

He urged that the Women's Reservation Act should be implemented sincerely and not used for political purposes, adding that opposition parties are ready to support its proper execution.

Call for Political Accountability

He questioned how a law already passed in September

2023 could be obstructed and criticized claims suggesting otherwise. He also pointed out that in Andhra Pradesh, both ruling and opposition parties—including leaders like N. Chandrababu Naidu, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, and Pawan Kalyan—have not clearly expressed their stance on this crucial issue. He warned that if leaders fail to take clear positions on important matters, they risk being judged harshly by history. He also cited the unfulfilled special status promise made by Manmohan Singh as an example of lack of commitment.

Final Remarks

He called on all opposition parties to unite and demand immediate implementation of the Women's Reservation Act. He urged voters to teach the BJP a lesson in the upcoming Assembly elections and called for the protection of democratic values in the country.

The press meet was also attended by CPI state secretariat members P. Harinath Reddy, P. Durgabhavani, and Donepudi Shankar.



Deeply distressing: Rajath Singh on Tamil Nadu fire accident

NEW DELHI: (APR 19)

Describing the tragic fire accident in Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar as "deeply distressing", Defence Minister Rajath Singh on Sunday offered condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones in the incident. At least 23 people were charred to death, and six others sustained grievous injuries following a massive explosion at a private firecracker manufacturing unit near Virudhunagar, local police said on Sunday. Singh in a post on X, said, "The tragic fire accident in Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar is deeply distressing."

Shashi Tharoor Sees Vizhinjam Port Gain Amid Hormuz Tensions

Amid rising tensions in the Strait of Hormuz disrupting global shipping routes, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor has highlighted an unexpected opportunity for India, pointing to a surge in activity at Kerala's Vizhinjam Port in his Thiruvananthapuram constituency.



Tharoor said Vizhinjam is increasingly emerging as a reliable gateway in this evolving scenario. "From handling its 1 millionth TEU in record time to fast-tracking Phase II, Vizhinjam is officially India's transshipment answer to the world. When I first helped bring in the tender bid that made the port a reality, it was a long-shot project with plenty of sceptics and critics," he said. Recalling the project's early days, Tharoor said it once faced significant doubt but has now transformed into a critical maritime asset. "With the world looking for a new, reliable gateway, Vizhinjam has answered the call," he added, describing the port as a "global necessity." The port's expansion plans further highlight its growing importance, with work underway to enable simultaneous berthing of up to five motherships, which is expected to significantly enhance capacity.

In a post on X, Tharoor said nearly 100 vessels are either queued or seeking berthing at the port, signalling a shift in global maritime traffic. "The Strait of Hormuz crisis has shifted global shipping eyes to my constituency," he wrote, calling it a significant moment for India's maritime ambitions. Vizhinjam Port, the country's first deep-water transshipment hub, has seen rapid growth in recent months. Tharoor noted that the port handled its one millionth TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) in record time and is now fast-tracking Phase II expansion. In March 2026 alone, it handled 61 vessels, marking a new operational high. The disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, a key global shipping chokepoint, have pushed companies to look for stable alternatives.

EDITORIAL

BRACING FOR THE DEFICIT:
IMD'S OMINOUS FORECAST AND THE
IMPENDING SHADOW OF EL NIÑO

In the rhythmic cycle of meteorology, the inevitable trough often follows the high-water mark of the crest. After enjoying two consecutive years of bountiful surplus precipitation, the Indian subcontinent is now likely confronting a substantial shortfall as the upcoming monsoon season approaches. The India Meteorological Department (IMD), in its critical April projections, has anticipated an 8% precipitation deficit, categorizing the June-to-September window as "below normal." While a 5% margin of error is officially acknowledged in this estimation, historical data regarding the IMD's predictive accuracy reveals a sobering trend: the agency has more frequently predicted a "normal" monsoon only for the country to suffer a drought than it has predicted a drought and been proven incorrect. Indeed, when the IMD issues a warning of a deficit as early as April, historical precedents suggest that India is frequently on the verge of a severe drought. Within its official terminology, the agency meticulously avoids the word "drought," opting instead to label rainfall that falls below 90% of the average as "deficient."

The parallels to previous years are striking; in April 2015, the IMD issued a "below normal" forecast for the southwest monsoon, projecting seasonal rains at 93% of the long-period average. The reality proved far grimmer, with the nation ending the season at a mere 86% of the Long Period Average (LPA). For the current cycle, the agency anticipates a significantly depressed monsoon during the vital second half—specifically August and September—primarily because climate models indicate the emergence of El Niño. This cyclical weather phenomenon, characterized by the heating of the central equatorial Pacific Ocean beyond 1 degree Celsius, has a strong historical correlation with aridity; since 1950, it has coincided with a deficient monsoon in nine out of sixteen instances.

The specific timing of an El Niño event remains a decisive factor in its overall impact. Should the temperature elevation occur outside the primary monsoon months, the threat to agricultural output is notably diminished. In 2019, for example, the IMD initially projected lower-than-normal precipitation in its April report due to looming El Niño-like conditions. Paradoxically, the country eventually recorded above-normal rainfall because the oceanic heating did not manifest with the anticipated intensity. This year, meteorologists are hoping that the Indian Ocean Dipole might provide a counteracting force to the desiccating influence of El Niño. However, at a time when the most alarming clouds are the metaphorical ones of conflict over West Asia, a potential shortage of natural gas and fertilizer could further dampen farmer morale alongside the weak rains. The government must act with immediate urgency to fortify fertilizer reserves, ensure the equitable distribution of water—particularly in reservoirs expected to face extreme stress—and deliver precise, timely advisories to the farming community regarding optimal sowing strategies to mitigate the risks of a dry season.

Open Forum

The Mango Mirage

A Deep Dive into the Health Hazards of Artificial Ripening

As summer sweeps across India, markets glow with the golden allure of mangoes—the nation's most cherished fruit. But beneath this vibrant display lies a troubling reality. In a race for profits and speed, many traders are turning to hazardous chemicals to artificially ripen fruit overnight, exposing millions of consumers to hidden health risks. What appears to be nature's sweetness may, in fact, be a carefully engineered deception.

As summer arrives, Indian markets transform into a vibrant sea of yellow, gold, and green, celebrating the arrival of the mango—the undisputed "King of Fruits." For many, the wait for this seasonal delicacy is a ritual. However, a dark shadow now looms over this beloved tradition. The natural, patient process of ripening has been replaced by a "magic show" of chemicals, where fruits are forced to mature overnight. Health experts are increasingly alarmed, warning that these "painted" perfections are leading the public toward a health crisis. This analysis uncovers the mechanics of artificial ripening, the risks involved, and how to safeguard oneself from this chemical deception.

India's Mango Map: The Giants of Production
India's mango production is a massive enterprise, often exceeding twenty million tonnes annually, though yields can fluctuate with the whims of the monsoon. Uttar Pradesh stands as the crowning leader in this sector, contributing nearly one out of every four mangoes produced in the country. Regions like Malihabad and Lucknow are world-renowned for their aromatic varieties. Following closely is Andhra Pradesh, where the coastal districts are carpeted with orchards producing the prestigious Banganapalli, Neelam, and Totapuri varieties. Karnataka makes its mark with the premium Alphonso from Kolar and Bengaluru, while Bihar's Gangetic plains offer a diverse palette of flavors. Telangana's Nalgonda and Khammam districts boast vast stretches of orchards, and Gujarat's Bhavnagar and Surat regions remain the undisputed home of the Kesari mango. While Maharashtra's Ratnagiri

Alphonso is a global brand, it sits slightly lower in total volume compared to these giants. Together, these states elevate India to the pinnacle of global mango production, despite seasonal shifts in their rankings.

The Chemistry of Deception: Carbide and Its Consequences
The primary culprit in the race to ripen is Calcium Carbide, commonly referred to as "Carbide." On the surface, it appears as a harmless grey or white chalky substance, but its application is anything but benign. When these stones are placed among raw mangoes and sprinkled with water, they trigger a chemical reaction that releases acetylene gas. While acetylene mimics the effects of ethylene—the natural hormone produced by fruits to ripen—it is a poor and dangerous substitute. This industrial-grade chemical is used primarily in welding, yet it is being surreptitiously used in our food supply to turn green skins into a deceptive yellow within hours, bypassing the natural biological clock of the fruit.

Legal Boundaries and the Ethylene Alternative:
The use of Calcium Carbide is strictly prohibited under Indian law, but some traders continue to gamble with public health for higher profit margins. Another chemical often misused is Ethephon; while it is a source of ethylene, its direct application or excessive use is a violation of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) norms. Currently, the only legally sanctioned method for ripening is the use of Ethylene gas in controlled environments. Ethylene is a natural plant hormone and is considered safe when used within specified limits. FSSAI allows the use of Ethephon only in the form of small, sealed sachets that do not

come into direct contact with the fruit, allowing the gas to permeate the atmosphere naturally. The judiciary has taken a stern view of these violations, with the Delhi High Court famously equating the use of carbide to "poisoning the consumer." Despite these legal deterrents, the battle against illicit ripening remains an uphill task.

A Heavy Price for Health: The Toxic Toll
Consuming mangoes ripened with Carbide or excessive Ethephon is akin to inviting a "hidden enemy" into your body. Calcium Carbide often contains traces of arsenic and phosphorus, which are highly toxic. Short-term exposure leads to immediate symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. In the long run, these toxins can devastate the nervous system and potentially lead to permanent damage. For pregnant women and children, the risks are even more severe, as these chemicals can interfere with development. Some studies even suggest that the chronic ingestion of these residues could be a precursor to cancer. Furthermore, Ethephon misuse can cause skin rashes, respiratory distress, and severe irritation of the gastrointestinal tract, eventually placing a heavy burden on the liver and kidneys.

Unmasking the Imitation: How to Spot Artificial Fruit
Identifying a chemically ripened mango requires a keen eye and a bit of skepticism. Nature rarely produces uniform perfection; naturally ripened mangoes usually display a patchwork of colors, with subtle green spots remaining even when the fruit is sweet. In contrast, artificially ripened mangoes often look "too good to be true," possessing a uniform, bright lemon-yellow skin that looks almost polished.

The aroma is another giveaway; a natural mango emits a rich, heady fragrance that fills a room, whereas a carbide-treated fruit either lacks a scent entirely or smells faintly of chemicals. When touched, a naturally ripe mango is soft throughout, while a chemically treated one might feel soft on the outside but remain hard and woody at the core. Most importantly, the taste of a naturally ripened fruit is a balanced explosion of sweetness, whereas the "magic" variety often tastes flat, bland, or even metallic.

Vigilance and Safety: Protecting the Consumer
The fight against this menace is being fought on two fronts: regulation and awareness. Food safety officials are increasingly conducting raids on wholesale markets, using laboratory testing to confirm the presence of banned substances and revoking the licenses of unscrupulous traders. However, since total eradication is difficult, consumers must take their own precautions. If you suspect your mangoes have been treated, washing them thoroughly under running water is essential. Soaking the fruit in a solution of salt, vinegar, or baking soda for at least fifteen to twenty minutes can help neutralize surface residues, though it cannot remove toxins that have already penetrated the skin. Ultimately, the best defense is to buy from trusted, local sources or wait for the peak of the natural season when the need for artificial ripening decreases. In the quest for the perfect summer treat, one must remember that health is the greatest wealth, and no fruit is worth the price of a chemical illness.

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LIFE — THE BROKEN CONDUIT

Life
a fractured conduit of time,
bleeding silent dreams
in a slow, unrelenting rhythm
beware, brother
beneath each step
lingers the hush of collapse.
Life
a pilgrimage through storm-worn
breath,
where balance trembles
like a bridge of fading light,
and faith
a fragile ember
on extinction's edge.
For this world
a ruthless tutor
etches upon your days
the grammar of ruin,
the quiet alchemy
that turns trust into absence.
Choose union over unrest
for what is woven in togetherness
outlives the teeth of time;
while anger
builds only monuments
to its own decay.
Forget not humanity
the "Anthem" ember
in existence's ashen lungs,
the last unbroken prayer
beneath a collapsing sky.
Learn to smile
for sorrow is a language
spoken most fluently
by those who dwell
closest to your soul.
Learn to stand
for the hands that undo you
often carry the warmth of nearness
the fall
is seldom dealt by strangers.
Learn to live
not as one who counts days,

but as one who kindles them
for death
faithful to none
claims all
with immaculate silence.
Learn to rise
not merely above depths,
but beyond the gravity of betrayal
for drowning
is an art
the trusted perfect
with unseen hands.
And what, then,
is the true grandeur of life?
Not possession
but perception, tempered by pain.
Not instruction
but transformation through fire.
To learn
until wisdom becomes breath.
To uplift
for though teachers crowd the path,
the self-forged
are rare as constellations.
Wealth decays
but character inscribes eternity
possession fades
but compassion outlives time.
The only inheritance that endures
is not what fills the hand,
but what shapes the human
a quiet bequeathal of light
to an unborn dawn.
Greatness and smallness
are not measures of matter,
but echoes of conduct
not in what you hold,
but in how you become.
Look to the mountain
it does not rise for height alone,
but endures
through the depth of its stillness
its silence
stronger than its summit.

