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ABHISHEKS 135 BLOWS DELHI AWAY

STADIUM 11

WILL DHANUSH MRUNAL TAKE THIS RISK



BOX-OFFICE 12



Himachal Imposes Steep Pay Cuts on Top Officials Amid Fiscal Strain

Himachal Pradesh is facing a deepening financial crisis, prompting the government to impose temporary salary cuts on its political leadership and senior officials. The six-month austerity measure is aimed at easing pressure on strained state finances.

Chief Minister Sukhinder Singh Sukhu has announced a voluntary 50% cut in his salary. Ministers will take a 30% reduction, while MLAs face a 20% cut. Senior bureaucrats, including IAS, IPS, and IFS officers, will see salary reductions ranging from 20% to 30%.

The government attributes the fiscal stress to the discontinuation of Revenue Deficit Grants worth ₹10,000 crore and GST compensation of ₹13,000 crore from the Centre. The cuts will apply to key officials, including secretaries, department heads, senior police officers, and forest officials.

While the government says the move is necessary for financial stability and self-reliance by 2027, it has sparked concern among bureaucrats and criticism from the Opposition, who warn of rising debt and a potential financial emergency.

SHIMLA

Jagtial Rally a 'Grand Success': Jeevan Reddy

Hyderabad/Jagtial, April 21: Former minister T. Jeevan Reddy on Tuesday hailed BRS chief K. Chandrashekar Rao's public meeting in Jagtial as a "massive success", likening it to the spirit of the Telangana movement. He claimed the gathering reflected a growing public desire for political change.

Launching a sharp attack on Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Jeevan Reddy accused the Congress government of failing to deliver on key promises, including alleged delays in the Rythu Bandhu scheme and the Rs.2,500 monthly assistance to women. He further alleged neglect of the education sector, stating that no review meetings had been conducted so far.

The BRS leader criticized the CM's rhetoric as "undignified" and claimed it stemmed from an inability to accept KCR's continued popularity. He also accused the Congress

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

TGSRTC Strike from Midnight as Govt Talks Fail

The JAC demanded immediate implementation of promises made to RTC workers, including merger of the corporation with the state government, provision of government pay scales and job security to staff, starting recruitments, conduct of union elections, and handing over of electric buses to RTC.



HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

Statewide bus services operated by TGSRTC are set to come to a halt from Wednesday as employees and workers' unions, under a joint action committee (JAC), begin an indefinite strike from midnight Tuesday. The decision follows four hours of inconclusive talks between union leaders and the state government, which failed to produce any agreement on the unions' long-pending 32 demands.

The strike is expected to disrupt daily travel for nearly 60 lakh passengers, including around 40 lakh women who rely heavily on RTC services. All depots have been instructed to suspend operations from the first service on Wednesday. This marks the first major strike by RTC employees in over six-and-a-half years, the last being the prolonged 55-day strike in October 2019.

Union leaders expressed strong dissatisfaction with the outcome

of the discussions, stating that the government did not offer assurances on even a single demand. They emphasized that their demands are not new but are longstanding issues, many of which were included in the ruling party's election manifesto. The unions also pointed out that despite issuing a strike notice on March 13, the government took 41 days to initiate talks, doing so only hours before the strike deadline.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Battle Lines Drawn

Campaigning Ends in Tamil Nadu and Bengal Phase 1



CHENNAI, KOLKATA, APRIL 21

With campaigning drawing to a close in Tamil Nadu and 152 constituencies in West Bengal set to vote in the first phase on April 23, the stage is set for voters to decide the fate of key contenders in two politically significant states.

In West Bengal, the electoral discourse was shaped by contentious issues of voter rolls, identity politics, governance, and polarisation. The revision of electoral rolls following the SIR exercise emerged as a major flashpoint, with nearly 91 lakh names removed. This sharp drop in the electorate triggered political controversy, with the BJP backing the move as a necessary clean-up to identify illegal migrants, while the ruling TMC alleged that it unfairly targeted minorities and genuine voters.

Identity politics played a central role, with the TMC invoking Bengali sub-nationalism and positioning itself

as the defender of regional identity. The BJP, in turn, focused on the issue of infiltration, accusing the state government of enabling illegal migration. The Matua community, an influential voting bloc, remained a key factor, with voter deletions in Matua-dominated areas raising concerns about citizenship and electoral inclusion. Corruption allegations against the TMC government, particularly the school recruitment scam, were a major campaign plank for the opposition. The Supreme Court's cancellation of thousands of appointments was repeatedly cited to question governance. Alongside this, concerns over unemployment, industrial stagnation, and migration contributed to anti-incumbency sentiment.

Communal polarisation and law-and-order concerns, especially women's safety, also featured prominently. High-profile crime cases became rallying

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

BJP's 'Jan Akrosh Padayatra' Against 'Anti-Women' attitude of Cong & Indi Alliance

HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has announced a large-scale Jan Akrosh Padayatra (People's Outrage March) in Hyderabad on April 23, alleging an anti-women stance by the Congress and its INDI Alliance partners.

State BJP President N. Ramchander Rao, in a statement, accused the Congress of historically obstructing women's empowerment and politicising the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Parliament to ensure fair representation for women in legislative bodies. "Time has come to expose the true colors of the Congress and its allies, who have shelved women's reservations for decades and stifled 'Nari Shakti,'" Rao remarked.

The padayatra will begin at the GHMC office and proceed to Indira Park via Domalguda. Rao urged women to participate in large numbers to "expose Congress hypocrisy" and support greater representation for women in legislatures.

TG Norwegian investment in Tech, Green sectors

Hyderabad, April 21: Telangana has invited Norwegian companies to explore investment opportunities in the State, particularly in Life Sciences, Healthcare, Clean Energy and emerging technology sectors.

Minister for IT and Industries D. Sridhar Babu on Tuesday urged Norwegian entrepreneurs and companies to establish industries in Telangana, describing the State as an ideal destination for investments in Life Sciences, Healthcare and Green Technologies. "Telangana is ready to be Norway's preferred partner in India for Life Sciences, Healthcare and Green Technologies," Sridhar Babu said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Kishan Reddy's Quality Mandate for Coal PSUs

Hyderabad, April 21 (NSS): In the context of India moving towards self-reliance in the energy sector, Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy emphasised that all government coal companies must strive to remain competitive in the market by adhering to strict quality standards.

He stated that Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) should also focus on reducing production costs and improving coal quality to strengthen its position in the competitive market.

The Minister conducted a nationwide review of coal companies through a video conference from New Delhi on Tuesday.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

SHORT TAKES



8 New Trains Announced from TELANGANA

The Ministry of Railways has announced 8 new trains from Hyderabad to improve passenger convenience. These trains will operate as weekly services.

SPECIAL 02

Delhi Terror Plot Foiled: Two 'ISI Operatives' Arrested in NCR

NEW DELHI, APRIL 21

The Delhi Police Special Cell has claimed to have dismantled a criminal module allegedly linked to Pakistan-based gangster-turned-terrorist Shahzad Bhatti, believed to be acting as a proxy for the ISI. Two operatives from Madhya Pradesh were arrested for allegedly planning terror-style attacks at hotels and clubs in the Delhi-NCR region. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Praveen Tripathi identified the accused as Rajveer (21), a resident of Dabra in Gwalior district, and Vivek Banjara (19), also from Gwalior. According to police, the duo was recruited through social media and assigned tasks including targeted shootings and grenade attacks at crowded public places.

The operation was led by Inspector Sunil Rajan under the supervision of ACP Vivek Kumar Tyagi. Acting on specific intelligence, police registered a case under Section 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita on March 31.

Vivek was apprehended on April 16



Rajveer s/o Vijayram r/o Gwalior, MP

Vivek Banjara s/o Lt. Nihal Banjara r/o Gwalior, MP

from Dabra based on human intelligence inputs. During interrogation, he revealed key details that led to the arrest of Rajveer on April 18 from Sarai Kale Khan in Delhi. Police said Rajveer was allegedly preparing to open fire at a prominent hotel in Delhi-NCR under instructions from handlers linked to Bhatti. A pistol and six live cartridges were recovered from Rajveer at the time of arrest. Police also seized mobile phones containing alleged incriminating videos and voice messages, which are believed to support the conspiracy claims.

Investigations revealed that Rajveer was in contact with an associate of Bhatti known as "Rana Bhai," who facilitated his recruitment. Rajveer later introduced

Vivek into the network. The duo reportedly attempted to procure weapons from Ahmedabad, but after failing, travelled to Amritsar on April 9, where they received firearms, ammunition, and cash.

Police further stated that Rajveer attempted a shooting at a club in Zirakpur that had received extortion threats, but the weapon malfunctioned. The incident was reportedly recorded to be sent to their handler. He later procured another weapon from Punjab and returned to Delhi with plans for another attack before being intercepted.

Bhatti, suspected to be operating from Dubai, is said to be associated with Balochistan-based gangster Farooq Khokhar. He has been linked to multiple criminal and terror-related activities, including grenade attacks, illegal arms supply, and recruitment of operatives through social media.

Security agencies believe his network functions through remote handlers who lure young recruits with money and use them to execute attacks.

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8 New Trains Announced from TG

NEW DELHI, APRIL 21

The Ministry of Railways has announced 8 new trains from Hyderabad to improve passenger convenience. These trains will operate as weekly services.

Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy expressed happiness over this decision and thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Railway Minister Ash-

wini Vaishnav.

Background

There had been long-standing demands for regular train services from Hyderabad to destinations like Tirupati, Tiruchanur, Sri Ganganagar, Jaipur, and Bhubaneswar. Following discussions between Kishan Reddy and Ashwini Vaishnav, the Railway Ministry approved these new services.

The trains will operate from major stations in Hyderabad, including Kacheguda Railway Station, Charlapalli Railway Station, and Hyderabad Deccan Railway Station. Out of these, 5 trains will cater to pilgrims traveling to Tirupati and Tiruchanur, while others will connect long-distance destinations like Bhubaneswar, Jaipur, and Sri Ganganagar.