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

Current Affairs

Battle for the Bastions: Defining Contests in Western and Southern Tamil Nadu

In a previous analysis of the Tamil Nadu electoral landscape, I argued that this is not a broad "wave" election but a granular, seat-by-seat struggle. While every general election features intense local rivalries, certain "defining battles" emerge—contests that do not merely decide a candidate's fate but reveal decisive trends capable of shifting the entire state's political trajectory. Having traveled extensively across the state, I have identified the following key contests in the Western and Southern districts. These are the seats where the ground reality will dictate the final tally. In a subsequent piece, I will detail the critical watch-seats in the Central (Delta), Northern, and Chennai regions.

The Western Region: The AIADMK's Fortress Under Siege

In the 2021 assembly elections, the AIADMK alliance dominated this region, securing 43 out of 57 seats. Their performance was nearly a total sweep in districts like Salem (10/11), Coimbatore (all 10), and Dharmapuri (all 5). For the DMK, the West is the primary territory for potential expansion; they must make significant inroads here to compensate for any incumbent fatigue in their strongholds in the North, South, and Chennai.

1. Coimbatore South

This seat serves as a litmus test for Senthil Balaji, the DMK's regional strongman known for his organizational discipline. Balaji has moved from his traditional Karur base to contest here, aiming to dismantle the AIADMK's Coimbatore calculus. In 2021, the BJP's Vanathi Srinivasan (AIADMK alliance) narrowly defeated Kamal Haasan. With Srinivasan moving to Coimbatore North, Balaji faces Amman K. Arju-

nan, the AIADMK incumbent from North who has shifted here to defend the bastion. This contest will reveal if the DMK can breach the AIADMK stronghold and how much the TVK (Vijay) and NTK (Seeman) factor into a traditional two-party split.

2. Gobichettipalayam (Erode)

Eight-time AIADMK MLA KA Sengottayan has moved to the TVK, presenting a fascinating psychological test for the voters: is loyalty to the "Two Leaves" symbol stronger than loyalty to a veteran leader? The AIADMK has fielded young VB Prabhu to retain the seat. A split in the traditional AIADMK vote could hand a historic opportunity to the DMK in a seat they lost by 25,000 votes in 2021.

3. Tiruchengode (Namakkal)

KG Arun Raj, the TVK's General Secretary and a former IRS officer, faces a tough three-way fight against incumbent ER Easwaran (DMK alliance/KMDK) and the AIADMK's R. Chandrashekar. This contest will show whether the TVK can dismantle sub-regional, caste-based parties and if the AIADMK can maintain its grassroots machinery after its former ally, Easwaran, shifted to the DMK.

4. Salem West

This seat is the ground zero for assessing the "PMK split." Incumbent Arul Ramadoss (loyal to Ramadoss Sr.) faces M. Karthe, fielded by Ramadoss Jr. (AIADMK alliance). The DMK has tactically stepped back, giving the seat to the DMKD. The outcome will determine if the split in the Vanniyar-based PMK has fatally weakened the party's influence in Edappadi Palaniswami's home district.

5. Dharmapuri

Another PMK prestige battle. Sowmya Ramadoss (wife of Anbumani Ramadoss) is challenged by A. Saravanan (Ramadoss Sr.'s candidate). With the DMK-backed DMKD candidate in the fray, the result will decide Anbumani Ramadoss's future standing and whether the PMK's internal rift hands the seat to the DMK alliance on a platter.

The Southern Region: Testing Alliances and Loyalties

The DMK alliance swept the South in 2021, winning 42 of 58 seats. The region is a complex web of OBC Thevar and Dalit vote banks, now further complicated by the entry of the TVK and the shifting loyalties of veteran leaders.

1. Bodinayakanur (Theni)

The most discussed shift in the state: O. Panneerselvam (OPS), the former CM sidelined by EPS, is now contesting with DMK support. Facing him is AIADMK local strongman VT Narayanasamy. This seat will answer a fundamental question: will AIADMK loyalists follow OPS to the DMK, or will they remain devoted to the "Two Leaves" symbol regardless of the candidate? It also tests the influence of the TTV Dhinakaran-EPS alliance in the Thevar heartland.

2. Alangulam

Similar to OPS, PH Manoj Pandian won as an AIADMK candidate in 2021 but is now the DMK's face here. In the Nadar-dominated deep South, this contest will prove whether individual influence can override traditional party symbols.

3. Virudhunagar

Vijay Prabhakar (son of the late Vijayakanth) is contesting for the DMK-DMKD-Congress alliance. He faces VG Ganesan (AIADMK). Having narrowly lost the 2024 parliamentary poll as an AIADMK

ally, Prabhakar's performance will determine if the new DMK-DMKD partnership is effective at the grassroots and if the TVK can siphon off the DMKD's youth vote.

4. Karaikudi (Sivaganga)

A volatile four-cornered contest involving incumbent S. Mangudi (Congress/DMK), NTK Chief Seeman, the TVK's TK Prabhu, and the NDA's DV Pandi. This seat is a litmus test for the NTK's resilience against the TVK's surge and will show the relevance of smaller players like the AMMK in a fractured field.

5. Periyakulam (Theni)

An existential battle for the VCK. Party leader Aatral Arasu is contesting in a region symbolic of Dalit-Thevar caste tensions. Facing the AMMK's Dr. Kathirkamu, the VCK must prove that its core Dalit base remains intact and has not gravitated toward the TVK.

6. Thiruparankundram (Madurai)

Incumbent AIADMK MLA VV Rajan Chellappa faces TVK's CTR Nirmal Kumar and the DMK's Krithika Thangapandian. A traditional AIADMK stronghold, a breach here would signal that the TVK is successfully cannibalizing the AIADMK's urban and semi-urban vote share.

7. Madurai Central

Minister P. Thiagarajan (PTR), a high-profile DMK face, is challenged by actor/director C. Sundar (NDA). With the NTK and TVK both fielding Muslim candidates, this seat will reflect minority voting trends and the DMK's ability to withstand local anti-incumbency in a sophisticated urban constituency.

- VEERESH,
SR. JOURNALIST

The spirit of 'Ahimsa Parmo Dharma' is more relevant today than ever: CM Nayab Singh Saini

CHANDIGARH, APRIL 19

Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that the core principle of Jainism— "Ahimsa Parmo Dharma" (non-violence is the highest duty)—is more relevant today than ever. Amid global conflicts, wars, and violence, it conveys a message of peace and compassion. He stated that the Varshi Tap Parva festival of this religion is especially inspiring for the youth, as it teaches the importance of self-discipline and patience. If the younger generation adopts these values, it will lead not only to their personal growth but also to the progress of society and the nation. The Chief Minister was addressing a special religious gathering at the chief guest at Shri Atma Manohar Jain Aradhana Mandir in Karnal. On this occasion, he laid the foundation stone of the first floor of Piyush Block Hospital and inaugurated two bird towers and a Jeev Seva Kendra. He also interacted with patients admitted in the hospital and offered prayers at the temple of Lord Ghantakarna Mahavir. During the event, he also honoured so-

cial workers.

On this occasion, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that today is Akshaya Tritiya, the birth anniversary of Lord Parshuram, and also the Varshitapa Parana festival. Lord Rishabh Dev concluded his 400-day fast with sugarcane juice. Extending heartfelt greetings to the people of the state on these auspicious occasions, he said that the Varshitapa Parana festival is being celebrated at the Aradhana Mandir. This place holds great significance in Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist traditions and is a revered shrine of the powerful deity Ghantakarna Mahavir. It also houses the sacred site of Osian Mata and the samadhi temple of Gurudev Manohar Muni, which is a centre of deep faith. Regular spiritual camps are organized here to guide people in the art of living.

He added that this festival is being celebrated in the land of Mahaveer Danveer Karnal, known for his generosity and firm vows. The spiritual vibrations of Karnal are still present in this land, as reflected in the many devoted and charitable individuals present here. He said



that he always draws inspiration from the social service institutions of Karnal. Sh. Saini stated that under the able leadership of the Prime Minister, India is progressing continuously while also reviving and promoting its rich cultural heritage globally. Over the past 11 years, several historic initiatives have been undertaken for cultural preservation and revival. Referring to the construction of the grand Ram Temple, the development of the Mahakaleswar Corridor, and the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, he said these are results of visionary leadership. He also mentioned the renovation of the sacred site in Kurukshetra where

Lord Krishna delivered the message of the Bhagavad Gita. He said that the Prime Minister is not only building a modern India but also working towards making it a Vishwa Guru by following the teachings of sages and saints. The Chief Minister emphasized that Jainism places great importance on penance and renunciation. A follower undergoes rigorous discipline for 14 years to become a monk. The Varshitapa holds a special place in this tradition, symbolizing purification, restraint, and sacrifice. Jainism has guided humanity towards the right path for centuries. He also appreciated the contributions of Sant Gaurav Piyush

Muni Maharaj in fields like education, healthcare, nation-building, compassion for living beings, and environmental protection. He said that Jainism has historically flourished in Haryana, with regions like Gurugram, Rohtak, Faridabad, Bhiwani, and Hisar deeply influenced by Jain culture thousands of years ago. Archaeological findings such as inscriptions and idols of Tirthankaras support this. Even today, Jain temples and religious centers are present across the state, and the Jain community has significantly contributed to its development. The government is committed to respecting and promoting all religions. To ensure that economically weaker elderly devotees are not deprived of pilgrimage opportunities, the government has launched the Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana. Under this scheme, a train will be sent from Kurukshetra to Nanded Sahib on May 5. On this occasion, Piyush Muni Ji Maharaj said that Akshaya Tritiya is not just a date in the Indian calendar but symbolizes the pinnacle of sacrifice, penance, and charity. True spirituality

is not limited to material comforts or outward appearances; it lies in awakening the inner light and serving humanity. He explained that Lord Rishabhdev performed continuous penance for 12 months. At that time, people were unaware of the proper method of offering alms. Even though he was a king, when he went for alms, people offered him valuables like silver, pearls, and precious items, which he did not accept. After a long period of 12 months, his grandson Shreyans Kumar, guided by divine inspiration, offered him sugarcane juice as food, thereby concluding his penance. This incident teaches the value of selfless charity and timely service. He also highlighted the astrological importance of Akshaya Tritiya, stating that unlike other dates that fluctuate with the lunar cycle, the merit earned on this day never diminishes, making it highly auspicious for all good deeds.

On this occasion, Indri MLA Sh. Ramkumar Kashyap, Karnal MLA Sh. Jagmohan Anand, Assandh MLA Sh. Yogenender Rana, and other dignitaries were present.



Swift Action by RPF Leads to Arrest of Theft Accused at Multiple Stations

MALIGAON, 19 APRIL, 2026:

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of North-east Frontier Railway has once again demonstrated its unwavering commitment towards ensuring passenger safety and security through a series of successful operations conducted across different locations. On 13th April 2026, a team from CPDS/Rangiya apprehended one individual, onboard Train No. 15930 Down for involvement in theft of passenger belongings. A stolen mobile phone valued at approximately Rs 40,000 was recovered from his possession. The accused, along with the recovered item, was handed over to GRP/Rangiya, where a case under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) has been registered. In another operation on 14th April 2026, RPF/Post/Katihar (East) personnel apprehended one person at Katihar Railway Station. A stolen mobile phone worth approximately Rs 15,000 was recovered. The accused was subsequently handed over to GRP/Katihar, which

registered a case under appropriate sections of BNS.

On the same day, RPF personnel from CPDS/Guwahati successfully apprehended one person at Guwahati Railway Station. The team recovered a stolen mobile phone valued at approximately Rs 15,000. The accused was handed over to GRP/Guwahati, where a case has been registered under relevant provisions of BNS.

Further continuing its crackdown, on 16th April 2026, RPF/Post/New Bongaigaon apprehended one person at Bongaigaon Railway Station with a stolen mobile phone worth approximately Rs 10,000. The accused was handed over to GRP/New Bongaigaon for further legal proceedings.

These successful operations highlight the alertness and prompt action of RPF personnel in safeguarding passengers and their belongings. Northeast Frontier Railway reiterates its commitment to maintaining a safe and secure travel environment and urges passengers to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activities to railway authorities.

Congress Seeks Arrest Over Remarks on Francis Xavier

PANAJI: (APR 19)

A political row erupted after a right-wing speaker allegedly made objectionable remarks against Goa's patron saint, St. Francis Xavier, resulting in a police complaint and the Opposition demanding his arrest for hurting people's sentiments. A video of Gautam Khattar, the founder of Sanatan Mahasangh, addressing an event on Saturday evening in the presence of Swami Brahmeshanand, State Transport Minister Mauvin Godinho and BJP MLAs Sankulp Amonkar and Daji (Krishna) Salkar, has gone viral.