NEW TRAIN SERVICES (SCHEDULE & ROUTES)

Train No. 17607/17608: From Kacheguda to Tiruchanur, every Thursday at 9:30 PM – starting May 15, 2026

Train No. 17601/17602: From Kacheguda to Sri Ganganagar, every Saturday at 10:00 PM – starting July 14, 2026

Train No. 17047/17048: From Charlapalli to Tiruchanur, every Wednesday at 6:55 PM – starting May 7, 2026

Train No. 17441/17442: From Charlapalli to Tirupati, every Wednesday at 9:20 PM – starting May 14, 2026

Train No. 17443/17444: From Charlapalli to Tirupati, every Friday at 4:20 PM – starting May 15, 2026

Train No. 17059/17060: From Charlapalli to Tiruchanur, every Sunday at 9:15 PM – starting May 11, 2026

Train No. 17067/17068: From Charlapalli to Bhubaneswar, every Monday at 6:10 PM – starting May 5, 2026

Train No. 17079/17080: From Nampally (Hyderabad Deccan) to Jaipur, every Friday at 7:50 PM –

start date to be announced soon by South Central Railway

HC issues notice to govt over media accreditation committee appointments

Hyderabad, April 21: The Telangana High Court Single Bench comprising Justice E.V. Venugopal has directed the respondents to file a counter affidavit in a matter concerning the alleged failure of State authorities to appoint a representative of the Telangana Working Journalists Federation to the State Media Accreditation Committee.

The petition was filed by Bodige Basava Punnaiah, General Secretary of the Telangana Working Journalists Federation, a resident of Jillelaguda, Ranga Reddy district, was represented before the Court by his Advocate, Rapolu Bhaskar.

The respondents to the petition are the State of Telangana, represented by its Principal Secretary and Chief Secretary of the Information and Public Relations Department, the Special Commissioner of the Information and Public Relations

Department, Telangana, the Chairman of the Telangana Media Academy, and Mamidi Somaiah, former president of the Telangana Working Journalists Federation.

The petitioner contends that the Special Commissioner of the Information and Public Relations department failed to act upon his representation dated 29th December 2025, wherein he sought the appointment of B.Jagadeeshwar, Correspondent at Nava Telangana State Bureau, as a member of the State Media Accreditation Committee on behalf of the Telangana Working Journalists Federation. The petitioner submits that such an appointment was mandated under G.O.Ms. No.229, General Administration (Information and Public Relations) Department, dated 12th February 2026, and that the continued inaction of the respondent authority is unlawful.

Jupally to flag off Adivasi Tourism Exposure programme today

HYDERABAD, APRIL 21

In a significant push towards inclusive cultural exchange, Minister for Tourism Jupally Krishna Rao will formally launch the Adivasi Tourism Exposure programme on Wednesday.

The Minister is scheduled to flag off the inaugural convoy from Gondu Guda in Utnoor mandal at 6:00 AM.

The initiative, curated by the Telangana Tourism department, aims to provide a comprehensive study tour for 650 tribal participants from the Utnoor region of Adilabad district. The programme is designed to bridge the geographical and

cultural divide by showcasing the historical heritage and modern infrastructure of Hyderabad.

To ensure seamless logistics and personalised attention, the department has organised the tour into three distinct phases. The batch 1 will commence April 22, second batch on April 23 and third batch is scheduled on April 25.

Each batch, comprising 200 to 250 participants, will travel in a fleet of five air-conditioned buses. The two-day itinerary offers a curated mix of heritage and modern landmarks, including the Hyderabad International Airport, the majestic

Golconda Fort, Charminar, Lumbini Park, and the arts village, Shilparamam.

The government has made extensive arrangements for the comfort of the participants. Accommodation and hospitality services have been centralised at the Taramati Baradari heritage resort, providing the tribal delegates with an immersive experience of the state's hospitality.

The programme is expected to provide the Adivasi community with vital exposure to the state's capital, fostering a deeper connection with the historical and developmental narrative of Telangana.

A Netherlands-Inspired Celebration of Love and Bonding at Meridian School



MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, APRIL 21,

Meridian School, Kukatpally came alive with color, joy, and celebration on April 16 as it hosted "Merk Blooms & Bliss - Mom's Tulip Fiesta," a heartwarming event dedicated to the mothers of the foundational stage. Inspired by the beauty and charm of the Netherlands, the fiesta created a memorable space for bonding, cultural appreciation, and togetherness.

The school auditorium was transformed into a breathtaking tulip paradise, adorned with vibrant floral décor that captured the essence of a Dutch spring. The mothers added elegance and authenticity to the occasion by arriving in graceful Dutch-style attire. They were warmly welcomed with a delightful flower shower and were crowned with floral tulip tiaras, making them feel truly special from the very beginning.

The celebration commenced with a warm welcome note, followed by the grand inauguration by the respected Principal, Aakrushi Ma'am. In a symbolic and captivating gesture, she declared the fiesta open by blossoming a tulip flower, marking the beginning of a day filled with excitement and meaningful engagement.

The event unfolded with a series of lively and entertaining activities designed to energize and involve every participant. It began with fun warm-up exercises, setting an enthusiastic tone for the day. One of the highlights was the creative Cycling Flower Delivery activity, where mothers joyfully

delivered flower baskets, blending fun with teamwork.

Adding to the uniqueness of the celebration, the Dutch Formation Fun activity invited mothers to work together and creatively form shapes such as a cycle, windmill, and tulip, reflecting imagination, coordination, and collective spirit. The excitement continued with the Tulip Relay Race, which challenged participants with a variety of playful tasks and was met with great enthusiasm.

The cheerful Tulip Tic-Tac-Toe game sparked strategic thinking and laughter, while the vibrant Clog Dance filled the auditorium with rhythm, energy, and celebration. The event became even more special when children joined their mothers for playful bonding activities, creating touching moments that strengthened their connection.

The fiesta concluded with a delightful lunch, leaving everyone with smiling faces and cherished memories. Principal Aakrushi Ma'am expressed heartfelt gratitude to all the mothers for their enthusiastic participation and appreciated the overwhelming response and presence that made the celebration a grand success.

At Meridian School, such initiatives reflect the institution's enduring commitment to nurturing joyful relationships, celebrating cultural diversity, and promoting holistic development. "Merk Blooms & Bliss - Mom's Tulip Fiesta" stood as a beautiful reminder that every shared moment can blossom into a lasting memory.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

TGSRTC Strike from Midnight as Govt Talks Fail

FROM PAGE 1

Key demands include the merger of the RTC with the state government, implementation of government pay scales, job security for employees, fresh recruitment drives, conduct of union elections, and allocation of electric buses to RTC. The unions also insisted that all RTC operations should remain under the corporation's control.

The JAC rejected the government's proposal to form a high-level committee and seek four weeks to resolve the issues. The committee, consisting of senior IAS officers, has been tasked with reviewing the demands and submit-

ting a report within the stipulated time. However, union leaders dismissed this move as a delay tactic.

JAC chairman E. Venkanna accused the government of wasting time through committees, leaving employees with no choice but to strike. Other leaders echoed similar sentiments, stating that the government merely listened to their concerns without offering any concrete commitments. They made it clear that the strike would not be called off without firm assurances.

The unions reiterated that the agitation would continue indefinitely and that they would not yield to pressure.

They also referred to earlier protests, including a "Chalo Assembly" demonstration, to highlight that their concerns have remained unresolved for months. Meanwhile, TGSRTC management has appealed to employees to reconsider their decision and return to duty, citing the inconvenience caused to the public. Managing Director Y. Nagi Reddy stated that the government is taking a positive and phased approach toward resolving the issues and has already initiated steps by forming a committee.

He noted that many of the demands involve significant financial and policy implications, requiring careful examination. The government, he said, has sought four weeks to study the issues thoroughly and arrive at practical solutions.

At the same time, the management criticized certain unions for proceeding with the strike despite ongoing efforts, alleging that some leaders were misleading workers. Emphasizing the responsibility of RTC staff, Nagi Reddy urged employees to prioritize public welfare, especially the needs of daily commuters and economically vulnerable groups, and to ensure that essential transport services are not disrupted.

Kishan Reddy's Quality Mandate for Coal PSUs



FROM PAGE 1

During the meeting, he stated that a new coal sale mechanism through the proposed coal exchange is being introduced to enable consumers across the country to procure coal of their preferred grade from a supplier of their choice and in this competitive framework, maintaining coal quality will be essential for government companies to sustain their market presence.

The Union Minister further advised all companies to take necessary measures to reduce production costs in order to protect and expand their market share.

Reviewing the performance of SCCL, Kishan Reddy advised the company to focus on supplying quality coal at competitive prices and to achieve the targets set for new mining projects. From Singareni Bhavan, Hyderabad, Chairman and Managing Director of SCCL Dr. Buddhaprakash Jyoti, participated in the review and presented the company's future plans through a powerpoint presentation. He informed that efforts are underway to secure necessary approvals for the commencement of five new opencast projects during the year. These include JK OC at Yellandu, Manuguru Opencast Extension, Ramagundam OC-1 Phase-III, Goleti OC, and RK Opencast project.

These projects require forest and environmental clearances. Additionally, approvals for non-forest land are required for seven other projects, Buddhaprakash Jyoti said.

He stated that SCCL is taking measures to supply higher-quality coal to consumers and is increasing dispatches to avoid stock accumulation during the summer season.

The SCCL CMD also highlighted that, due to the non-availability of Compensatory Afforestation (CA) land, CPSU status is required for SCCL to facilitate the early grounding of new mining projects.

Battle Lines Drawn

FROM PAGE 1

points for the opposition, while the ruling party highlighted measures taken to improve safety and policing. Welfare schemes remained central to the TMC's campaign, with the party banking on its track record of social support programmes.

In Tamil Nadu, the campaign reflected a mix of traditional Dravidian politics and emerging dynamics. The ruling DMK sought a mandate based on governance and welfare delivery, while the AIADMK-BJP alliance focused on issues such as corruption, law and order, and governance gaps.