Akshay Tritiya: devotees will get darshans of lotus feet of Banke bihari

MATHURA, APRIL 19

Sea of vibrant devotees visible outside major temples from today, as temples in the city are getting ready for Akshay Tritiya celebrations tomorrow. Historian and Shri Bankey Bihari temple Vrindavan, Sewayat Prahlad Ballabh Goswami told that historical temples in the city observe any occasion or festival based on Hindu Calander's Udaya Tithi (Sunrise date). Since Akshay Tritiya falls at the time of sunrise tomorrow, the temple will observe Akshay Tritiya tomorrow. Aksay Tritiya holds special significance at Shri Bankey Bihari temple Vrindavan since devotees get a



chance to have darshans of lotus feet of Thakur ji Maharaj, which is available only on this day in the year. Large number of devotees are also seen performing Maha Abhishek and doing circumambulation at Goverdhan, since it is believed

that performing parikrama on the day leads to salvation. G K Purohit Ji Sewayat Sri Danghati temple Govardhan said. The temple will observe Akshay Tritiya tomorrow. At historical Radha Damodar temple Vrindavan the preparation

will begin early morning tomorrow, when the Sewayat will mix camphor, saffron and perfume in sandalwood paste before applying it to Thakur ji. "The deity adorns a crown, jewellery and attire carved out of sandalwood paste," Krishna Balram Goswami Sewayat Sri Radha Damodar temple said. It takes an entire day to carve the attire and the deity offers darshans in the attire only in the evening, he added.

Thakur Radha Ballabh Lal will wear Hathphool and Payal made of Sandalwood tomorrow. Sukrati Goswami, Sewayat Shri Radha Ballabh temple Vrindavan said "The Phool Bangla Utsav will begin from tomorrow at the tem-

ple." The temple will also offer summer food like Thandai. Different kinds of Sharbat, Lassi and summer fruits to the deity.

The District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh said that the entire Vrindavan is divided into 3 zones and 11 sectors with police personnel and magistrates. Ten medical teams and 5 ambulances are also placed at different locations. Taking note of extreme heat conditions, Fans and coolers are placed at various places and mats are placed for the convenience of devotees. He also asked officials to ensure round the clock availability of drinking water for devotees.

Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam Appeals for Calm, Urges Withdrawal of Statewide Shutdown

IMPHAL, 19 APRIL 2026

Manipur Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam on Saturday appealed to civil society organisations and the general public to reconsider and withdraw the proposed five-day statewide shutdown, citing concerns over public welfare and disruption to normal life. Addressing a press conference at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Imphal, the Minister emphasized the adverse impact of prolonged shutdowns and protests on daily wage earners, farmers, and students. He noted

that educational institutions have remained closed, further affecting academic activities across the state. Govindas Konthoujam assured that the State Government is actively considering the demands raised by the public and is committed to addressing them sincerely. He stated that most of the demands put forward by the Joint Action Committee (JAC) in connection with the Tronglabi incident have already been accepted by the government. Referring to discussions held with the father of the two children who lost their lives in the Tronglabi



incident, the Minister said the government had offered a suitable government job to him, equivalent to his current position in the Border Security Force (BSF). Additionally, a government job

was also offered to the children's mother, who is a trained nurse. However, the family requested time to deliberate on the proposals. The subsequent announcement of a five-day shutdown, he

remarked, was "highly unfortunate." On the recent incident at T.M. Kasom village, Govindas Konthoujam condemned the violence and termed it "deeply unfortunate." He informed that the Tangkhul Naga Long (TNL) had submitted a memorandum listing several demands. These were discussed during a joint meeting attended by TNL leaders and Naga MLAs, led by Deputy Chief Minister Losli Dikho. The government has assured compensation to the families of the deceased as per existing norms and pledged medical assistance for those injured.

The Home Minister also highlighted security arrangements in West Bengal, stating that out of 272 companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), 88 have been withdrawn due to election duties in West Bengal, with 15 more scheduled to be withdrawn. However, following intervention by the Chief Minister, 184 companies will continue to remain deployed in Manipur to maintain law and order. He further announced the introduction of advanced security measures, including mine-protected and bullet-proof vehicles, to enhance civilian safety.

The wave of devotion shook Noida

Thousands of people experienced the transforming power of devotional kirtan
SN VERMA

Noida: On the completion of 100 years of a historic spiritual moment, a deeply inspiring evening of devotional kirtan and meditation was organised at the Noida Ashram of the Yogda Satsang Society of India (YSS), in which more than thousands of participants participated in a powerful collective experience of peace and inner upliftment.

The event commemorates the historic evening of April 18, 1926, when Paramahansa Yoganandaji introduced the Bhakti my Kirtan in front of the Western world at Carnegie Hall in New York. The 2,800-seat hall overflowed, and thousands of people participated in the kirtan of "O



God Beautiful", creating an atmosphere of profound spiritual transformation that continued even after he left the stage. Inaugurating the event, Swami Smtiananda (in English) and Swami Adyanandji (in Hindi) presented their thoughts on the profound significance of this century. Swami Smtiananda emphasised that "Music full of self-power is real universal music, which can be understood by all hearts,"



thus underlining the universality of Bhakti maya Kirtan as a direct path to God. He further explained that Bhakti maya Kirtan is not just a musical expression, but a scientific spiritual practice. According to the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda, it concentrates the mind, awakens devotion and makes consciousness introverted. He said that Kirtan is tantamount to winning the "half battle" in meditation, as

it quickly leads the seeker to a state of deep awareness and inner peace.

Referring to the teachings of Yoganandaji, he said that Bhakti maya Kirtan uplifts consciousness and awakens Bhakti, strengthens concentration through rhythm and music. Helps in removing anxiety, fear and restlessness, paving the way for deep meditation and inner stillness. Can bring change at the physical, mental

and spiritual level through the power of vibrations. The highlight of Bhajan Sandhya was an engrossing devotional may kirtan session with the san-nyasins, led by Brahmachari Bhaskarananda. Starting with the sacred kirtan "O God Beautiful", the session proceeded through a series of cosmic chants in English and Hindi, filled with brief meditative pauses. As soon as many voices were raised together, the atmosphere became imbued with the depth of devotion. Many participants experienced inner stillness, emotional liberation, and spiritual upliftment—an echo of the original event in 1926, when those present experienced God-realisation and healing of body, mind, and spirit. Swami Smtiananda also told that Bhakti may Kirtan is an art, in which loyalty, emotion and inner immersion are essential. True Kirtan, he

said, goes beyond words and sound and connects the seeker to God. The event concluded with a brief address by Swami Adyananda, who inspired the attendees to further study the teachings of YSS, including the path of Rajayoga, which harmonises devotion, meditation and a balanced life. Held at the Yogda Ashram in Noida, this Bhajan Sandhya Sabha was part of a global centenary celebration, which was held on the same day at Carnegie Hall in the United States, a parallel event—which connects hearts around the world through the universal language of devotion. As the evening ended, a message kept echoing within everyone: When music is filled with devotion, it is no longer just sound—it becomes the medium of divine experience. The presence of dignitaries from different fields enhanced the dignity of the event.

2 Americans detained at Srinagar airport after satellite phone found in luggage

Two US nationals were questioned and handed over to the police after a satellite phone was recovered from their bags during a security screening at Srinagar airport.

Two US nationals were detained at Srinagar airport on Sunday after security officials found a satellite phone, a prohibited item, in their luggage during a routine check. The individuals were questioned by airport security and later handed over to police for further investigation. One of the detained individuals was identified as Jeffrey Scott from Montana. Officials said the satellite phone, manufactured by Garmin, was recovered from his luggage.

The use of satellite phones is prohibited in India without prior government approval. Devices such as Thuraya and Iridium phones fall under strict regulation, and unauthorised possession can lead to detention, arrest and seizure under the Indian Telegraph Act and other security rules. According to official guidelines, travellers must obtain written permission from the Department of Telecommunications before carrying or using satellite communication devices in the country.

India enforces stringent telecom restrictions due to security concerns, and both foreign nationals and Indian citizens have faced action in the past for carrying satellite communicators. Last May, a US-based ophthalmologist was stopped at Puducherry airport after an Iridium satellite phone was found in her possession. She was prevented from boarding a flight to Hyderabad, and a police investigation was initiated.

Authorities have also reported previous detentions involving foreign nationals, including a Chinese citizen and a British executive, for carrying unauthorised satellite devices at airports and hotels across the country. To curb such violations, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation on January 30, 2025, directed airlines operating flights to India to inform passengers about the ban through in-flight announcements, overseas offices and onboard publications. Foreign governments have also taken note. Travel advisories issued by the US and the UK warn citizens that carrying satellite phones or similar GPS devices into India could lead to hefty fines to the tune of Rs 2 crore, confiscation of equipment, or arrest.

Delhi: 63-year-old retired RBI staffer stabbed to death at home

NEW DELHI: (Apr 19) A 63-year-old retired employee of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was allegedly stabbed to death inside his residence in New Delhi's Mandir Marg area on Sunday evening, police said. The incident came to light

after a PCR call was received at around 5:30 pm reporting a stabbing near Anndh Vidyalyaya.

The caller informed the police that his uncle had been attacked, following which a team from the Mandir Marg police station rushed to the scene.

Bangladesh remains 'hostage' to IMF terms that dips growth, fuels inflation

NEW DELHI

Adviser to Bangladesh's Prime Minister warned that Bangladesh has become "hostage" to International Monetary Fund's (IMF) loan conditions, which could weaken the country's growth, a new report has said.

Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, the adviser, warned that if textbook reform formulas are implemented ignoring local context, high inflation will follow, hurting farmers and low-income groups, a report from Bangladeshi media house New Age said.

Speaking at a seminar organised by the Economic Reporters' Forum in Dhaka, Titumir cautioned that IMF targets such as raising the tax-to-GDP ratio under weak economic conditions could dip growth below 3 per cent and intensify stress on businesses as well as households.

The country accepted tough



bailout terms earlier to sustain a patronage-driven system without considering public interest, and is now compelled to continue with the IMF, Titumir was quoted as saying.

Titumir criticised "inconsistent positions of global institutions," which acknowl-

edge rising poverty but advise cuts in subsidies and direct support.

He said that the recently enacted Bank Resolution Act allowing former owners of distressed banks to apply for regaining ownership is still operational, adding that any

contradiction of the provision with the constitution or existing laws could be addressed through the Supreme Court.

The law allows previous shareholders or eligible applicants to reclaim control of banks under resolution, overriding other provisions, which

has already drawn criticism from economists. He said the previous government has left behind a fragile economy, weak institutions leading to a stagnant investment landscape. Titumir added that remittance inflows sustained the economy in previous crises. Addressing current challenges requires creative and context-specific solutions rather than rigid policy formulas, he said, calling for private sector investment, and better use of investible funds within the country.

He also stressed coordination between fiscal and monetary policies and reaffirmed the government's support for an independent central bank, the report noted.

CPD distinguished fellow Mustafizur Rahman warned that Bangladesh could fall into a middle-income trap and a debt trap, as interest payments now exceed spending on education.

Two Indian men shot dead outside gurdwara in Italy

ROME

Two Indian men were shot dead in Italy's Covo just as they were leaving the warehouse used as a place of worship, local media reported on Sunday.

The incident occurred on Friday, a few minutes before midnight, near Gurdwara Mata Sahib Kaur Ji in the industrial area of Bergamo town of the Lombardy region. The victims have been identified as Raginder Singh, 48, a resident of Covo, and Gurmit Singh, from Agnello, Italian daily La Sicilia reported.

The assailant approached the men, opened fire and then fled from the spot in a car. According to initial findings, a sudden brawl that escalated into bloodshed has been ruled out and instead suggests a rapid and lethal attack. Approximately ten shell casings were found at the site of the incident, far more than was "necessary" to target the two victims, as authorities investigate the "hypothesis of a coldly planned execution", it said. The shooter was "an Indian" who also frequented the gurdwara, La Sicilia reported, citing a witness.

Bulgaria holds 8th parliamentary election in 5 years



SOFIA

Bulgarians went to the polls on Sunday to vote in the country's early parliamentary election, the eighth vote for the legislature in five years.

Nearly 6.6 million voters are eligible to elect 240 lawmakers among more than 4,700 candidates from 14 political parties and 10 coalitions, as well as one independent candidate, according to the Central Election Commission, reported Xinhua news agency.

The commission said that the polling stations in the country opened nationwide at 7 a.m. (local time) and are due to close at 8 p.m. Meanwhile, polling stations in 55 countries and regions are available for Bulgarians living abroad to cast their ballots.

Exit polls will be announced immediately after stations close in Bulgaria, and the final results should be announced no later than April 23.

The elections became inevitable after Prime Minister Rosen Zhelyazkov's coalition government resigned in December 2025 amid large-

scale protests over the ruling majority's economic policy, and parliamentary parties subsequently failed to elect a new government.

Zhelyazkov's government took power on January 16 last year after snap elections in October 2024.

The National Assembly is Bulgaria's legislative body. It also elects the government by a simple majority and has a four-year term, except in certain circumstances, such as when it cannot elect a government.

Bulgaria is holding early parliamentary elections after the third and final attempt to form a government within the existing legislature failed in January.

Bulgarian President Rumen Radev offered the parliamentary group 'Alliance for Rights and Freedoms' (ARF) to form a government in January, but it declined, and the two largest parliamentary groups, GERB-UDF and PP-DB, also declined to do so in January this year.

Andrey Gurov was appointed as the caretaker prime minister in February by President Iliana Lotova.

UN chief strongly condemns attack killing French peacekeeper in Lebanon

UNITED NATIONS

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres strongly condemned the attack that killed one French peacekeeper serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and injured three others earlier in the day, his spokesperson said in a statement. "Attacks on peacekeepers must stop. They are grave violations of international humanitarian law and of Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006) and may amount to war crimes," said the statement, issued by spokesperson Stephane Dujarric.

Guterres reiterated his call on all actors to uphold their obligations under international law, ensure the safety of UN personnel and the inviolability of UN property and assets, and respect UNIFIL's freedom of movement, Xinhua news agency reported quoting the statement.

"All attacks on peacekeepers must be promptly investigated, and those responsible must be effectively prosecuted and held accountable," it said.

The statement noted that according to a UNIFIL initial assessment, the peacekeepers came under fire from non-state actors, presumed to be Hezbollah, while investigating a location where suspected improvised explosive devices had reportedly been placed.

S. Korean President vows to defend democracy

SEOUL

President Lee Jae Myung departed for India on Sunday for a two-nation trip that also includes a visit to Vietnam for summit talks, likely to focus on stabilising supply chains amid global energy market uncertainties stemming from the war in the Middle East.

Lee will arrive in New Delhi later in the day and hold summit talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday. It will mark their third in-person

meeting, following earlier talks on the sidelines of the G7 and G20 summits last year, reports Yonhap news agency.

The summit is expected to focus on expanding economic cooperation in areas such as shipbuilding, maritime industries, artificial intelligence and defence, as well as coordinating responses to energy supply chain uncertainties linked to the Middle East situation, National Security Adviser Wi Sung-lac said on Thursday. He also plans to attend a business forum to explore



new opportunities and support the operations of Korean companies in India, a key production hub and major consumer market for Korean electronics and auto-

makers. Lee is scheduled to head to Hanoi, Vietnam, on Tuesday for a state visit and hold talks on Wednesday with To Lam, Vietnam's president and general secretary of the Communist Party, with cooperation on energy supply chains and critical minerals expected to be high on the agenda.

The visit will make Lee the first foreign leader to travel to Vietnam since To Lam was elected state president earlier this month, consolidating his authority by holding the country's two

most powerful positions. The following day, Lee is set to meet Vietnamese Prime Minister Le Minh Hung, the No. 2 official, and National Assembly Chairman Tran Thanh Man, the No. 3 official, and attend a business forum to explore ways to bolster economic cooperation between the two countries.

In light of the trip, Lee will seek to strengthen strategic cooperation with fast-growing economies and broaden South Korea's diplomatic reach, according to Wi.

Iran says 'progress' in US talks, but 'far from final discussion'

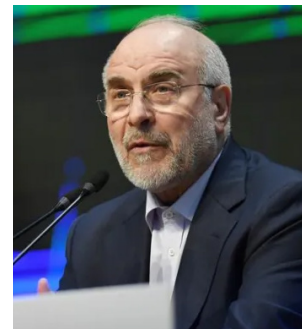
TEHRAN

Iran has indicated that there has been "progress" in its ongoing discussions with the United States, though it stressed that a final agreement is still a long way off, with the current two-week ceasefire due to expire on April 22, according to local media reports on Sunday.

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, said in a televised address on Saturday (local time) that significant differences continue to persist between the two sides.

"There are many gaps and some fundamental points remain," Ghalibaf said, underlining that negotiations have yet to reach a decisive stage.

"We are still far from the final discussion," he added, signalling that while dialogue is ongoing, a comprehensive settlement has not yet been achieved.



Ghalibaf also asserted that Iran had maintained an upper hand during the recent weeks of conflict and suggested that Tehran agreed to the temporary ceasefire only after its conditions were acknowledged by Washington.

"If we accepted the ceasefire, it was because they accepted our demands," he said, referring to the United States.

Emphasising Iran's strategic position, he said the US had failed to accomplish its objectives, while Iran continued to

exercise control over the crucial Strait of Hormuz, a key maritime route for global energy supplies.

"The enemy's every effort was to impose its demands on us, and it is important that we register our rights, so this is where negotiation is a method of struggle," Ghalibaf said.

Meanwhile, Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said that the country is determined to exercise control and supervision over traffic through the Strait of Hormuz until the war is definitively ended and a lasting peace is achieved in the region.

The statement, reported by Iranian media, came after Iran's main military command, Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, announced earlier on Saturday the resumption of strict control over the Strait of Hormuz, citing the continuation of US naval blockade against Iran.

Israel great ally of US; courageous and loyal, unlike others: Trump

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump called Israel a "great ally of the United States of America" and heaped praise on the country for its "courage" and "loyalty" as the conflict with Iran continues to escalate. In a post on his social media platform Truth Social on Saturday (local time), Trump said that Israel has stood by the US in times of conflict, "unlike others," and continues to fight hard.

"Whether people like Israel or not, they have proven to be a great ally of the United States of America. They are courageous, bold, loyal, and smart, and, unlike others that have shown their true colours in a moment of conflict and stress, Israel fights hard, and knows how to win!" Trump said.

These remarks come



a day after the US President warned Israel against bombing Lebanon and had said, "Enough is enough."

Meanwhile, Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said that the country is determined to exercise control and supervision over traffic through the Strait of Hormuz until the war is definitively ended and a lasting peace is

achieved in the region. The statement, reported by Iranian media, came after Iran's main military command, Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, announced earlier on Saturday the resumption of strict control over the Strait of Hormuz, citing the continuation of US naval blockade against Iran.

The SNSC said it will control the strait by demanding vessel information, issuing passage permits, charging fees for security and environmental services, and directing traffic according to its regulations and wartime protocols, Xinhua news agency reported.

"By the time the enemy seeks to cause disruption to the vessels' transit through the strait and resorts to methods such as imposing a naval blockade, which will be considered as violations of the (current two-week) ceasefire, the country will prevent the conditional and restricted reopening of the Strait of Hormuz," it said.

The SNSC noted that a major part of the equipment for US bases in West Asia is supplied via the Strait of Hormuz, which it said poses a threat to Iranian and regional security.

Rajnath Singh to visit Germany next week to discuss strengthening defence cooperation

NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will travel to Germany for an official visit from April 21-23 to further strengthen the defence partnership between the two nations. During his visit, Rajnath Singh is set to hold talks with his German counterpart, Boris Pistorius, and other senior leaders of the government.

Discussions will focus on increasing defence industrial collaboration, strengthening military-to-military engagements and exploring opportunities in emerging sectors like cyber security, artificial intelligence, and drones, according to a statement released by the Ministry of Defence.

A Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap and Implementing Arrangement for Cooperation in UN Peacekeeping Operations Training are likely to be signed in the presence of both ministers.

"The visit will provide an op-



portunity to review the ongoing defence cooperation initiatives and identify new avenues for collaboration between the defence industries of both countries. Shri Rajnath Singh is also expected to interact with key representatives of the German defence industry, with a view to promoting joint development and co-production under the Make-in-India initiative," the Ministry of Defence stated in a release.

The last visit to Germany by any Indian Defence Minister was in 2019, when then-Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman visited the European nation. Boris Pistorius trav-

elled to India in June 2023 and held talks with Rajnath Singh.

"India and Germany share a strong & multifaceted strategic partnership, anchored in democratic values, the rule of law, and a shared commitment to a rule-based international order. Defence and security cooperation has emerged as an important pillar of this partnership in recent years. The objective of the visit is to further deepen bilateral ties and contribute to regional and global peace, stability, and prosperity," the Ministry of Defence stated in a release.

On April 14, India and Germany held Foreign Office Consultations in Berlin and agreed to further deepen and diversify cooperation in areas of contemporary relevance, including critical and emerging technologies, defence, industrial collaboration, digital governance, renewable energy, green hydrogen, innovation, and development cooperation in third countries.

VP Radhakrishnan meets Sri Lankan President Dissanayake, focus on strengthening ties

NEW DELHI

Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan called on Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo on Sunday, with discussions held on strengthening bilateral and cultural ties between the two nations. During the meeting, Radhakrishnan reaffirmed India's commitment to the Neighbourhood Policy and further strengthening cooperation between India and Sri Lanka for the benefit of people of two nations.

In a post on X, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated, "Vice President Shri. C.P. Radhakrishnan called on President Anura Kumara Dissanayake of Sri Lanka at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo today. They held productive discussions on further deepening the multifaceted India-Sri Lanka ties, rooted



in shared history and cultural values."

"Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan reaffirmed India's commitment to the Neighbourhood First policy and to further strengthen our cooperation for the benefit of both nations. The discussions also focused on various initiatives including the Indian Housing Project and projects being implemented under the USD 450 mn package for areas affected by Cyclone Ditwah in Sri Lanka," he added.

Earlier in the day, the Vice President arrived in Colombo on Sunday for a two-day official visit to Sri Lanka.

This visit underscores the growing momentum in diplomatic engagement between the neighbours. The Vice President was accorded a warm welcome upon his arrival in the Lankan capital with a traditional Kandyan dance performance.

The visit is notable as the first bilateral official trip by an Indian Vice President to Sri Lanka. This visit will focus on

strengthening the civilisational and people-to-people ties between the two nations.

During the visit, VP Radhakrishnan is scheduled to hold discussions with Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya. His engagements will also include interactions with leaders of the Indian-origin Tamil community and Tamil representatives from the Northern and Eastern regions of the island nation.

The Vice President will also address members of the Indian diaspora at a community event in Colombo. At the event, he will virtually hand over houses to beneficiaries from Tamil communities constructed under the third phase of the Indian Housing Project. With this phase, the total number of houses built for Tamil communities will reach 50,000, while an additional 10,000 houses are currently being developed under the initiative's fourth phase.

Pakistan: Security beefed up in Rawalpindi as talks expected between US, Iran

ISLAMABAD

Security has been beefed up in Pakistan's Rawalpindi with the deployment of more than 10,000 police personnel as the second round of talks between the US and Iran are expected to be held in Islamabad, local media reported on Sunday. A police spokesperson said over 10,000 officers and personnel of Rawalpindi police were doing security duties while more than 600 special pickets were monitoring the entry and exit points of the city. Furthermore, additional security personnel have been deployed on highways, Pakistan's leading daily Dawn reported. As many as 400 elite commandos, including 100 snipers, will be part of the security during the arrival and departure of the foreign dignitaries.

EESL Charts National Roadmap for MSME Decarbonisation; Economic Sustainability

VIJAYAWADA, APRIL 19:

Building on the success of flagship Government of India programmes such as UJALA, the Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP), distributed solar, and smart metering, Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) under the Ministry of Power is set to unveil a comprehensive national roadmap to accelerate the adoption of advanced, energy-efficient technologies among Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The proposed roadmap aims to transform MSMEs—long seen as energy- and carbon-intensive—into engines of sustainable industrial growth through scalable solutions, innovative financing models, and global technology integration. At the heart of this national push, Andhra Pradesh is positioning itself as a frontrunner to take stringent steps for adopting advanced technologies. EESL has prepared a dedicated blueprint for the State envisioning it as a key driver in India's industrial decarbonisation journey while significantly enhancing MSME competitiveness. MSMEs remain central to India's economic growth but account for a substantial share of industrial energy consumption. Recognising this, EESL has evolved

into a key national implementation agency, enabling MSMEs to transition towards low-carbon, energy-efficient operations through a blend of domestic programmes, international collaborations, and market-based mechanisms. Aligned with India's Climate Commitments

EESL's MSME initiatives are closely aligned with India's global climate obligations, including its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, the target of reducing emissions intensity of GDP by 45% by 2030, and the long-term Net Zero goal by 2070.

Through its interventions, EESL is driving:

- Reduction in industrial energy consumption
- Lower carbon emissions across MSME clusters
- Demand-side energy management
- Integration of cleaner and advanced technologies.

Given the scale of MSMEs, these interventions offer one of the most cost-effective pathways to achieve large-scale emissions reduction.

Integrated Programme Architecture

Maximise Energy Savings.. Boost Economic Gains.. Cut GHG Emissions.. State Partnerships to Strengthen MSMEs. Several Key Industrial States to Benefit.. EESL Prepares Exclusive Blueprint for AP MSMEs.. Centre-State Synergy Boosts MSMEs.. Naidu Pushes Global Tech for MSMEs.

Andhra Pradesh emerges as a front runner State in adopting advanced technologies for large scale implementation... Dr. Yuvaraj Principal secretary, Industries



EESL's strategy combines multiple national and international initiatives into a cohesive implementation framework:

- UNIDO-GEF-EESL Programme: Demonstrates low-carbon technologies and facilitates technology transfer and climate finance
- BEE-EESL MSME Initiatives: Strengthen institutional capacity and build a sustainable energy-efficiency ecosystem
- ADEETIE Scheme. Bureau of Energy Efficiency Under Ministry of Power Provides financial incentives to accelerate adoption of energy efficient technologies
- ESCO-Based Deployment Model: Enables market-driven implementation without long-term subsidy dependence
- State Partnerships: Ensure alignment with local industrial policies.

EESL's implementation model hinges on strong collaboration with state governments, which play a crucial role in identifying MSME clusters, mobilising stakeholders, and aligning initiatives with regional industrial strategies.

The programme has already seen success across key industrial states including Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka—each demonstrating measurable gains in energy efficiency and emissions reduction.