A key talking point was the entry of actor Vijay into politics, which added an element of unpredictability. His party's growing visibility and large public gatherings have drawn attention, though its electoral impact remains uncertain.

Welfare politics continued to dominate the narrative, with competing promises of

subsidies and financial assistance. However, there is a growing emphasis, particularly among younger voters, on employment, investment, and long-term economic opportunities, indicating a shift in voter priorities.

Identity and federalism remained core issues, with debates over language, opposition to Hindi imposition, and resistance to central policies like NEET shaping the campaign. The DMK framed these as issues of state autonomy, while the BJP highlighted development and national integration.

Law and order, including concerns over drug abuse and women's safety, was another major issue raised by the opposition. The DMK countered by pointing to improvements in governance and law enforcement.

As both states head to the polls, the outcome will reflect how voters weigh welfare, identity, governance, and emerging political alternatives in shaping their choices.

TG Norwegian investment in Tech, Green sectors

FROM PAGE 1

The Minister made the remarks during a meeting with a high-level Norwegian delegation led by Ambassador of Norway to India, May-Elin Stener, at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat.

The discussions focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation between Telangana and Norway and identifying sectors for long-term collaboration.

Sridhar Babu highlighted the measures being taken by the State government to promote industrial growth, including investor-friendly policies, ease of doing business reforms and world-class infrastructure for setting up industries.

He said Telangana offers strong opportunities in Life Sciences, Healthcare, Digital Health, Biotechnology and Medical Devices, and called upon Norwegian companies to leverage the State's robust innovation and industrial ecosystem.

The Minister observed that Norway has emerged as a global leader in Clean Energy, Sustainable Infrastructure, Electric Mobility, Offshore Wind, Climate Innovation and Green Manufacturing.

He proposed closer collaboration be-



tween Telangana and Norway in key areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Climate Tech, Health Tech, Cybersecurity, Green Hydrogen, Battery Technology, Electric Mobility, Clean Energy, Industrial Decarbonisation, Digital Health, Biotechnology and Medical Devices.

Sridhar Babu said the State government was ready to prepare a comprehensive roadmap for cooperation in these sectors. To institutionalise the partnership, he proposed the formation of a dedicated "Telangana-Norway Working Group" to facilitate regular engagement between government agencies, industry representatives and investors from both

sides. Responding to the proposal, Stener said Norway was keen to work with progressive States such as Telangana and expressed confidence that bilateral ties would deepen in the coming years.

"We are ready to work with Telangana. We will take further steps to strengthen bilateral relations and initiate the process for setting up the working group," she said.

The meeting was attended by Bjorn Iversen, Head of Innovation Norway; Silje Christine Andersen, First Secretary; Siri Veseth Meling, Director in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud and senior officials.

BRS CALLS KEY STRATEGY MEET ON APR 27 AT TELANGANA BHAVAN

Hyderabad, April 21:

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi will hold a crucial meeting on April 27 here at Telangana Bhavan, marking the conclusion of its Silver Jubilee celebrations. BRS chief and former chief minister K. Chandrababbar

Rao will preside over the meeting, focusing on organizational strengthening and membership expansion. Party working president K.T. Rama Rao, in a statement, said key leaders, including MPs, MLAs, MLCs, district presidents

and former corporation chairpersons and former ZP chairpersons, have been invited. The meeting is expected to outline the party's future strategy and response to the evolving political landscape in Telangana.



Jagtial Rally a 'Grand Success': Jeevan Reddy

FROM PAGE 1

government of misleading the public under the banner of 'Praraja Palana'. Jeevan Reddy alleged that farmers were facing hardships and that welfare systems like Gurukul institutions were being weakened. He further targeted Revanth Reddy over past controversies, including the infamous Vote-for-Note scam, and accused him of acting under external political influence.

Post card Campaign Under 'Aarakshan Bill Aaj Karo Abhi Karo' Slogan by Mahila Congress



Implement Women's Reservation Bill Immediately: ErraBelli Swarna

HYDERABAD

Demanding the immediate implementation of the Women's Reservation Bill, the Congress party organized a post-card signature campaign at Gandhi Bhavan under the slogan "Aarakshan Bill Aaj Karo Abhi Karo." The program was conducted under the leadership of Mahila Congress State President ErraBelli Swarna, following the directions of All India Mahila Congress Pres-

ident Alka Lamba. Speaking on the occasion, ErraBelli Swarna said that the Women's Reservation Bill must be implemented immediately to ensure adequate political representation for women. She stated that this is crucial for the protection of women's rights across the country. She criticized the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), alleging that it lacks sincerity regarding the Women's Reservation Bill. She also informed that the signed postcards demanding immediate implementation were sent to Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his Delhi address, adding that the "countdown has begun" for Modi.

Medchal District Mahila Congress President Rajanolla Lakshmi said that the BJP's campaign portraying Congress as anti-women is false. She recalled that the Women's Reservation Bill was unanimously passed by Parliament in 2023. She emphasized that linking the implementation of reservations to delimitation is not appropriate and demanded that reservations be implemented immediately based on the current number of seats in Parliament and State Assemblies.

She further warned that increasing Lok Sabha seats and delaying the process in the name of delimitation would

be unjust to smaller states and could harm the federal structure of the country. Lakshmi added that if women's issues are used for political gain, it would negatively impact the future of the BJP.

The program saw participation from Secunderabad District Mahila Congress President Kavitha, District Vice Presidents Durga and Jyothi, District General Secretaries Merugu Sunitha and Jajala Ramya, Market Committee Chairman Pushpa, District Secretaries Latha Reddy, Shobha Rani, Balamani, Koteswari, Quthbullapur B-Block Vice President Narayanamma, A-Block Vice President Nagashiromani, Secretary Vanitha, Organizing Secretary Jajala Archana, Kukatapally B-Block President Sandhya.

Medchal A-Block President Tatikayala Komalatha, Dammaiguda Division President Jupalli Shobha Rani, Bodupal Municipal President Samatha Yadav, Nizampet Municipal President Kadiyala Indra, Division Presidents Vijayalakshmi and Bharathamma, Quthbullapur Division Presidents Sujatha, Tulasi, Sujatha Yadav, Dundigal Municipal President Fatima, Gundla Pochampally Vice President Shilpa, along with a large number of executive members.



Birth anniversary celebrations of Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya

HYDRABAD

The birth anniversary celebrations of Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya are being held at Suvarna Bharati Goshala in LB Nagar, Hyderabad. The event is being conducted grandly under the leadership of Brahma Shri Srinivasa Bangaraya Sharma, founder of Tattvam Charitable Trust. On this occasion, Padma

Shri Jayanthi Savitri Shankaru presented a Harikatha performance. Jyoti Gogoi from the state of Assam attended as a special guest. She was honored with a traditional handwoven "Gamosa" shawl from Assam, a northeastern state. Narasimha Prasad, a resident of Pithapuram, also participated in these celebrations. Devotees felt delighted after listening to the Harikatha performance.

TG govt forms panel to address TGSRTC employees' grievances

HYDERABAD: The Telangana government has constituted a high-level committee to examine comprehensively the issues related to employees of the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC). The panel, headed by the Special Chief Secretary (Transport, Roads & Buildings), includes senior officials from Labour and Finance departments, along with the Vice Chairman & Managing Director of TGSRTC as Member-Convener.

PROVISION OF 2X48 FIBERS OFC FOR COMMUNICATION BACKBONE

E-Tender Notice No.: KIR-N-2026-K-2 Dated: 16-04-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: - Name of work: Provision of 2x48 fibers OFC for communication backbone in Aluabari Road-Surajakamal and Ambari Falakata-Belakoba section in Kathar Division. Tender Value: ₹5,58,90,767.14/-. Earnest Money: ₹11,17,800/-. Date & time of closing of tender: At 15.00 hrs. & opening at 15.30 hrs. on 08-05-2026. The complete information with tender documents of above e-Tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs. on 08-05-2026 in website www.ireps.gov.in

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Protest by Farmers from Nagarkurnool District in Hyd's Kushaiguda

HYDERABAD

Farmers from Nagarkurnool staged a protest in Kushaiguda after allegedly being cheated in a major financial fraud.

Protest over land compensation fraud

Farmers who lost their lands under the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme held a dharna, accusing a finance company of swindling their compensation money.

According to the victims, a firm named Om Sri Sairam Finance allegedly cheated around ₹250 crore belonging to nearly 2,500-3,000 displaced farmers from about 25 villages. The accused reportedly lured farmers by promising to provide land at low prices and offer high interest returns.

Dharna in front of accused's house

After learning that one of the accused, Dhanunjay Gupta, resides in Subhash Nagar colony of Kushaiguda, around 300 affected farmers gathered in front of his house on Tuesday and staged a sit-in protest demanding justice.

The victims alleged that the main accused, Ityala Saibaba, along with Dhanunjay Gupta and others, orchestrated the scam. Realizing they had been cheated, the farmers approached the High Court, which reportedly ordered the attachment of the accused's properties.

Support and demands

Social activist Pasham Yadagiri extended support to the protesting farmers. He demanded justice for those who lost their lands and criticized successive governments, including Bharat Rashtira Samithi and Indian National Congress, for failing to properly implement the Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) package.

He called for the immediate arrest and strict punishment of the accused and questioned the inaction of the authorities. He also urged society to socially boycott such offenders and stand firmly with the victims to ensure justice.

RNC Hospitals Launches Month-Long Series of Specialized Health Camps Across Chintal and Balanagar Units

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI



RNC Hospitals has announced a month-long series of specialized health camps to be conducted across its Chintal and Balanagar units, underscoring a strong commitment to accessible community healthcare. The initiative, led by Dr. C. Ramesh, Managing Director and Senior Neurosurgeon, aims to bring high-quality medical expertise to the public at subsidized rates, with a clear focus on early detection through targeted screenings and diagnostics.

The hospitals have designed a diverse clinical

calendar to address a range of health needs, scheduling specialties on fixed dates and times to maximize public access.