Measurable Impact

- Energy savings: 20-30%
 - Significant CO₂ emission reductions
 - Improved grid stability through peak demand reduction
- Beyond environmental gains, MSMEs have reported reduced operational costs, enhanced productivity, improved export competitiveness, and better working conditions—translating into broader socio-economic benefits.

Andhra Pradesh Sets the Benchmark

In a significant development, Andhra Pradesh has emerged as a model state in this transition. A landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the State and EESL during the CII Global Summit in Visakhapatnam, in the presence of In-

dustries Minister Kondapally Srinivas, is being seen as a structured and replicable framework for nationwide adoption. "This initiative marks a paradigm shift—from isolated interventions to a comprehensive MSME enablement model," said Akhilesh Kumar Dixit, CEO, EESL. The blueprint, soon to be submitted to the State Industries Department, aligns with Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's vision of leveraging advanced technologies to drive economic growth, generate employment, and promote environmental sustainability. Dr. Yuva Raj Principal secretary, Industries department welcomed the initiative, reiterating the government's commitment to positioning Andhra Pradesh as a preferred global destination for investment and technology-led industrial development. He also acknowledged the efforts of M.Viswa CEO of MSME Development Corporation in facilitating Central Government support through the Ministry of MSME for implementing energy-efficiency programmes across key industrial clusters in the State.

The Ageless Glow Secret Even Middle-Class Indians Are Discovering

VIVEK SHUKLA

Imagine turning back the clock on your face — not with heavy makeup or filters, but with a refreshed, confident version of yourself that still looks unmistakably you. International icons like Cindy Crawford, Nicole Kidman, and Kim Kardashian have long captivated the world with their seemingly ageless glow. In Bollywood and beyond, many stars maintain that radiant, youthful edge that defies time.

Of course, they look so young with glow in their face thanks to Deep Plane Facelift Surgery. Well, now this surgery is not confined to big time stars only. Even middle class Indians too are consulting specialists for this surgery. In Delhi-NCR and across India, this time-tested procedure is gaining popularity among men and women aged 40 to 65. It delivers subtle, natural-looking rejuvenation rather than a dramatic appearance. Leading the way is Dr. Prateek Sharma, an AIIMS alumnus Delhi-based facial plastic surgeon working at Eveite aesthetics who has pioneered this technique in India told in an interview that his focus on lifting the deeper facial layers offers longer-lasting results and a more harmonious outcome than traditional methods. "It's not just about erasing wrinkles — it's about restoring self-assurance and helping people face the world with renewed vitality," he informs.

What Exactly Is a Deep Plane Facelift?

Unlike conventional facelifts that primarily tighten the skin's surface, a Deep Plane Facelift goes deeper. It targets the underlying muscles, fat pads, and connective tissues that sag with age.

The surgeon carefully releases these structures and repositions them as a single unit, lifting the mid-face, jawline, cheeks, and neck together. This creates smoother contours, reduces deep folds like nasolabial lines, and restores youthful volume — all without the tight, pulled look associated with older techniques. The result? A face that moves naturally, expresses emotions freely, and simply appears refreshed and revitalized, as if you've had a long, restful vacation.

Why Deep Plane Stands Out

According to Dr. Prateek Sharma, the real magic lies in its authenticity: "By working on the deeper plane, we achieve a lift that respects the face's natural anatomy. Patients don't look 'operated on' — they look like a younger, more vibrant version of themselves."

Dr. Shreya Garg, another AIIMS Alumnus and experienced facial plastic and ENT surgeon working for Aloysieveite aesthetics notes that this procedure has broken barriers. Once seen as a luxury for the elite, it's now sought after by women (and men) from diverse backgrounds, including lower middle-class families. The appeal? Subtle yet transformative changes that boost confidence without announcing themselves.

Who Is Choosing It?

Women in their mid-30s to mid-50s still form the core group, but men are increasingly joining in. In today's image-conscious world, both genders value a sharp jawline, defined contours, and a professional, energetic appearance.

Dr. Sharma observes a steady rise in consultations from all walks of life. People no longer view cosmetic surgery as vanity — they see it as an investment in self-image, career presence, and overall well-being. Aging affects everyone; this procedure helps level the playing field.

The Standout Benefits

Long-Lasting Results: Because it addresses the structural causes of aging, results typically endure 10 to 15 years or more — significantly longer than traditional facelifts. You continue aging gracefully, but from a much younger starting point.

Incredibly Natural Appearance: No wind-tunnel tightness. The face retains its unique character, expressions, and movement.

Minimal, Well-Hidden Scarring: Incisions are placed discreetly along the hairline and behind the ears. With time and proper care, scars become nearly invisible.

Reasonable Recovery: Most patients return to social activities and daily routines within 2 to 3 weeks, though full settling of results continues over a few months. Swelling and bruising are manageable with good aftercare.

Psychological Boost: Beyond the mirror, many patients report higher self-esteem, improved social interactions, and even new opportunities. Looking refreshed often translates into feeling empowered.

One patient, Sunanda Bhatia (name changed), shared how the procedure gave her a natural lift that enhanced her confidence without changing her identity.

Internationally acclaimed for its effectiveness, Deep Plane Facelift is also making waves in India. While Bollywood celebrities rarely disclose specifics, the pressure of constant public scrutiny makes such advanced techniques increasingly relevant in the entertainment industry.

A Modern Path to Confidence

Deep Plane Facelift Surgery represents a thoughtful evolution in facial rejuvenation — effective, natural, and increasingly accessible. In Delhi and beyond, it's empowering people from all backgrounds to embrace aging on their own terms while looking and feeling their best.

If you're considering a subtle yet powerful transformation, consult an experienced specialist who can help you understand if this is the right step for your unique goals. After all, true beauty isn't about fighting time — it's about aging with grace, confidence, and authenticity.



NLC India CMD Shri Prasanna Kumar Motupalli Conferred "Pride of Telangana" Award

HYDERABAD, APRIL 19, 2026:



Prasanna Kumar Motupalli, Chairman and Managing Director, NLC India Limited (NLCIL), has been conferred the prestigious "Pride of Telangana" Award at the 4th Telangana Public Relations Conference & National Public Relations Day Celebrations, organised by the Public Relations Society of India (PRSI), Hyderabad Chapter, at Hyderabad today. The award was presented by Shri K. Sreenivas Reddy, Chairman, Media Academy of Telangana; Smt. Ch. Priyanka, IAS, Special Commissioner, Information & Public Relations Department, Government of Telangana; Prof. K. Nageswar, noted academican and former MLC in the presence of distinguished dignitaries. A native of Bhadrachalam, Telangana, Shri Motupalli expressed happiness on receiving the honour in his home State. The award recognises his exemplary leadership, outstanding contributions to the energy sector, and relentless efforts in steering NLC India Limited towards greater heights of operational excellence, sustainability, innovation, and nation-building. Under the dynamic leadership of Shri Motupalli, NLC India Limited has achieved remarkable milestones in lignite mining, thermal power generation, renewable energy expansion,

and corporate governance. NLC India is presently supplying about 400 MW of power to the two Telugu States, contributing significantly to regional energy security and economic growth. The company has also made notable progress in diversification, capacity expansion, digital transformation, and implementation of people-centric welfare initiatives for employees and surrounding communities. Its consistent performance and commitment to sustainable growth have further strengthened its stature as a leading Navratna Public Sector Enterprise of the country. On the occasion, he appreciated the dedicated efforts of the entire NLC India team and dedicated the award to all employees of NLC India Limited for their commitment and hard work. The recognition as "Pride of Telangana" is a matter of immense pride for the entire NLC India family and reflects the company's continued commitment to excellence and national development

SEIL Energy Wins Prestigious PRSI Award

HYDERABAD, 19 APRIL 2026:



SEIL Energy India Limited, one of the largest independent power producers (IPP) in India, today announced that it has been conferred with the prestigious 'Influencer Campaigns' Award by the Public Relations Society of India (PRSI), Hyderabad Chapter. The award recognises the outstanding contribution of the Company's Corporate Relations Department in conceptualizing and executing effective influencer-led

communication initiatives. On behalf of the Company, Mr. Raji Reddy Kesireddy, Lead, Corporate Relations Department, SEIL Energy India

Limited, received the award from Shri K. Sreenivas Reddy, Hon'ble Chairman, Press Academy of Telangana and Mrs. Ch. Priyanka, IAS, Spl Commissioner, I&PR Dept, Government of Telangana, at the 4th TGPR Conference and National PR Day Celebrations held in Hyderabad. On this occasion, Mr. Janmejaya Mahapatra, CEO - SEIL Energy India Limited, said,

"This award is a proud moment for Team SEIL Energy. It reflects how our Corporate Relations team has innovatively leveraged Media engagement

to build authentic dialogue with our stakeholders and communities. I commend the team's strategic thinking and creativity in advancing SEIL Energy's commitment to transparent, two-way communication. This recognition from PRSI motivates us to keep raising the bar."

The 'Influencer Campaigns' category at PRSI honours organizations that demonstrate excellence in leveraging credible voices and digital platforms to drive meaningful engagement, trust, and reputation impact.

India's crude oil imports declined nearly 17% in March, says data

Amidst India's push for piped gas, LNG imports increased 20.5% in March. In the first full month of the lasting West Asia crisis, India's crude oil imports declined 17% on a year-over-year basis in March this year, according to provisional data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC).

As a result of the lower, New Delhi spent about 4.9% less during the mentioned period on its crude imports. Although, the net import bill for oil and gas



combined stayed nearly flat during the mentioned period at \$11 billion, marginally down from \$11.3 billion in the comparable period last year. Further, amidst India's push for piped natural gas (PNG) to alleviate some pressure of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) spurred more than 20%. **Crude import volume,**

bill lower The provisional government holds that India imported 18.9 million metric tonnes (MMT) of crude oil in March this year. This was lower than 22.8 MMT in the comparable period last year. It spent \$11.7 billion during the mentioned period, as compared to \$12.3 billion in the year-ago period. Further, indicative of price pressure amidst the escalating tensions and their impact on energy routes, India's basket crude price averaged \$113.49 for every barrel in March. The same averaged \$69.01 for every

barrel in February. **Rise in natural gas consumption** Further, according to the provisional data from the govt, India's total natural gas consumption rose 7.2% to 5,727 million metric standard cubic metre (MMSCM) on a year-over-year basis in March. However, essential to note, PPAC cautioning about provisional figures, held the actual import figures of liquefied natural gas (LNG) could be lower because of the West Asia conflict, thus lowering the figure for consumption as well.

Ships Return After Hormuz Attempt

Sanmar Herald, fired at by Iranian forces, was among some seven Indian-flagged vessels that sought to cross the Strait of Hormuz on Friday-Saturday (April 17-18, 2026) and returned to the Persian Gulf, as per marinetraffic.com. Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) crude oil tanker Dush Garima, which went to Persian Gulf for drydock repairs, exited the strait, as per the tracker site. Sanmar Herald, owned by Sanmar Shipping and chartered by IOC, was carrying some 2 million barrels crude. It had gone farthest into the strait and crossed Larak Island too. Sanmar Group told The Hindu that Sanmar Herald suffered no damage.

Sri Sri Holistic Hospitals Launches 24x7 Chest Pain & Stroke Hotline and Emergency Ambulance Services

HYDERABAD, APRIL 18:

Sri Sri Holistic Hospitals, Kondapur, in collaboration with RED Ambulance Services, has launched 24x7 Emergency Ambulance Services along with a dedicated 24x7 Chest Pain & Stroke Hotline, aimed at strengthening emergency medical response and saving critical time during life-threatening situations. The initiative was formally inaugurated today in the presence of Dr. M. Ramesh, IPS, Commissioner of Police, Cyberabad, along with distinguished guests Dr. Soumya Mishra, IPS, Director General of Prisons & Correctional Services, Telangana, and Shri Venkat Changavalli, CEO, Insurance Information Bureau of India and former CEO of EMRI & 108 Services.



This initiative focuses on ensuring faster on-ground emergency response, seamless patient transport, and immediate access to expert medical guidance during critical cardiac and stroke events.

A key highlight of the launch is the introduction of a 24x7 Chest Pain & Stroke Hotline (888 6666 108), which en-

ables patients and caregivers to connect instantly with specialists through video consultation. The service is designed to provide:

- Immediate medical advice
- Early risk assessment
- Timely identification of cardiac and stroke emergencies
- Faster decision-making and hospital access

Medical experts emphasized that in emergencies such as heart attacks and strokes, every second plays a crucial role, and early intervention can significantly reduce complications and improve survival outcomes. As part of the program, leading specialists including Dr. Sravan and Dr. Neelesh (Interventional Cardiologists), Dr. Manoj (Interventional Neurologist), and Dr. Mythri (Neuro Physician) shared insights on the importance of timely medical response and the role of integrated emergency systems.

In addition, the hospital also introduced Evening Clinics and Sunday Clinics, enhancing accessibility to quality healthcare for patients with busy schedules.

Speaking on the occasion, the dignitaries appreciated the hospital's efforts in bridging critical gaps in emergency care and emphasized the importance of coordinated systems that enable faster response and improved patient outcomes.

The leadership team of Sri Sri Holistic Hospitals, including Prof. Dr. V. S. Ramchandra (Chairman & Chief of Cardiology & Electrophysiology), Dr. Tushara Aluri (Managing Director), and other senior officials, reiterated their commitment to advancing patient-centric and technology-driven healthcare services.



Beyond the Resume

The Rise of the Proof Portfolio in the Modern Economy

The traditional resume is dying. For decades, a two-page summary of bullet points and bolded job titles was the gold standard for job seekers. It was the gatekeeper of the professional world—a tidy list of promises. But in today's hyper-competitive, globalized, and AI-driven job market, "promises" are no longer enough. Employers are no longer asking, "What have you done?" They are asking, "Show me what you can do right now."

Enter the Proof Portfolio.

A proof portfolio is more than a creative gallery for designers or a GitHub repository for coders. It is a strategic, evidence-based collection of a professional's best work, designed to validate skills, quantify impact, and provide a narrative of competence. Whether you are an accountant, a project manager, a teacher, or a

sales executive, the proof portfolio has become the most critical tool for surviving and thriving in a cut-throat employment landscape.

The Necessity: Why the Resume is No Longer Sufficient

The modern job market is defined by three distinct pressures that have rendered the standard CV insufficient: Information Overload, The Skill-Verification Gap, and the AI Filter.



1. Combating Information Overload

Hiring managers often receive hundreds, sometimes thousands, of applications for a single remote role. In this sea of digital paper, every candidate claims to be a "strategic thinker," a "team player," and "proficient in Excel." When everyone uses the same buzzwords, the words lose their value. A proof portfolio breaks through this noise by replacing adjectives with evidence. It moves the conversation from "I am capable" to "Here is the result of my capability."

2. Closing the Skill-Verification Gap

Degree inflation and the rise of short-term certifications have made it difficult for employers to judge actual proficiency. A certificate in Data Science doesn't prove a candidate can handle a messy, real-world dataset. A proof portfolio bridges this gap. By showcasing a specific project—complete with the problem statement, the process, and the final outcome—the candidate provides an immediate "test drive" of their skills.

3. Humanizing the AI Filter

Most large companies use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to scan resumes for keywords. While necessary for efficiency, these systems strip away personality. A portfolio linked in a resume provides the human touch that the ATS lacks. Once a human recruiter clicks that link, they see the way a candidate thinks, the style of their communication, and the depth of their passion.

Key Features of an Effective Proof Portfolio

1. The "Problem-Action-Result" (PAR) Case Studies

The heart of a proof portfolio is the case study. Instead of just showing a finished spreadsheet or a marketing flyer, the candidate explains: The Problem: What challenge was the company facing? (e.g., "Sales dropped by 15% in Q3.") The Action: What specific steps did you take? (e.g., "I redesigned the lead-nurturing email sequence.") The Result: What was the outcome? (e.g., "Open rates increased by 20%, and sales rebounded by 10% within two months.")

2. Quantifiable Metrics and Data

Proof requires numbers. An effective portfolio uses charts, graphs, and percentages to illustrate growth, savings, or ef-

A high-impact proof portfolio is not just a digital scrapbook; it is a curated professional narrative. To be effective in a cut-throat market, it must contain five essential features:

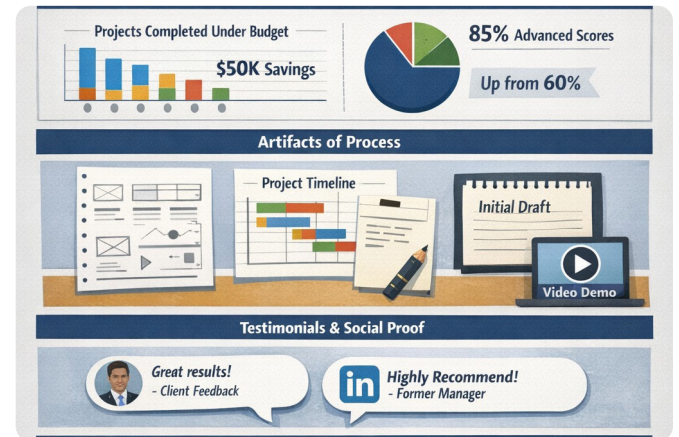
iciency. For a project manager, this might be "Completed 5 projects under budget by a total of \$50,000." For a teacher, it could be "85% of students achieved 'Advanced' status on standardized tests, up from 60% the previous year."

3. Artifacts of Process

Employers are often more interested in how you solve a problem than the solution itself. Including "behind-the-scenes" artifacts—such as rough drafts, wireframes, project timelines, or even a video walkthrough of a complex software setup—demonstrates your methodology and work ethic.

4. Testimonials and Social Proof

A proof portfolio is the perfect place to house "micro-testimonials." Snippets from LinkedIn



recommendations, emails from happy clients, or praise from a former supervisor add a layer of third-party validation that a resume cannot accommodate.

5. Technical Stacks and Tool Proficiency

Rather than just listing "Python"

or "Salesforce" in a skills section, the portfolio shows these tools in action. Seeing a screenshot of a customized CRM dashboard or a snippet of clean, commented code proves the candidate isn't just familiar with the tool but is a master of it.

In a market where the competition is global and the stakes are high, the proof portfolio offers several psychological and practical advantages.

1. Immediate Credibility and Trust

Trust is the most expensive commodity in hiring. A recruiter is taking a risk every time they hire someone. A proof portfolio drastically reduces that perceived risk. By providing tangible evi-

dence, you move from being a "risky prospect" to a "proven asset."

2. Command of the Interview

A portfolio changes the dynamic of the job interview. Instead of being grilled with hypothetical "What would you do if..." questions, the candidate can guide the interviewer through the portfolio. "Actually, I faced a similar situation last year; let me show you on page four of my portfolio how I handled it."

The Advantages: Winning the "Cut-Throat" Race

This shifts the candidate from a passive interviewee to a collaborative expert.

3. Justification for Higher Compensation

When you can prove that you saved a previous employer \$100,000 or generated 500 new leads, you are no longer negotiating for a "salary range"—you are negotiating for a "return on investment." Evidence of impact provides

the leverage needed to demand the top end of a salary bracket.

4. Versatility Across Industries

While portfolios were once the domain of "creatives," they are now vital for "analytics." For Sales: Proof of hit rates, territories expanded, and client retention charts. For Operations: Process

flowcharts, efficiency reports, and cost-reduction audits.

For HR: Employee engagement data, training manuals developed, and turnover reduction stats.

Constructing the Portfolio: A Modern Blueprint

Building a proof portfolio does not require advanced web development skills. In 2026, the tools are more ac-

cessible than ever.

Select the Platform

Use personal websites (Squarespace, Wix), professional platforms (LinkedIn's Featured section, Behance), or even a clean, hyperlinked PDF or Notion page.

Curate, Don't Dump

Quality beats quantity. Choose 3 to 5 projects that represent the pinnacle of your work and align with the

jobs you are targeting.

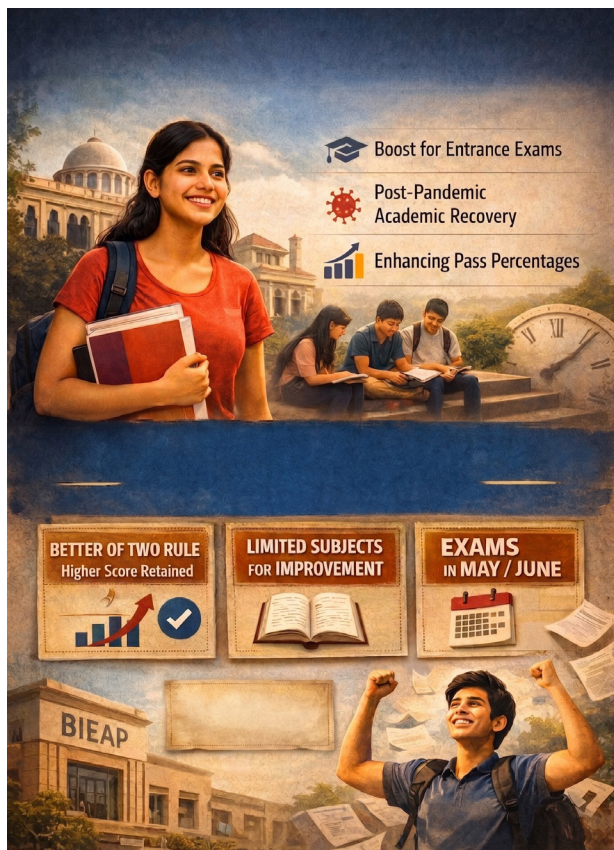
Ensure Accessibility:

Make sure the link works, the files load quickly, and the language is free of dense corporate jargon. It should be "skimmable" for a busy recruiter but "deep" for a technical lead.

The Evidence-Based Future

The shift toward proof portfolios is a reflection of a broader trend in the global economy: the move toward competency-based hiring. As AI be-

comes more capable of generating "perfect" resumes and cover letters, the only thing that will distinguish a human candidate is their unique, documented history of making an impact. In the cut-throat job market of 2026, your resume might get you noticed, but your proof portfolio will get you hired. It is the definitive bridge between who you say you are and what you can truly deliver. Stop telling the world you're a great worker—show them the proof.



Second Chances and Rising Percentages

AP Inter Board's Historic Decision on Second-Year Improvements

In a significant move that has sent waves of relief and excitement across the student community in Andhra Pradesh, the Board of Intermediate Education (BIEAP) has officially announced a landmark shift in its examination policy. For the first time in recent years, the board has decided to allow Senior Intermediate (Second Year) students to appear for Improvement Examinations, a privilege previously reserved almost exclusively for First-Year students. This decision marks a pivotal moment for thousands of students aiming for top-tier national universities, where every percentage point can be the difference between an admission letter and a rejection.

The Shift in Policy: Breaking the Tradition

Historically, the "Improvement" system in Andhra Pradesh allowed students who passed their First-Year exams to retake papers to better their scores. However, once a student reached the Second Year and completed their final board exams, the marks were traditionally considered "final" for that academic cycle, unless the student opted to fail the exam and retake it entirely as a private candidate. Under the new directive, students who have successfully passed their Second-Year Intermediate exams can now re-appear for specific subjects to enhance their cumulative percentage.

The Necessity: Why Now?

The board's decision is not merely a bureaucratic adjustment; it is a response to the evolving competitive landscape of Indian higher education.

1. Competitive Edge for National Entrance Exams

Many national-level institutes, including certain IITs, NITs, and central universities, factor in "Top 20 Percentile" scores or specific board weightage during the admission process. By allowing Second-Year improvements, the AP Inter Board is ensuring that its students are not at a disadvantage compared to boards like the CBSE, which offer similar flexibility.

2. Post-Pandemic Academic Recovery

Educators have noted that the current batches of students have faced unprecedented academic disruptions. This "Improvement" window serves as a safety net for students who may have underperformed due to health issues, stress, or the transition back to offline learning environments.

3. Boosting the State's Overall Pass Quality

By encouraging students to strive for higher scores, the state effectively raises the quality of its human capital, making AP students more competitive in the global job market.

How the Improvement System Works

To maintain the integrity of the examination process, the BIEAP has outlined specific guidelines for the Second-Year Improvement exams:

The "Better of Two" Rule: In a student-friendly move, the board has clarified that if a student scores lower in the improvement exam than in the original main exam, the higher of the two marks will be retained in the final marks memo. **Subject Limitation:** While students are given flexibility, there is typically a cap on the number of subjects they can choose for improvement to ensure the supplementary schedule remains manageable.

Timeline: These exams are scheduled to be conducted alongside the Advanced Supplementary Examinations, usually held in the months of May or June.

Reactions from the Ground The announcement has been met with widespread applause from parents and educators alike.

"This is a dream come true for my daughter," says Srinivas Rao, a parent from Guntur. "She missed her 95% target by just a few marks in Physics. Earlier, we had no choice but to accept it. Now, she has a shot at correcting that score and aiming for a better engineering college." Career counselors also highlight that this move will significantly reduce student stress. The knowledge that a single bad day in the examination hall doesn't define one's entire academic future provides a much-needed psychological cushion.

The Road Ahead

While the decision is a win for students, it poses a logistical challenge for the BIEAP. Conducting improvement exams for both First and Second-Year students simultaneously requires a massive scale-up in invigilation, paper setting, and evaluation centers. However, board officials have expressed confidence in their digital evaluation systems and streamlined logistics to handle the increased volume.



Careers in Uniform

Indian Army and Navy Recruitment Notifications Released

As of mid-April 2026, the Indian Armed Forces have opened several high-priority recruitment windows. This year marks a significant shift toward technical integration and specialized roles, reflecting the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiative in defense manufacturing and operations. Below is a detailed breakdown of the current active notifications for the Indian Army and the Indian Navy.

I. Indian Army: Active Notifications

Technical Graduate Course (TGC-143) The Army has invited applications from unmarried male Engineering graduates for the 143rd Technical Graduate Course at the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Dehradun. **Eligible Streams:** Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Computer Science, and Electronics. **Age Limit:** 20 to 27 years.

Key Feature: This is a Permanent Commission entry. It is ideal for those looking to contribute to the Army's engineering and logistics wings.