General Medicine will be available on the 1st Saturday at Chintal and the 4th Saturday at Balanagar, while Pulmonology is offered ev-

ery 2nd Saturday with Balanagar sessions from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM and Chintal sessions from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Gynecology is set for the 8th of every month at both units, Orthopedics on the 3rd Saturday at Balanagar and the 4th Saturday at Chintal, General Surgery

on the 16th of every month at both units—with Balanagar from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM and Chintal from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM—and Cardiology on the 12th of every month with Balanagar sessions from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM and Chintal from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM.

Dr. Ramesh emphasized that the core mission of these camps is to bridge the gap between experienced medical professionals and the general public, with an emphasis on early detection through a range of screenings and diagnostic tests tailored to identify age-related ailments. He stated that the

initiative is designed to provide expert medical advice and comprehensive screenings at an affordable price, reinforcing the hospital's motto of quality healthcare accessible to all.

To support patients further, RNC Hospitals is offering a 50% discount on all investigations and a 20% discount on medicines purchased during the camp sessions. Residents are encouraged to visit their nearest RNC Hospital unit to benefit from these specialized services and screenings, reinforcing the commitment to affordable, high-quality care for the community.



Grand Felicitation to Merugu Madhu, Member of CBFC Advisory Panel

BHUVANAGIRI

Renowned educationist Merugu Madhu was felicitated at a TRSMA meeting held at Mother Teresa School in the town. On this occasion, TRSMA District President Palakurla Venkatesh Goud stated that the appointment of Merugu Madhu as a member of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), Hyderabad Regional Advisory Panel, is a matter of great pride.

He noted that Madhu, who has been serving the education sector for over

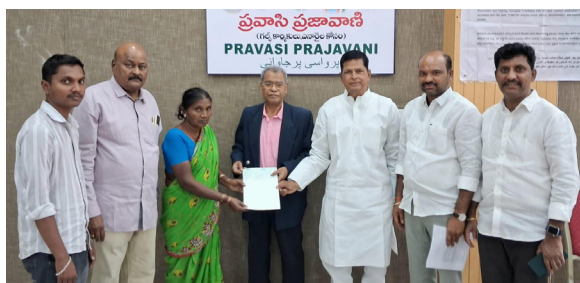
two decades, has played a vital role in shaping the future of thousands of students. His appointment to this prestigious position brings special recognition to Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, he added. The event was attended by TRSMA District Honorary President Gade Somireddy, General Secretary Dasari Sriramulu, leaders Tungathuri Rangarao, Chandrasekhar, C. Suresh, Bhagyalakshmi, Thotakura Yadaiah, Sunil, and TRSMA Nalgonda District Executive Member Pamula Ashok Mudiraj, among others.

RS. 5 LAKH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO GULF WORKER WHO DIED DUE TO ILLNESS

Funds Sanctioned by CM Revanth Reddy as a Special Case

Cheque Handed Over to Deceased's Wife by CM Praja Vani Incharge Chinna Reddy

HYDERABAD



Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy extended financial assistance of Rs. 5 lakh as a special case to the family of Arelli Gangarajam, a Gulf worker from Polasa village, Jagtial Rural Mandal, who died after being shifted from Dubai to Hyderabad NIMS for better treatment while in a coma due to illness. He passed away 10 days later.

On Tuesday, CM Praja Vani Incharge and State Planning Board Vice Chairman Dr. G. Chinna Reddy handed over the cheque to the deceased's wife, Arelli Rajavva, at Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan.

State NRI Advisory Committee Chairman & Ambassador Dr. B.M. Vinod Kumar, Vice Chairman Manda Bheem Reddy, and Pravasi Praja Vani Coordinator Bojja Amarendra Reddy participated in the programme.

Arelli Gangarajam (61), who was suffering from a severe kidney-related ailment, went into a coma on November 12, 2025, at Aster Hospital in Dubai. For advanced treatment, he was shifted to Hyderabad on December 14 and admitted to NIMS. Later, he received treatment at the

Jagtial Rehabilitation Center and finally died at the Jagtial Government Area Hospital on December 24.

As per G.O. No. 216, the state government provides Rs. 5 lakh ex-gratia to the families of migrant workers who die in Gulf countries. However, in this case, since the death occurred in India, a technical condition stating that the 'place of death must be a Gulf country' became a hurdle in obtaining financial aid.

Considering this, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy supported the family through the CM Relief Fund by treat-

ing it as a special case. The deceased's wife Rajavva and son Jalandhar had submitted an application in the name of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on March 31 at the "CM Pravasi Praja Vani" programme held at Praja Bhavan, requesting that the case be considered on humanitarian grounds as a special case and sanction Rs. 5 lakh Gulf ex-gratia. Dr. G. Chinna Reddy endorsed the application.

State Nodal Officer Divya Devarajan discussed the matter over the phone with CM OSD Vemula Srinivasulu and wrote a D.O. letter to the government requesting financial assistance through the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Polasa Sarpanch Milkoori Shankarajah and DCC President Gajangi Nandaiah expressed gratitude to CM Revanth Reddy, Jagtial MLA Dr. Makunuri Sanjay Kumar, and the official machinery for supporting Gulf worker families with a humanitarian approach.

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SHORT TAKES

GITAM Scholar Awarded Ph.D. in Pharmacy



HYDERABAD: GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, proudly congratulates Dr. Sunkara Muni Sireesha on being awarded the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Pharmacy for her research titled "Design, Synthesis, and Biological Evaluation of N-Heterocyclic Compounds as Putative Antidiabetic Agents." The research was carried out under the guidance of Dr. Beda Durga Prasad, Associate Professor, School of Pharmacy. Her doctoral work focused on developing novel therapeutic molecules for the management of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM). Through innovative medicinal chemistry and green synthesis approaches, the study identified promising heterocyclic compounds with strong inhibitory activity against key enzymes linked to post-meal blood glucose levels, with some compounds showing efficacy comparable to the standard drug Acarbose. The research makes a significant contribution to the development of safer and more effective antidiabetic therapies and offers a strong foundation for future preclinical and clinical investigations. Congratulating Dr. Muni Sireesha on this remarkable achievement, university leaders including Prof. D. S. Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor, D.V.V.S.R. Varma, Resident Director, and Prof. G. Shiva Kumar, Principal, School of Pharmacy, lauded her valuable contribution to pharmaceutical research and healthcare innovation.

Telangana shines in 'Divya Bharat' report; Jupally terms it a proud moment

HYDERABAD: Minister for Tourism, Culture & Excise Jupally Krishna Rao has termed the recognition accorded to Telangana in the "Divya Bharat" tourism report released by NITI Aayog as a proud moment, noting that it highlights the State's diverse tourism strengths. "It is a proud moment for Telangana to be featured in the 'Divya Bharat' report by NITI Aayog, which highlights the State's diverse tourism strengths," the Minister said on Tuesday. He noted that attractions such as Hussain Sagar, Golconda Fort and Bhongir Fort, along with spiritual centres like Yadadri Temple and Bhadrachalam Temple, continue to attract visitors.

"BRS will not change even in a thousand years"

"Jeevan Reddy is completely anti-Telangana... he contested twice against the movement leadership with YS's support"

"BRS cannot utter a word against the Centre"

"Backdoor deals are being discussed"

"Chief Minister's remarks are influencing court judgments"

"Even after the entire season, half the farmers did not receive Rythu Bandhu"

"If you try to eliminate the opposition, people will throw you out"

- Telangana Jagruthi President Kalvakuntla Kavitha

HYDERABAD

Telangana Jagruthi President Kalvakuntla Kavitha strongly criticized that the BRS party will not change even after a thousand years. She said that the Congress party is following the same path as BRS. Speaking to the media on Tuesday at the Telangana Jagruthi office in Banjara Hills, she expressed anger that BRS has still not introspected after its defeat and is instead blaming the people, speaking as if the public is at fault.

She questioned what message is being sent to the youth when a 75-year-old leader is brought in and projected as a "young leader." She said their upcoming party will en-



courage youth leadership and called upon young people to join in large numbers.

Referring to the Jagtial meeting, she said bringing in a 75-year-old leader and calling it "political reunification" shows that BRS will never change. She stated that under the guise of reunification, anti-Telangana forces are being brought in while claiming to rebuild Telangana. She urged intellectuals and academics to understand the mindset of BRS.

She described Jeevan Reddy as strongly anti-Telangana, recalling that when leaders resigned twice for the Telangana movement, he questioned the need for Telangana if YS leadership was available, and even contested twice against the movement leadership in by-elections. She expressed concern that no mention was made of the activists who fought passionately for Telangana in the Jagtial meeting, and said that Telangana activists are now in a pitiable condition.

She questioned why BRS leadership did not speak even a single word against the Central government at the public meeting. Despite

calling itself a national party, it did not address issues like the Women's Bill, delimitation, or the census in Parliament. She alleged that women are never respected in BRS, which is why they did not react even when the Women's Reservation Bill was stalled. She criticized BRS for still blaming the public for its defeat.

She said that both the ruling party and the main opposition are busy organizing large rallies to show strength instead of addressing public issues. She remarked that while BRS tells exaggerated stories, Congress tells trivial ones. She emphasized that politics should be people-centric rather than party-centric, and announced that they are entering as a new political force on the 25th of this month. She appealed to the public to support them and said she is entering politics as a woman to address people's problems and will continue to fight until issues are resolved.

She criticized alleged backdoor dealings, questioning whether the Chief Minister has a responsibility to inform the public if party leaders are meeting RSS leaders in Delhi. She

accused the Chief Minister of making statements that could influence court judgments, especially regarding the Kaleshwaram case, and said such remarks undermine constitutional institutions. While stating her respect for the judiciary, she questioned how the Chief Minister could predict court verdicts.

She questioned who Revanth Reddy is to decide whether there should be an opposition in Telangana, stating that people should decide who governs and who sits in opposition. She asked how anyone can claim they will remain Chief Minister for ten years and what Congress has done to deserve a second term.

She criticized the government for failing to provide Rythu Bharosa to half the farmers even after the season ended, demolishing poor people's houses in the name of HYDRA, not responding to the death of a two-month-old baby at Kummera-Jatara, and failing to provide jobs or a job calendar.