Agniveer Recruitment Rally (Phase II)

Following the completion of the online Common Entrance Exam (CEE) earlier this year, recruitment rallies are now being scheduled across various Zonal Recruiting Offices (ZROs) for April and May 2026.

Categories: Agniveer (General Duty), Agniveer (Technical), Agniveer (Clerk/Store Keeper), and Agniveer (Tradesmen). **Selection Process:** Physical Fitness Test (PFT), Physical Measurement Test (PMT), and Medical Examination.

Short Service Commission (SSC) Tech - Men & Women

Applications are currently being processed for the SSC (Tech) entries. This is one of the primary routes for women engineers to join the Indian Army. **Tenure:** 10 years (extendable to 14 years). **Training:** Officers Training Academy (OTA), Chennai.

II. Indian Navy: Active Notifications

Executive and Technical Branch (Short Service Commission) The Navy has released a major notification for various branches under the SSC entry for the Jan 2027 course. **Executive Branches:** General Service (GS), Hydrography, Pilot, and Naval Air Operations Officer. **Technical Branches:** Engineering Branch (General Service), Electrical Branch (General Service), and Naval Architecture. **Education:** B.E./B.Tech with minimum 60% marks.

Sailor Entry - Agniveer (SSR & MR) 01/2026 Batch

The recruitment for Senior Secondary Recruits (SSR) and Matric

Recruits (MR) is in its final merit-listing stage, but fresh notifications for the 02/2026 batch are expected by late April.

SSR Qualification: 10+2 with Maths & Physics. **MR Qualification:** 10th Standard pass.

Location: Training at INS Chilka, Odisha.

Permanent Commission (PC) - Education & Logistics

A focused notification for the Education and Logistics branches has been released for post-graduates and MBA holders. **Logistics:** Requires BE/B.Tech or MBA/MCA/M.Com. **Education:** Requires M.Sc in Physics/Maths/Operational Research or MA in English/History.

Important Instructions for Applicants

- Official Portals Only: Candidates should only apply through the official websites:
- Army: joinindianarmy.nic.in
- Navy: joinindiannavy.gov.in
- Ensure you meet the height, weight, and vision standards specific to the branch you are applying for (e.g., Pilot entries have stricter vision requirements).
- It is now mandatory for all recruitment profiles to be linked with a functional Aadhaar number for identity verification during the CEE and SSB interviews.
- With the increasing focus on the SSB (Services Selection Board) interview, candidates are advised to begin their personality development and psychological preparation alongside their physical training. The 5-day SSB process remains the ultimate decider for officer-level entries.



2ND WT20I



Shafali promises India will 'come back harder' after defeat



DURBAN: India opener Shafali Verma expressed regret over a mistimed shot that ended her stay at the crease at 57, but insisted that the team remains united and vowed the visitors will 'come back harder' after suffering an eight-wicket defeat to South Africa in second T20I. Despite scoring a fluent 57, Shafali's dismissal saw India lose their way and were eventually bowled out for a below-par 147, which South Africa chased it down with eight wickets to spare. "In the beginning, I got a very good start. Then I was just thinking to go for shots down the ground, take one run at a time, and then whenever I will get a loose ball, I will go for that.

CRICKET

'I am playing for my country': Rashid Khan



NEW DELHI: Rashid Khan has shared that he turned down offers of citizenship from both India and Australia. He chose to stay committed to representing Afghanistan. The star leg-spinner revealed this in his book, Rashid Khan: From Streets to Stardom. He recounted an incident from the 2023 IPL season. A team official told him that a "senior figure" from Indian cricket wanted to meet him. Rashid remembered the conversation. He said, "I went over and greeted him. We started talking, and he said: 'The situation in your country (Afghanistan) is very bad. Come stay in India. We will give you Indian documents, live here, play cricket here.' I was surprised by what he was saying and didn't know how to respond.

RACING

Kadur, Ramaswamy win APRC Round 2 and INRC opener



CHENNAI: Karna Kadur of Bengaluru, along with co-driver Kumar Ramaswamy from Coimbatore of Arka Motorsports, overcame a turbo failure to win the 49th South India Rally at the Madras International Circuit on Sunday. The event was organized by the Madras Motor Sports Club. His main competitor, Gaurav Gill, retired due to a mechanical issue. Kadur, 37, dominated the weekend with blistering speed, matching the intense heat as he surged through the FIA Asia-Pacific Rally Championship powered by Vamcy Merla and the FMSCI Indian National Rally Championship. His performance once again highlighted his undeniable talent. Hyderabad's Jeet Jhabkarg and co-driver Musa Sherif from Kasargod finished second in the APRC.

Arya, Connolly, bowlers help PBKS extend unbeaten run with 54-run win over LSG

NEW CHANDIGARH

Blazing half-centuries from opener Priyansh Arya (93 off 37 balls) and Australian southpaw Cooper Connolly (87 off 46 balls), followed by a clinical bowling performance, powered Punjab Kings to a clinical 54-run victory over Lucknow Super Giants in their IPL 2026 clash on Sunday.

At a packed Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium, PBKS defended a season-high total of 254/7 by restricting LSG to 200/5. With this win, the in-form PBKS extended their unbeaten run to remain at the top of the points table, while LSG slumped to their third straight loss and be at number eight.

Arya and Connolly produced a breathtaking display of modern-day power-hitting while sharing a 182-run second-wicket partnership and shatter LSG's bowling rhythm to post the highest score of this season. With the aim to send every ball past the boundary ropes, Arya hit four boundaries and nine sixes at will, while Connolly matched him step by step by smashing eight fours and seven sixes.

Though they lost wickets at the back end, the Arya-Connolly efforts meant PBKS crossed 250-mark. For LSG, Prince Yadav was the pick of the bowlers with figures of 2-25, while the rest of the bowling attack conceded 226 runs in 16 overs.



Opting to bowl first, veteran Mohammed Shami provided the perfect start by dismissing Prabhsimran Singh for a duck through a wobble seam delivery. But the joy was short-lived as Arya welcomed Mohsin Khan with a massive six over mid-wicket to signal his intent.

While Connolly was initially scratchy, crawling to 19 off 22 balls, Arya kept the momentum high with relentless boundary-hitting to reach his fifty in just 19

deliveries. Connolly eventually found his range to hit a 35-ball fifty.

The duo saved their most brutal assault for Aiden Markram, milking the part-time off-spinner for 32 runs in the 13th over, including five sixes. The breakthrough finally came when Prince induced a top edge from Connolly and end his stay at 87.

Arya looked set for reaching a well-deserved century, but fell seven runs short of it after being caught at long-off by Mitchell

Marsh off Manimaran Siddharth. A brief middle-order wobble saw Shreyas Iyer and Nehal Wadhwa depart in quick succession as LSG began to claw back.

But the momentum stayed with the hosts as Marcus Stoinis (29 off 16 balls) and Shashank Singh (17 off 6 balls) unleashed a late barrage. Shashank took 20 runs off Shami's final over to push the total past the 250-run mark, before Stoinis was eventually run out on the final ball

of the innings. LSG's experiment of getting Ayush Badoni to open with Mitchell Marsh – their third opening pair of the season – began well as they hit 10 boundaries in their opening stand going past fifty. But the 61-run stand wasn't ever enough to set the tone for chasing a tall score – Vyshak broke the stand on the final ball of the powerplay by deceiving Badoni with a slower delivery that was comfortably caught by mid-wicket. Marsh and Pant then tried to inject momentum – with the LSG skipper smoking Jansen for back-to-back sixes. But the introduction of Chahal tightened the screws – with 20 runs coming off overs 9-11, he broke the threatening second-wicket partnership when Marsh dragged a flighted delivery straight to long-on.

Pant continued his solo charge by smashing Chahal for consecutive sixes in the 12th over, but fell for a quick-fire 43 when his attempt to slice a wide yorker from Arshdeep led to him being caught behind, a decision confirmed by UltraEdge.

The chase effectively ended there as Nicholas Pooran's poor run continued when he fell for nine – mistiming a knuckleball from Jansen to long-on. Markram (42) and Mukul Choudhary (21 not out) entertained with a flurry of boundaries and aided by three dropped catches from PBKS fielders in the final three overs, but the result was a foregone conclusion in the hosts favour.

Rinku, Anukul script dramatic turnaround as KKR beat RR by 4 wickets to seal first win



KOLKATA

After a torrid start to their IPL 2026 campaign, Kolkata Knight Riders finally found relief as Rinku Singh and Anukul Roy held their nerve in a tense finish to guide the side to their first win of the season, chasing down a modest target against Rajasthan Royals at Eden Gardens on Sunday. In a chase that began disastrously, KKR were reduced to 2/2 in the first two overs. Jofra Archer struck off the very first ball to remove Tim Seifert, while Nandre Burger followed it up by dismissing skipper Ajinkya Rahane for a second consecutive duck. The early collapse continued to haunt KKR as wickets fell at regular intervals, leaving them reeling at 84 for 5 by the 13th over.

Cameron Green briefly counter-attacked with a brisk 27 off 13 balls, while Rovman Powell added 23, but Rajasthan's spin duo, led by Ravindra Jadeja (2/8), kept the scoring in check through the middle overs. Debutant Yash Raj Punja also made an impact, picking up his maiden IPL wicket and maintaining control after an expensive start. At 97 for 6 in the 15th over, the game seemed to be slipping away from KKR. However, Rinku Singh and Anukul Roy stitched together a match-defining partnership for the seventh wicket, blending caution with calculated aggression. The turning point came in the 16th over when Anukul took on Ravi Bishnoi, smashing a six to inject momentum into the chase. Rinku, who had struggled initially and even survived

a dropped catch, gradually found his rhythm, rotating strike effectively before unleashing boundaries at crucial moments.

With 40 needed off the last four overs, the duo steadily chipped away at the target. Rinku took charge against Jofra Archer in the 17th over, finding gaps and keeping the equation within reach. Anukul complemented him perfectly, including a towering six off Archer in the 18th over that swung the pressure back onto the Royals. Needing 21 off the last two overs, the pair showed composure under pressure. Anukul's smart running and timely hits, combined with Rinku's calculated strokeplay, brought the equation down to nine off the final over.

Facing Brijesh Sharma in the 20th over, Rinku sealed the contest in dramatic fashion. After striking two boundaries early in the over, he brought up his half-century with a top-edged six that sailed over the keeper, sparking wild celebrations at Eden Gardens as KKR completed a memorable win with two balls to spare.

Rinku remained unbeaten, anchoring the chase with a composed unbeaten half-century (53*), while Anukul's valuable cameo (29 not out) provided the perfect support in the closing stages. Earlier, Rajasthan Royals had posted a competitive total on the back of disciplined batting, but KKR's bowlers, especially Varun Chakaravathy, Kartik Tyagi and Sunil Narine, managed to restrict them from posting an imposing score.

2nd WT20I: Tryon, Sekhukhne, Wolvaardt and Luus help SA thrash India by 8 wickets

DURBAN

Chloe Tryon and Tumi Sekhukhne picked three wickets each while skipper Laura Wolvaardt and Sune Luus struck commanding half-centuries each as a clinical South Africa Women thrashed a sloppy India by eight wickets and secure a 2-0 lead in the five-match series at Kingsmead on Sunday. From a position of relative comfort at 99/3, India lost their way as the last seven wickets fell for just 33 runs to end at a below-par 147. Shafali Verma, playing her 100th T20I game, hit 57 off 38 balls and was sensational in hitting seven fours and two sixes.

Shafali was the lone bright spot in an otherwise disappointing batting display for India. For South Africa, Tumi and Chloe picked excellent three-fors, and used the slower balls and good length area to great effect.

Chasing a below-par 148, the Proteas openers made a mockery of the Indian attack with a 106-run stand. Laura led from the front by finding gaps with immaculate ease and smashed a 34-ball 54, laced with seven fours and a six, while Luus remained equally effective by hitting 57 off 46 deliveries, studded with six fours and a maximum.

After the duo fell to Shreyanka Pa-



til, Tazmin Brits (20 not out) and Annerie Dercksen (12 not out) wrapped up the proceedings with 17 balls to spare to get a comprehensive win for the Proteas. It also helped that Indian bowlers weren't penetrative enough, gave away too many runs in fielding lapses and middle order collapse meant they failed to capitalise on the good start provided by Shafali Verma's 57.

The chase began with intent as Laura greeted Kranti Gaud with a crisp boundary through backward

point in the opening over. Shreyanka Patil was introduced in the second over but fared no better, as Laura stepped out to drive her through mid-off for another four, before the Proteas captain creamed Kranti Gaud for a boundary.

Sune joined the party in the fourth over, clearing the long-on ropes for the first six of the chase off Shreyanka. By the time the Powerplay concluded, South Africa had raced to 66/0, with Deepti Sharma conceding 12 runs in her opening over.

Olympian Udayan Mane looks for second win

CONGO

Udayan Mane had been eagerly counting down the days since his last professional victory before finally winning the IGPL Invitational South Africa. As he prepared for the third part of the African Swing and the IGPL Invitational Congo, Mane was brimming with confidence and anticipated another great result after finishing T-3 in Mauritius and winning in Joburg.