She said both BRS and Congress are neglecting the people. She accused the government of neglecting RTC workers and attempting to privatize the organization by weakening its workforce. She announced full support for the RTC workers' strike and demanded immediate merger of RTC into the government.

She concluded by inviting people to the party's formation meeting on the 25th, mentioning that party workers have already begun a padayatra from Sircilla. She requested the police and authorities not to create obstacles for supporters traveling to attend the meeting and alleged that striking workers were being threatened to return to duty.

ECI flags off Phase-II of International Election Visitors' Programme-2026

The Election Commission of India commenced the second phase of International Election Visitors' Programme (IEVP), 2026 for the ongoing General Elections to the Legislative Assemblies of Tamil Nadu and West Bengal in New Delhi today.

2. Chief Election Commissioner Shri Gyanesh Kumar inaugurated the programme today at India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIDEM).

3. 34 delegates from 17 countries including representatives from their Foreign Missions in Delhi and a representative of International IDEA will be participating in the second phase of the programme.

4. The participants will visit Tamil Nadu and West Bengal from April 22 to April 23, 2026. In the first phase, the delegates of the Programme visited Assam, Kerala and Puducherry from April 8 to April 9, 2026.

5. The delegates were given demonstration of the EVM at IIDEM today and they took part in the mock poll using the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) to get a hands-on experience of the voting process.

6. The delegates evinced keen interest in the technological in-

terventions and administrative safeguards in the election process in India. The delegates had an interactive session with the experts clarifying their doubts/queries.

7. The delegates will be travelling to West Bengal and Tamil Nadu on April 22, 2026. They will visit the dispatch and distribution centres and other facilities including the District Control Rooms and the Media Monitoring Centres. They will also witness the actual polling in the morning of April 23, 2026.

8. The IEVP is a flagship program of the ECI for international cooperation and engagement with the Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of other countries and International Organizations.

9. The IEVP provides a comprehensive overview of India's electoral framework, institutional mechanisms, and operational architecture, while familiarising foreign EMB delegates with best practices and innovations in election management.

10. The IEVP showcases the strengths of India's electoral system to the international community and sharing the best practices adopted in the world's largest democracy for conduct of elections.



Police arrest inter-State gang for hash oil smuggling, contraband worth ₹2.5 cr seized

Dr Srinivas Vooradi

WARANGAL

The Warangal police have arrested an inter-State gang allegedly involved in large-scale smuggling of hash oil and seized contraband worth approximately ₹2.5 crore. The operation was carried out jointly by the Drug Control team, CAT Party, and Intezarganj police. Four persons — Hantal Sannu (23) and Hantal Sanyasi (23) from Malkangiri district in Odisha, and Kandel Chinnababu (56) and Krishna Hantal (56) from Andhra Pradesh — were taken into custody. Another accused, identified as Kilo Pandu, is absconding.

Addressing the media, Police Commissioner Sunpreet Singh said the accused were known to each other and were engaged in cultivation and processing of cannabis (ganja). The main accused Sannu, allegedly cultivated cannabis in his native place and later

collaborated with the absconding accused Pandu, who specialised in extracting hash oil. Following Pandu's instructions, the group procured equipment and processed cannabis into hash oil, producing around 40 kg.

Of this, 20 kg was reportedly taken away by Pandu, while the remaining was packed in one-kg packets for sale. The accused reportedly boarded a train from Tuni in Andhra Pradesh on April 19, intending to transport the contraband to Mumbai. However, suspecting police checks, they got off at Warangal railway station and stayed back. Acting on a tip-off that the suspects were moving near the railway goods shed at the Warangal bus station, police teams detained them and recovered 20 kg of hash oil along with two mobile phones. The Commissioner commended the efforts of Central Zone DCP Dara Kavitha and other officers involved in the operation.

Government Coal Companies Must Demonstrate Competitiveness Under New Coal Sale Policy

Coal should be marketed at competitive prices while maintaining quality standards under the proposed Coal Exchange mechanism

Union Minister for Coal and Mines, Shri G. Kishan Reddy, gives directions during nationwide review of coal companies

SCCL CMD Dr. Bud-dhaprakash Jyoti participates through video conference

SINGARENI BHAVAN

In the context of India moving towards self-reliance in the energy sector, Union Minister for Coal and Mines, Shri G. Kishan Reddy, emphasized that all government coal companies must strive to remain competitive in the market by adhering to strict quality standards. He stated that Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) should also focus on reducing production costs and improving coal quality to strengthen its position in the competitive market. On Tuesday, the Minister conducted a nationwide review of coal companies through



a video conference from New Delhi.

During the meeting, he stated that a new coal sale mechanism through the proposed Coal Exchange is being introduced to enable consumers across the country to procure coal of their preferred grade from a supplier of their choice. In this competitive framework, maintaining coal quality will be essential for government companies to sustain their market presence. He further advised all companies to take necessary measures to reduce production costs in order to protect and expand their market share.

Reviewing the performance of SCCL, the Minister advised the company to focus on supplying quality coal at competitive prices and to

achieve the targets set for new mining projects. From Singareni Bhavan, Hyderabad, SCCL Chairman and Managing Director, Dr. Bud-dhaprakash Jyoti, participated in the review and presented the company's future plans through a PowerPoint presentation. He informed that efforts are underway to secure necessary approvals for the commencement of five new open cast projects during the year. These include JK OC at Yellandu, Manuguru Open cast Extension, Ramagundam OC-1 Phase-III, Goleti OC, and RK Open cast Project. These projects require forest and environmental clearances. Additionally, approvals for non-forest land are required for seven other projects. He stated that

SCCL is taking measures to supply higher-quality coal to consumers and is increasing dispatches to avoid stock accumulation during the summer season. He also highlighted that, due to the non-availability of Compensatory Afforestation (CA) land, CPSU status is required for SCCL to facilitate the early grounding of new mining projects.

During the review meeting, from Singareni Bhavan, the Company Directors—Shri L. V. Suryanarayana (Operations), Shri K. Venkateshwarlu (Planning & Projects), and Shri Tirumala Rao (E&M), along with ED (Coal Movement) Shri B. Venkanna and GM (Coordination & Marketing) Shri T. Srinivas, and other officials participated.

Anti-women mentality of Cong and Indi alliance exposed, says Sambit Patra

HYDERABAD

Dr. Sambit Patra, MP and BJP National Official Spokesperson today alleged that Congress and INDI alliance have prevented highest representation from South India in the parliament by stalling 131st amendment which would have provided 33 per cent reservation to women in legislature bodies.

Women empowerment bill is pending since last 30 years. Whenever efforts were made to pass in the parliament, Congress, SP, DMK and TMC opposed it by using "But and why words" he said while addressing a press conference at Nalgonda.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has initiated efforts in 2023 for women empowerment and introduced it in parliament for 131st amendment which would have provided 33 per cent reservations to women in



parliament and states' assembly from 2029. But Congress party which has typical mentality of anti-women opposed it and deprived women from their rights.

Patra alleged that Congress party this time spread false information and tried to create division between South and North India by stating that delimitation would disadvantage for south states which would decrease MPs. and MLAs seats.

Refuting the Congress charges BJP national spokes-

person used statistics to counter the opposition's claim that the Women's Reservation Bill (Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam) and subsequent Delimitation would hurt South Indian states. He clarified that under the 131st Constitutional Amendment, Lok Sabha seats in the South would actually increase.

After delimitation process "South India's representation in the Lok Sabha would rise from 23.76 per cent to 24 per cent. The Congress is simply weaving

a conspiracy to create a North-South divide for political gains," Patra alleged.

Giving details of MP seats in five south Indian states, Patra said MP seats in Telangana would have been increased from 17 to 26, Karnataka from 28-42, Andhra Pradesh 25 to 38, Tamil Nadu 39 to 59 and Kerala 20 to 30.

The MP slammed the Revanth Reddy-led Telangana government for failing to fulfill its "Six Guarantees" promised to women like Mahalakshmi

Scheme of Rs 2500, Kalyanmastu scheme of 10 gram gold for brides, free scooters for girls students and no hike in pension for elderly, disabled and single women remain unfulfilled.

"While PM Modi provides toilets and tap water to every home, the Congress government in Telangana provides only deception, deception, and more deception," he remarked.

Patra raised serious questions regarding the Kaleshwaram Project investigation. He questioned why CM Revanth Reddy, who initially spoke of a Rs 1 lakh crore corruption scandal, has only referred matters worth Rs 9,000 crore for inquiry. "Have commissions been taken for the remaining thousands of crores?" he asked.

He also alleged massive corruption in the rice milling business in Nalgonda involving local Congress leaders.



"Senior Forward Bloc leader Prasad joins Telangana Jagruthi"

Hyderabad: R.V.R. Prasad, former state president of the All India Forward Bloc and a National Council member, joined Telangana Jagruthi along with his supporters. At the Jagruthi office in Banjara Hills, Telangana Jagruthi president Kalvakuntla Kavitha welcomed him by draping the party scarf. TDP Minority Cell leader Syed Mateen Ahmed also joined Jagruthi along with his supporters.

EDITORIAL

Open Forum

HEADING: ROUTINE TRAGEDIES:
THE COST OF NEGLIGENCE IN VIRUDHUNAGAR'S FIREWORKS INDUSTRY

The devastating explosion at a fireworks manufacturing facility in Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar district on April 19 claimed the lives of 25 workers and initially left eight others injured. That casualty count rose as a subsequent blast at the same site brought the total number of injured to 20, a figure that includes first responders like firefighters and police officers. This catastrophe is part of a harrowing pattern; over the last four years, this district—famous for its high density of pyrotechnic units—has seen at least 134 fatalities and 89 injuries due to similar blasts. To categorize these events as "accidents" is a factual misnomer. A basic investigation clarifies that true accidents involve elements of unpredictability. In Virudhunagar, however, every laborer understands—even without formal training—that the industry is inherently perilous and that any lapse in safety protocols is a precursor to disaster. These explosions occur with such rhythmic frequency, primarily killing workers from the most vulnerable economic backgrounds, that they have become a predictable consequence of systemic failure. Rather than moving beyond the standard ritual of offering condolences and financial solatium, Union and State authorities have failed to implement substantive changes to mitigate these risks. The persistent absence of rigorous, meaningful monitoring is directly responsible for this recurring loss of life.

The latest tragedy highlights a profound failure in law enforcement and oversight, particularly since the facility was operating on a Sunday—a standard industry holiday—seemingly without legal authorization. Furthermore, while the district-issued license strictly limited the workforce to twelve individuals at any one time, there were 40 people present when the blast occurred. Given the history of the region, these violations are likely endemic rather than isolated incidents. While official inspections are documented, they often appear to be perfunctory rituals rather than genuine safety audits. Although authorities frequently cite manpower shortages as a hurdle to effective oversight, this does not excuse the lack of accountability. Officials must take decisive action against unlicensed operators and chronic safety violators, yet they must also balance this with a fair approach that prevents the harassment of legitimate businesses. It is essential to acknowledge the local economic landscape: the fireworks industry is the primary source of survival for hundreds of thousands in an arid region where agriculture is unreliable. Ultimately, the industry's leadership must prioritize a shift toward automation to reduce human exposure to these lethal hazards.

The rapid expansion of India's digital infrastructure is a triumph of modernization, yet the physical manifestation of this growth—the unmanaged proliferation of optical fiber cables (OFC)—has reached a critical turning point. Transforming India into a digital-first economy requires shifting from a model of unregulated expansion to one of lifecycle stewardship.

FIBER CABLE WASTE: The Invisible Environmental Risk in the Digital Age

Digital expansion must be matched with responsible infrastructure governance

A familiar sight across Indian cities—tangled cables hanging from utility poles, abandoned wires along roadsides, and new fiber lines layered over old, unused ones. As India accelerates its digital transformation, the expansion of connectivity infrastructure has outpaced its management. What appears to be mere visual clutter is, in fact, an early signal of a deeper environmental and governance challenge.

India currently has over 35 lakh kilometers of optical fiber laid across the country—yet a significant portion of it is either underutilized, redundant, or entirely abandoned. The question is no longer just about laying more fiber, but about managing what already exists.

The Backbone of a Digital Economy

Optical Fiber Cable (OFC) is the backbone of modern telecommunications. By transmitting data as light through glass fibers, it enables high-speed, low-latency connectivity that powers broadband, 5G networks, digital services, and governance platforms.

Compared to legacy copper networks, fiber offers significantly higher capacity, lower signal degradation, improved energy efficiency, and longer lifespan. It remains the most robust and future-ready communication medium available today. Yet, the challenge lies not in the technology itself—but in how it is deployed, shared, and sustained.

From Connectivity to Congestion

Across urban India, multiple service providers independently deploy fiber networks, often in the same corridors. Obsolete cables are rarely decommissioned, resulting in layers of redundant infrastructure.

This leads to Infrastructure duplication and inefficiency. Repeated road excavations and civic disruption, Visual clutter and safety haz-

ards. Unchecked, this trend risks turning cities into 'cable ecosystems' that are difficult to manage, maintain, or regulate.

"Fiber is not just a communication medium—it is the foundation of a digital economy. But without structured governance, it risks becoming an unmanaged burden."

An Underestimated Environmental Concern

While fiber is often seen as a green technology, its lifecycle tells a more complex story. Fiber cables contain plastic sheathing and protective compounds that, if improperly disposed of, can contribute to soil and air pollution. Informal disposal methods especially burning can release toxic emissions.

In riverine and ecologically sensitive areas where fiber is increasingly being deployed to support smart governance and surveillance the risk of cable damage, abandonment, and informal disposal is even more acute. The environmental cost of unplanned deployment in such zones is rarely accounted for in project budgets or policy frameworks.

Moreover, the unnecessary production of new cables, driven by duplication rather than demand, increases energy consumption and carbon footprint. Without a structured lifecycle approach, even advanced infrastructure can become an environmental liability.

Global Lessons in Governance

Several countries have already addressed these challenges through proactive policy frameworks. The European Union enforces strict e-waste regulations under circular economy principles, including Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)—holding manufacturers accountable for product lifecycle management.

Singapore and similar urban systems have adopted common duct infrastructure, ensuring that multiple operators share unified pathways for cable deployment.

This reduces duplication, improves maintenance, and preserves urban aesthetics.

India's Policy Imperative

India has established e-waste management rules, but there is no comprehensive framework specifically addressing telecom infrastructure lifecycle management. India's BharatNet programme alone has laid fiber across over 6 lakh gram panchayats. As this network matures, the question of lifecycle management, decommissioning, and asset reuse will become increasingly pressing for state governments responsible for its upkeep.

With millions of kilometers of fiber already deployed—and rapid expansion underway through national initiatives—the absence of a structured policy presents a growing systemic risk. Left unaddressed, this challenge will grow in direct proportion to India's digital ambitions.

The Way Forward

A sustainable and efficient fiber ecosystem requires a coordinated policy approach. A Digital Fiber Asset Registry should be established to map and track all fiber infrastructure using GIS-based systems. A mandatory decommissioning framework must ensure that unused and obsolete cables are removed within defined timelines. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) should be enforced to make telecom operators accountable for deployment, maintenance, and end-of-life management. Urban areas must transition toward common duct infrastructure, enabling shared access and reducing repeated excavation. The government should take the lead in developing scalable, shared fiber infrastructure, which can be leased to service providers in a fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner.

Such a model would eliminate redundant investments, improve operational efficiency, enable better regulatory oversight, and ensure equitable access to infrastructure.

State-level governments, particularly those operating their own fiber grid corporations, are uniquely positioned to pilot these frameworks—creating replicable models that can be adopted nationally. Telangana's experience with T-Fiber demonstrates that government-owned, shared fiber infrastructure is not only viable but operationally superior to fragmented private deployment.

Importantly, this approach is fully aligned with the principles of the Telecommunications Act, 2023, which emphasizes efficient utilization of infrastructure, transparency, and non-discriminatory access. Further, adopting a circular telecom economy—focused on reuse, recycling, and refurbishment—along with technology-driven monitoring using AI and GIS, will strengthen governance. In parallel, hybrid connectivity models combining fiber with satellite technologies can optimize infrastructure deployment in diverse geographies.

A Strategic Opportunity

India stands at a critical juncture in its digital journey. States that are expanding fiber networks at scale have an opportunity to lead by example—by embedding sustainability, efficiency, and governance into infrastructure planning.

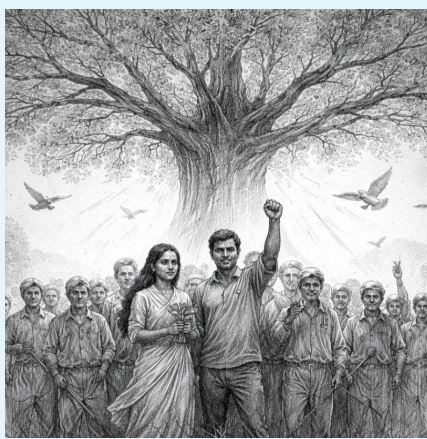
"Treat fiber as a national asset—planned, shared, and sustained responsibly. Act now, or risk turning our cities into unmanageable cable ecosystems."



潘内鲁 文努普拉萨德
MD, Telangana Fiber Grid Corporation Ltd. (T-Fiber), and leads the implementation of BharatNet in Telangana.

WE — THE SEED BEYOND BLOOM

We not mere blossoms on the tree of life, but breath-forged resistances against decay. Not bodies alone but awakenings, rooted in the dark grammar of time, rising with the syntax of light. We till the earth with calloused memories, sowing sweat like sacred syllables, harvesting dignity from seasons that fracture without warning. Hatred grows a venom-fed tree; we the silent axes, tempered in thought, swinging with the weight of conscience. Where cruelty authors its empire, we rewrite not in ink alone, but in endurance, in the living dialect of becoming human. Gautama Buddha—compassion's flame; Yemana—truth's unflinching mirror; Veerabrahmam—time's inner pulse; Bhagat Singh—defiance as thunder they do not follow us; they breathe within our marrow. To live is insufficient—we must become meaning. Not survival, but significance carved into the ribs of time. In the silent university of the heart, we earn no degrees—we transform into one: a testimony walking on two fragile feet. Read not scriptures of division read the scars of society; truth does not whisper in ink it bleeds, raw and untranslated. The living manuscript—the Constitution of India—not parchment, but pulse;



not law alone, but the architecture of human dignity. To read it is duty—to defend it, destiny. Fanaticism builds walls; we must become wind. Caste, creed, power—fractured inheritances—we dissolve them in the acid of awareness. Humanity—not emotion, but evolution; not charity, but continuity of conscience. Patriotism—not the noise of flags, but the act of holding a falling human upright against the gravity of collapse. Let this not remain a slogan—let it enter the bloodstream; not culture alone—but consciousness that refuses sleep. We—farmers of the unseen, cultivating futures in the fragile soil of now. Then—we are not flowers. We are seeds—hard, unyielding, buried yet unbroken—the unseen insistence of life, the fragrance that resists extinction, the breath that keeps the tree alive.

... Dr. Peruka Raju ...
7810032847

Special on World Earth Day

Sizzling Earth: A Race for Development or a Journey Toward Destruction?