The IGPL Invitational Congo continues the series of events in Mauritius and Johannesburg, South

Africa. It will take place at the Par-73 Golf Club de Lubumbashi, a renowned eco-friendly golf course in Congo. Mane's victory in Joburg was impressive, finishing seven shots ahead of the experienced and highly regarded Gaganjeet Bhullar. His strong rounds of 65, 64, and 67, totaling 20 under par, the best score in this year's IGPL season, not only ended his title drought but also boosted his confidence. He is now aiming for consecutive wins.

Mane said, "It's been 1,578 days since my last professional win, so this one carry real meaning for me

personally. It is one of the best courses I have played and certainly one I will not forget. We had one of the strongest fields in South Africa, and a golf course that truly tested every part of the game. Conditions were demanding throughout with rain, wind and cold, and we also played two different courses over three days. That required quick adaptation, and at this level, if you don't adjust quickly, performance drops."

"To win overseas is always special. It confirms the ability to perform in any conditions and on different types of golf courses.

'Don't want to make a sweeping statement': Varun downplays 'outside noise'

KOLKATA

Spinner Varun Chakaravathy, who returned to form with a decisive Player of the Match performance in Kolkata Knight Riders' win over Rajasthan Royals, reflected on the challenging period leading up to the game. He stated that bowlers are bound to leak runs if the wicket isn't in their favour and expressed that there was nothing to worry about his form or the 'outside noise.'

Having endured scrutiny since an underwhelming outing in an ICC tournament fixture against South Africa, Varun placed his recent struggles in perspective, insisting that fluctuating returns



are part and parcel of a bowler's journey in modern-day cricket.

"Look, just because I have taken three wickets today, I don't want to make a sweeping statement. That's the nature of the game. Next match, if the wicket has nothing in it, that's going to happen to every spinner. As you can see, initially, every spinner

was travelling. So, that's how it is. Once the pitches start slowing down, that's how we start coming into the game and we start being more effective. So, it's the nature of the game and we can't change it. So, I don't think much about that, Varun told the media at the press conference after the game.

Varun acknowledged that KKR's inconsistent results and external criticism may have influenced the team's approach at times, but stressed that the collective effort eventually paid off.

"Yes, there could be many things because we have not been winning and there is much outside noise which comes and which affects the players.

Geeta Phogat join Fit India Sundays on Cycle women's special edition

NEW DELHI

Geeta Phogat, India's first woman wrestler to win a Commonwealth gold and to qualify for the Olympics, appeared happy as she joined 1000 women at Delhi's Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium. This event was part of a special Fit India Sundays on Cycle initiative, launched by Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

"I wish I cycled more often, I really enjoyed myself today. I was thrilled to see so many young mothers with little children and even elderly women, cycling with me today. Our Prime Minister had started this Fit India initiative and being here today I have realised that it has actually become a People's Movement and people have started taking fitness very seriously," she said.

Women dominated Fit India Sundays with cycles all over the country in



a special edition celebrating women's contributions to a Viksit Bharat. Conducted simultaneously nationwide, the event attracted participation at over 2000 locations, making it one of the largest grassroots fitness efforts under the Fit India campaign. From big

cities to small towns, women gathered in large groups to join cycling rallies and fitness activities, highlighting the significance of health and community involvement.

The flagship event in Delhi featured prominent guests, including sporting

star Geeta Phogat, boxer Saweety Boora, judoka and Roadies finalist Priya Sharma, Fit India Icon Milind Soman, actress and Fit India Champion Ragini Dwivedi, and Ankita Konwar, also a Fit India Champion. Women achievers across the country, including Arjuna awardees, Dronacharya award-winning coaches, political figures, and cultural icons, participated in the event, united in their commitment to fitness and health. Stressing the importance of hosting an edition of Sundays on Cycle for women, Boora said, "A woman is the fulcrum of a family and if she stays healthy and fit, she can not take better care of her entire family and ensure that they remain fit too, but she can also contribute to the nation's growth by participating in the workforce. I am thrilled to see that women are understanding this and taking their fitness seriously."

Vaani Kapoor Brings Coastal Charm to Chic Studio Shoot

In a fresh and vibrant new photo-shoot against a bright lime-green backdrop, Vaani Kapoor exudes effortless charm and confidence. Wearing a figure-hugging off-white slip dress adorned with colourful sea-themed embroidery — including starfish, seashells, and seahorses — with delicate blue trim and tie straps, the actress delivers a sultry yet fresh gaze. The summery ensemble perfectly highlights her graceful style and glowing presence.

Born on August 23, 1988, in Delhi, Vaani Kapoor began her career as a model before making her Bollywood debut with Yash Raj Films' romantic comedy Shuddh Desi Romance (2013) opposite Sushant Singh Rajput and Parineeti Chopra. Her performance earned her the Filmfare Award for Best Female Debut. She followed it with the Tamil remake Aaha Kalyanam (2014) and the Aditya Chopra-directed Befikre (2016) opposite Ranveer Singh.

Vaani gained commercial success with a special appearance in the action blockbuster War (2019) and later appeared in Bell Bottom (2021), Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui (2021)

— where her role as a transgender woman was widely appreciated — and Shamshera (2022). In 2024, she featured in the comedy Khel Mein alongside Akshay Kumar. In 2025, she played Malini Patnaik in the crime thriller Raid 2 opposite Ajay Devgn and made her OTT debut with the Netflix thriller series Mandala Murders, portraying a complex CIB officer.

As of 2026, several of her completed projects await release, including the comedy Abir Gulaal (also known as Aabeer Gulaal), the coming-of-age drama Badtameez Gill (in which she plays the lead), and the social comedy Sarvagunn Sampanna. With her evolving choices from glamorous roles to more layered characters, Vaani Kapoor continues to carve a distinct space in Bollywood.



ALCOHOL TOOK OVER MY LIFE

Janhvi Kapoor has made a candid and personal revelation about her past battle with alcohol addiction, sharing how she worked her way through a difficult phase.

Speaking at an awareness event, she stressed that addiction should be seen as a mental health issue rather than a moral failure.

She urged people not to treat those struggling with substance abuse as criminals, highlighting that stress, anxiety, and emotional pressures often push individuals toward such habits.

Reflecting on her journey, Janhvi said what began as casual drinking slowly turned into dependency. She described alcohol as a "villain" in her life that gradually took control before she realised it. The turning point came when she started waking up with severe hangovers and developed a strong dislike for even the smell of alcohol. That phase forced her to confront the reality of her situation.

She added that addiction feels like living with an unfamiliar presence that affects behaviour and relationships. It made her more withdrawn from friends and family, until she consciously decided to change.

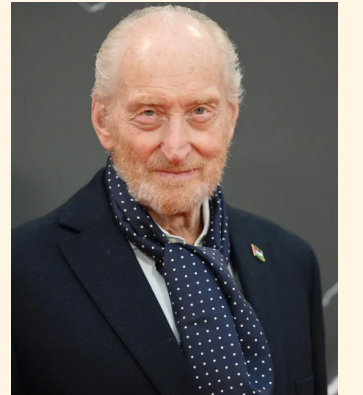
Janhvi emphasised that overcoming addiction requires awareness, effort, and continuous support.

On the work front, she will next be seen alongside Ram Charan in Peddi, directed by Buchi Babu Sana.



Charles Dance in Talks to Join Cast of 'The Batman: Part II'

Veteran actor Charles Dance is reportedly in negotiations to join the cast of The Batman: Part II, further strengthening the sequel's high-profile lineup. According to industry sources, Dance is being considered for the role of the father of Harvey Dent. DC Studios declined to comment on the casting speculation.



The film sees Robert Pattinson reprising his role as the Dark Knight. He is expected to be joined by Sebastian Stan as Harvey Dent and Scarlett Johansson as Dent's wife. Director Matt Reeves returns to helm the project and has co-written the screenplay with Mattson Tomlin. Production is anticipated to begin next month.

Dance is widely recognized for his portrayal of Tywin Lannister in Game of Thrones. His extensive film credits include Alien 3, The Imitation Game, Gosford Park, The First Omen, and The Day of the Jackal. He also appeared in Frankenstein, an Oscar-nominated production released last year.

The original The Batman was a commercial success, earning approximately \$772 million worldwide. Its ensemble cast featured

A sequel was first announced by Warner Bros. during CinemaCon in April 2022. In early 2023, James Gunn and Peter Safran indicated an October 2025 release. However, the timeline was later pushed back, with the film now slated for release on October 1, 2027.



Hombale Films Mahavatar Parashuram

Renowned India's top production house Hombale Films has officially announced its next ambitious venture, Mahavatar Parashuram, marking the auspicious occasion of Parashuram Jayanti. Known for delivering landmark blockbusters like KGF, Kantara, Salaar, and the recent Mahavatar Narasimha, the banner is ready to redefine cinematic scale once again. This massive project is being brought to life in a dynamic association with Kleem Production. Directed by the talented Ashwin Kumar, the film is an exciting new chapter in the highly anticipated Mahavatar Cinematic Universe. The project is beautifully conceived as an animatic cinematic journey that promises a grand and immersive storytelling

experience. It aims to seamlessly blend cutting-edge technology with the rich cultural roots of India, taking the cinematic universe a significant leap forward. The motion poster sends chills through the spine with goosebumps just like Mahavatar Narasimha. The movie is set to be a gigantic celebration of Astha and Dharma in theatres just like Mahavatar Narasimha. The creative team is dedicated to bringing timeless legends inspired by Lord Vishnu to a whole new generation. With anticipation already at its peak across the country, this epic visual treat is scheduled for a worldwide release in December 2027. This announcement is another major milestone in delivering powerful, rooted, and spectacular cinema to the audience.

INDORE TO HOST 9TH PRESTIGE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FROM APRIL 20

BY DR. BHUPENDRA VIKAL

The city of Indore is set to witness a celebration of cinema, creativity and culture as the ninth edition of the Prestige Indore International Film Festival (PIIFF) begins on April 20. The three-day festival, running until April 22, will bring together filmmakers, artists and young talent from across India and abroad.

The grand opening ceremony will take place at the Mehta Auditorium of the Sangeet Kala Academy, with veteran Bollywood actor Anupam Kher inaugu-

rating the festival. A special screening of his film Tanvi The Great will mark the occasion, followed by an "In Conversation" session where Kher will reflect on his acting journey and the evolving landscape of cinema.

A key highlight of the opening day will be a masterclass by noted filmmaker Gajendra Ahire, offering insights into storytelling techniques and the technical aspects of filmmaking.

Dr. Davis Jain, Chairman of the Prestige Education Foundation and Chancellor of PIMR Deemed to be University, described the festival as "a powerful opportunity for learning, dialogue and creative expression." Vice Chancellor Dr. S. S. Bhakar added that the event will feature film screenings, competitions, interactive sessions and digital-age learning experiences.

Creativity Challenge and Star Interactions on April 21

The second day will feature a 48-hour short film-making competition, encouraging young filmmakers to demonstrate creativity and teamwork under time constraints. A curated selection of 15 films will also be screened.

Actor and Member of Parliament Ravi Kishan will participate in an "In Conversation" session, sharing his perspectives on cinema and society. Filmmaker and writer Barnali Ray Shukla will conduct a masterclass on direction, screenwriting

and visual storytelling.

Focus on Digital Creators on Final Day

The concluding day on April 22 will host an influencer meet, bringing together around 30 content creators from Indore and Mumbai. Discussions will center on emerging trends in cinema and social media. Dr. Zuber Khan, Head of Prestige Media, said the initiative aims to connect youth with new opportunities in the digital space, while Colonel S. Raman Iyer, Director of the UG Campus, emphasized cinema's role as a medium for communication, compassion and education.

Bollywood Flavor at Pre-Launch Events

The festival's pre-launch events also reflected strong enthusiasm. Actress Khushboo Atre, known for her role in Criminal Justice Season 4, attended a launch "samroh" as chief guest, energizing students.

A "Bollywood Day" at the UG campus featured dance performances, flash mobs, musical mashups and themed ramp walks, showcasing student and faculty creativity. Awards were presented for standout performances, adding to the festive atmosphere ahead of the main event.



Nadia Farès, Star of 'The Crimson Rivers,' Dies at 57

French actor Nadia Farès has died at the age of 57, her family confirmed. She passed away Sunday after suffering a cardiac arrest.

According to her daughters, Farès had been found unconscious in a swimming pool in Paris last week and had remained in a coma following the incident. Speaking to Agence France-Presse, Cylia and Shana Chasman shared the news in a statement: "France has lost a great artist, but for us, it is above all a mother that we have just lost."

Farès was widely recognized for her role in The Crimson Rivers, which brought her international attention. Over a career spanning more than three decades, she built a diverse filmography across both television and cinema.

She began acting in 1990 with an appearance on the television series Navarro, before making her feature film debut in My Wife's Girlfriends. Her later credits included Tell Me Yes..., War, the Netflix series Marseille, Luther, and Toujours possible.

In 2002, she married producer Steve Chasman and later relocated to the United States in 2009, stepping back from acting for a period. In recent months, she had been preparing to begin work on her first feature film as a director and screenwriter, an action-comedy project in development with TF1 Studio.

Farès is survived by her daughters, Cylia and Shana, who paid tribute to their mother both publicly and on social media, remembering her as a devoted parent and resilient artist.