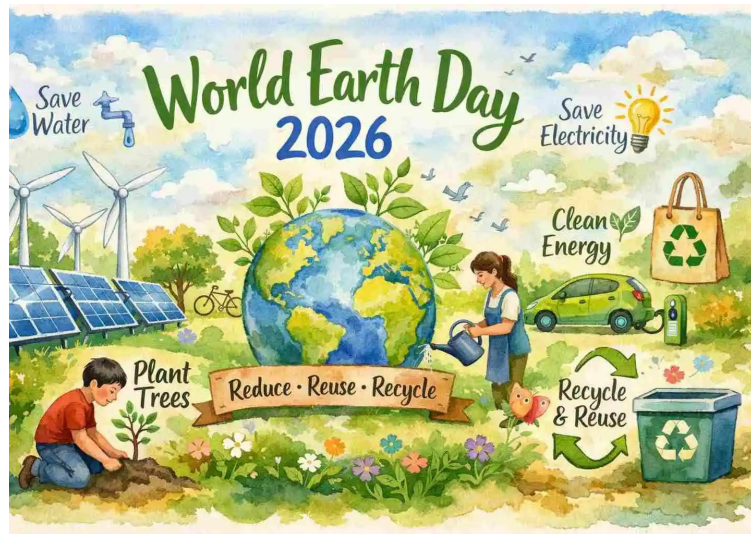
The continuous rise in global temperatures and the increasingly erratic behavior of the weather have become matters of grave concern, not just in India but across the world. Although numerous high-level international summits—from Doha and Copenhagen to Cancun—have been held over the years to tackle climate change, concrete actions remain elusive.

The reality is that while the deteriorating state of nature is discussed with great anxiety on national and international platforms, and various resolutions are passed, these concerns often lose their meaning. They are frequently overshadowed by the blind pursuit of luxury, the pressure to boost GDP, unregulated industrial growth, and the demand for maximum employment opportunities. In this context, 'World Earth Day' is observed every April 22 to raise awareness about environmental conservation and to emphasize the urgent need to save our planet.

Nature's Warning Signs
In recent times, nature has been sending severe signals through devastating storms, cyclones, and unseasonal hailstorms. These are reminders that the way we are tampering with nature in the name of 'development' is making it impossible to predict when or where the weather might turn catastrophic. The extent of climate change can be gauged from the fact that temperatures at the North Pole have recently surged by nearly 30°C above normal. The increasing adversity of the climate is visible everywhere: severe droughts in some regions and excessive unseasonal rainfall in others; heavy snowfalls alongside unexpected winter heatwaves. These are the direct consequences of our interference with natural resources, warning us of the grim future that awaits if this exploitation continues.

The Illusion of Progress
According to the book 'Pradushan

WHILE THE CHASE FOR GDP AND INDUSTRIAL DOMINANCE FUELS OUR MODERN WORLD, NATURE IS ISSUING A STARK, "FINAL CALL" THROUGH RECORD-BREAKING HEAT AND ERRATIC WEATHER. THE SHIFT FROM "WORLD EARTH DAY" RHETORIC TO GENUINE SURVIVAL NOW DEPENDS ON MOVING BEYOND THE ILLUSION OF CONCRETE PROGRESS AND EMBRACING A FUTURE WHERE CONSERVATION IS THE ONLY VIABLE CURRENCY.



Mukt Saansein', published with the support of the Hindi Academy, Delhi, we fail to realize that by tearing through mountains and destroying lush green forests to build 'concrete jungles,' we are not achieving development. Instead, we are paving the way for our own destruction. The rising heat in the mountains is leading to frequent and ferocious forest fires. This mountain warming directly impacts the plains, where temperatures are breaking records every year. If the Earth's temperature continues to rise at this rate, we must be prepared for dire consequences. Nature, which gifts us pure air, water, and soil, will not hesitate for a moment to reclaim or destroy everything if provoked by human-induced environmental crises.

A Desertified Future?
Two decades ago, the average max-

imum temperature in many Indian states during April was around 32–33°C; it now frequently exceeds 40°C. Meteorological departments estimate that in the next three decades, temperatures in these regions could rise by another 5°C. Such an increase would not only intensify forest fires but could also lead to:
• 20–30% of the Earth's land becoming drought-prone.
• One-fourth of the planet turning into desert, specifically affecting India, Southeast Asia, Central America, Southern Australia, and Southern Europe.
Why is the Earth Sizzling?
The primary culprit is Global Warming, a byproduct of human activities aimed at amassing comforts. The smoke from petrol and diesel engines has pushed carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas levels to dangerous

heights. Experts estimate that there is now 30% more CO2 in the atmosphere than in the past, playing a pivotal role in disrupting the climate. While trees and plants naturally absorb CO2 to maintain balance, we have spent decades replacing forests with concrete.

Unchecked population growth is another critical factor. The global population has surged from 1.7 billion in the 20th century to over 8 billion today. Since the Earth's landmass remains constant, the resources required to sustain this massive population are being extracted at an unsustainable rate. The late physicist Stephen Hawking once warned that if population and energy consumption continue to grow at this pace, the Earth could become a 'ball of fire' within 600 years.

The Final Call
The rising temperature is already causing polar ice to melt, leading to fears that many coastal cities across the globe will eventually be submerged. If we are the cause of these environmental problems through our interference with nature, then we must also be the solution. We must act now to avoid the wrath of nature. We must choose conservation over exploitation and sustainability over blind development. Failure to do so will mean that the entire human race will have to pay the ultimate price—its own extinction.



YOGESH KUMAR GOYAL
senior journalist

Maharashtra Minister Seeks Probe Into Pune MNC Retiring Room Misuse

PUNE: (APR 21)

Maharashtra minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini has written to the Pune Police Commissioner, seeking an inquiry into the alleged misuse of retiring rooms for religious activities at a multinational IT company's office in Hinjawadi. In her letter addressed to the city police chief, the minister of state for transport cited complaints received from various sources regarding the use of male resting rooms in the company. It has been alleged that a particular group is regularly using these rooms for religious activities, during which access to other employees is being restricted, she said.

Applying Fragrance or Glue on EVM Buttons to Be Treated as Tampering; EC

NEW DELHI: (APR 21)

Amid claims that some political workers apply fragrance on EVM buttons to find out whether a vote has been cast in their favour, Election Commission officials on Tuesday said such acts will be considered as "tampering", which is an electoral offence. Ahead of the April 23 voting in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, officials said that if a polling station presiding officer comes across such "mischief", the sector officer or the returning officer has to be notified. "The EC will not hesitate to take criminal action and can order a re-poll," an EC functionary said.

Fear of 'squandered' money makes family kill man in UP's Mahoba; five arrested

MAHOBA (UP): (APR 21)

The case involving a body found in a village drain took a sinister turn after a probe revealed that the man was allegedly killed by his own wife, daughters and minor son over fears that he would squander money meant for his daughter's wedding, police said on Tuesday. The body of Haranarayan Prajapati (36) was found on April 14 in a drain near Haivatpura Brahmanan village under Panwari police station limits in Mahoba. In an apparent attempt to divert suspicion, his family initially approached police and lodged a complaint, expressing suspicion against a neighbour with whom the deceased had frequent quarrels, officials said.

Delhi: Minor stabbed to death in Mahindra Park; attackers absconding

NEW DELHI: (Apr 21)

A 17-year-old boy was allegedly stabbed to death by a group of assailants in the Mahindra Park area of northwest Delhi, police said on Tuesday. The incident occurred on Monday night around 8 pm, when the minor stepped out of his house on his father's motorcycle with a friend. A group of four to five people, who were allegedly lying in wait, intercepted him and launched an attack with knives, police said.

BJP Stands for Development, Not Vote Bank Politics: Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini

CHANDIGARH, APRIL 21

Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that BJP's politics is not based on taking votes, but on ensuring the dignity and development of every citizen. The government does not believe in appeasement, but works towards empowerment. It does not create vote banks, but 'development banks'. He urged the people of Punjab to be ready for change and work towards making the state prosperous. He added that once BJP forms the government in Punjab, those involved in the illegal drug trade will run away from the state. The Chief Minister said this while addressing a delegation of the Rai Sikh community at Sant Kabir Kutir, Chandigarh, on Tuesday.

When compared with Punjab, Haryana's model of good governance is an excellent example of service

Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that while the Punjab government has made only attractive promises, the present Haryana government has implemented 'reservation within reservation' on the ground, ensuring

Rai Sikh Community Symbol of Courage and Sacrifice: CM Nayab Singh Saini
The government stands with every individual who is contributing to nation-building through hard work: CM
People of Punjab should work towards change and building a prosperous state



appropriate representation of Rai Sikh youth in government and administration according to their population. Compared to Punjab's situation, Haryana's governance model is a fine example of service. He said that although there is a significant population of the Rai Sikh community in Punjab as well, policies there are still confined to announcements. Rai Sikh community is an example of shared heritage, sacrifice, and valour. The Chief Minister said that BJP follows the principle of 'Antyodaya'. The very name Sant Kabir Kutir symbolizes equality and brotherhood. The government stands with every

individual who contributes to nation-building through hard work. The Rai Sikh community is not merely guests from a neighboring state, but represents a shared heritage of sacrifice and valour that has protected the nation's borders and culture for centuries. The history of this community is an enduring saga of courage, sacrifice, and determination. Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi, India is transforming. In the new India, the identity of a community is determined not by its past, but by its present, its capability, and its hard work. Today, opportunities,

platforms, and the right to progress belong to everyone. A community that has always stood firm for truth and the nation

He said that the Rai Sikh community has never learned to bow, but has always stood firm for truth and the nation. Through hard work in agriculture, education, service, and trade, the community has contributed significantly to nation-building and upheld the teachings of the Gurus. He said that democracy is meaningful only when the benefits of development reach the person standing at the last mile. With this objective, the Haryana government understood the long-standing concerns of the Rai Sikh community and included them in the 'Deprived Scheduled Castes' category. This is not just a change on paper, but a commitment to bring them into the mainstream. The government is determined that no community or section should be left behind in the race of development.

Government committed to preserving the cultural heritage of Rai Sikh community and the ideals of Sikhism

The Chief Minister said that the government is committed to preserving the cultural heritage of the Rai Sikh community and the great ideals of Sikhism. By celebrating the birth anniversaries (Prakash Parv) of Sikh Gurus at the state level, the government has demonstrated that respect for religion and culture is paramount. The government is not just running administration, but working to wipe the tears of the underprivileged and secure the future of their children. Together, efforts will be made to build a framework of social harmony and development that ensures the participation of the Rai Sikh community. On this occasion, OSD to the Chief Minister, Sh. Bharat Bhushan Bharti, Political Secretary to CM Sh. Tarun Bhandari and members of the Rai Sikh community delegation were present.

Heated Campaign For First Phase Of Bengal Polls Ends, Voting On April 23

The high-pitched campaign for the first phase of the West Bengal assembly elections came to an end on Tuesday as issues ranging from food habits, cross-border infiltration and a uniform civil code to the contentiously revised electoral rolls dominated the discourse.

KOLKATA

The high-pitched campaign for the first phase of the West Bengal assembly elections came to an end on Tuesday as issues ranging from food habits, cross-border infiltration and a uniform civil code to the contentiously revised electoral rolls dominated the discourse. The two big rivals, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Trinamool Congress (TMC), made a bunch of promises to woo the electorate ahead of voting in 152 constituencies across north Bengal and several districts in the southern part of the state on April 23. Nearly 3.60 crore electors are eligible to vote in this phase, including 1.84 crore men, 1.75 crore women and 465 third-gender voters, according to Election Commission data. Canvassing for the BJP candidates, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and several other leaders alleged that the state has witnessed political violence, lawlessness



and widespread corruption as, they claimed, the ruling TMC encouraged infiltration for vote bank politics, leading to demographic change. Addressing his final rally on Tuesday, Shah predicted that the state was in for a change of leadership on May 4. "Her time at the helm of the state has come to an end," he said, referring to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Urging people to vote without fear, he said, "No one can threaten our voters. The Election Commission has deployed central forces in sufficient numbers who are spread at every nook and corner of the state." Around 2,450 companies of central paramilitary forces that comprise nearly 2.5 lakh personnel have been deployed by the Election Commission for the polls. The poll panel has stepped up security arrangements, identifying more than 8,000 polling stations as highly sensitive for the first phase. "Bhaipo (nephew) will not be Bengal's future CM. He has already purchased

his ticket to leave the state after May 4," Shah said. Hitting out at the BJP, Abhishek Banerjee said the party had a long track record of making "false promises", as it did not fulfil its pledge of "Rs 15 lakh in every bank account and two crore jobs annually". "Those who could not deliver on basic promises cannot be trusted to provide welfare benefits," Banerjee said. He also challenged BJP-ruled states to replicate West Bengal's direct benefit schemes. "There are 16 states ruled by the BJP. If even one of them can implement a scheme like 'Lakshmi Bhandar' for all women without discrimination, I will never come to ask for votes again," the senior TMC leader asserted. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said her party would return to power comfortably in the state and claimed that the BJP-led government at the Centre would not last beyond 2026. She criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for saying in a recent rally that he was the

BJP candidate in all 294 seats going to the polls in West Bengal. "You have to quit the post of the prime minister first for that to happen," she said. "The BJP will not win the elections in West Bengal this time. The Trinamool Congress will again form the government. We will also throw out the BJP from Delhi in 2026 itself," Banerjee asserted. The TMC is seeking to come to power for the fourth straight term, while the BJP wants to unseat the Mamata Banerjee-led party in the state where the number of voters has reduced by around 91 lakh after the Special Intensive Review (SIR). Key candidates in this phase include leader of the opposition Suwendu Adhikari (BJP, Nandigram), former Union minister Nisith Pramanik (BJP, Mathabhanga), state minister Udayan Guha (TMC, Dinhatra), Goutam Deb (TMC, Siliuguri), and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury (Congress, Baharampur). The BJP has promised, among others, to implement the Uniform Civil Code, stop infiltration, strengthen borders, generate jobs, provide pending DA to state government employees, and give more financial assistance to beneficiaries than what they are getting now.

The TMC has accused the BJP of trying to manipulate the voter list through the SIR, targeting candidates and ruling party leaders using central agencies. It also claimed that the BJP would ban the consumption of fish, meat and eggs if it won the polls, a charge vehemently denied by the latter. The ruling party also pledged a pucca house to every family, piped drinking water for all, increased financial assistance to beneficiaries, support to landless farmers, and others. Among other issues, the decades-old demand of the Gorkhas for Gorkhaland, tea garden workers' wages, infrastructure gaps in north Bengal and agrarian distress in Malda and Murshidabad have shaped the campaign narrative. Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi also campaigned for party candidates; the party is seen as a marginal player in the state though. The gherao of judicial officers engaged in the SIR exercise in Malda's Mothabari also became a major issue during the campaign. Several people protesting the deletion of names in the exercise had gheraoed the officers for several hours, leading to the EC engaging the NIA to probe the matter on the Supreme Court's directive. The presence of several high-profile candidates adds spice to the first phase. In Nandigram, leader of the Opposition Suwendu Adhikari is taking on his former aide Prabir Kar, who shifted to the TMC recently. Adhikari, who is also contesting from the Bhawanipur constituency against TMC chief Banerjee, had defeated the CM from Nandigram in the 2021 elections.

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DMK Alliance Set for Victory in Tamil Nadu

CHENNAI, APRIL 21:

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka expressed confidence that the DMK-Congress alliance will come to power in Tamil Nadu. As part of the Tamil Nadu Assembly election campaign, AICC observer and former MP Madhu Yashki, along with Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka, extensively toured areas such as Karikkal, Veeranatur, Ariyur, and Ayyapedu in the Sholingur constituency of Ranipet district on Tuesday, campaigning for the alliance candidates.

He stated that the people of Tamil Nadu would endorse development and secularism. He expressed hope that Tamil voters would stand for self-respect. Bhatti said that the government under the leadership of M.K. Stalin is set to return to power with a massive ma-

Tamil People Support Self-Respect.. We Have Implemented Promises in Telangana
Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka



majority. He highlighted welfare initiatives in Telangana, including free bus travel for women under the Mahalakshmi scheme and free electricity up to 200 units under Gruha Jyothi. He said that the Congress-led government in Telangana has fulfilled not only

the promises made during elections but also additional commitments, inviting anyone to verify these claims. He noted that farm loans up to ₹2 lakh have been waived under Rythu Bharosa. Other initiatives include gas cylinders at ₹500, distribution of

fine rice, and free medical treatment up to ₹10 lakh under Rajiv Aarogyasri.

Tamil Nadu is an Ideology

Speaking during the campaign, Bhatti Vikramarka praised Tamil Nadu politics as a guiding force for the nation. He said Tamil Nadu is not just a state but a powerful ideology. He acknowledged that great leaders like Periyar, Anna Durai, and Karunanidhi laid strong foundations for social justice. He commended Tamil people for always standing at the forefront of protecting secularism. He criticized the rulers at the Centre, alleging attempts to suppress Tamil culture, language, and rights. He emphasized that unity among secular forces is essential to counter such tendencies

and urged strengthening Stalin's leadership.

Vote Against Divisive Politics

Bhatti remarked that Rahul Gandhi's message of love and Stalin's development agenda have come together. He said that a vote in Tamil Nadu is not just a mark on a ballot but a democratic voice against divisive politics. He called for defeating authoritarian tendencies and building a society free from hatred, asserting that there should be space only for love and equality. Reiterating that his government has been delivering welfare as promised, he appealed to voters to support the DMK-Congress alliance to ensure continued development and welfare in Tamil Nadu.



NFR Strengthens Cargo Operations and Customer Services

MALIGAON, 21 APRIL, 2026

The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) undertook a series of proactive initiatives aimed at enhancing customer satisfaction and increasing freight revenue during the month of March 2026. These measures focus on strengthening logistics efficiency, ensuring smooth cargo movement and supporting the growth of regional agricultural and industrial supply chains. As part of these initiatives, the Gati Shakti Multi-modal Cargo Terminal of M/s Dalmia Cement (North-East) Ltd. at Habaipur station under Lumding Division has been operationalized for handling inward traffic w.e.f. 27th March 2026. Additionally, as per the revised Freight Rates Circular, Baihata GCT under Rangiya Division has been permitted to handle outward traffic for a period of 90 days from 9th March 2026. These strategic measures are set to significantly strengthen logistics capability and efficiently meet the growing freight demands of the region. Under its Business Development Unit initiative, NFR has recorded commendable freight loading across its divisions. A total of 4.5 rakes (189 wagons) of po-

tato were successfully loaded from Dhuguri Railway Station under Alipurduar Division to multiple destinations, generating freight revenue of Rs. 0.76 crore. Furthermore, 6 rakes (252 wagons) of maize were loaded from Purnea, Jhalgarh and Katihar Jn. under Katihar Division to Bangladesh, earning revenue of Rs. 0.55 crore. Substantial freight movement has also been achieved under Lumding Division. A total of 2741 wagons of stone chips were transported from various originating points to multiple destinations. In addition, 2867 wagons of cement were handled, contributing freight revenue of Rs. 11.52 crore. Movement of 441 wagons of POL generated revenue of Rs. 3.88 crore, while 107 wagons of bamboo chips traffic were also handled, further strengthening overall freight performance. Northeast Frontier Railway continues to focus on improving its freight services and customer interface while contributing significantly to the logistics and supply chain ecosystem of the region. Through sustained initiatives and technology-driven solutions, NFR aims to ensure faster, safer and more efficient transportation for its customers.

'Modi is a terrorist,' says Kharge, then a clarification

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has stirred controversy by calling Prime Minister Narendra Modi a "terrorist." The remarks were made during a press conference in Chennai, where he slammed the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) for joining hands with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). "How can they (AIADMK) join with Modi? He is a terrorist. His party doesn't believe in equality and justice," Kharge said.

Kharge accuses AIADMK of weakening democracy

Kharge accused the AIADMK of weakening democracy by joining hands with the BJP. He said, "These people are joining with them; it means they are weakening democracy." However, he later clarified his statement against Modi when a reporter asked him about it, stating he didn't mean to call Modi a "terrorist." "I never said he is a terrorist...What I mean, I want to clarify, is that Modi always threatens. The institutions like ED, I-T and CBI are in his hands."

Later, Kharge clarifies 'Modi is not a terrorist'

At the same press conference, the Congress president also accused PM Modi of violating the Model Code of Conduct by addressing the nation to attack the opposition after the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 failed to pass in Parliament. "The violation of the Model Code of Conduct by the Prime Minister



in the middle of the election is completely unacceptable," he said.

Kharge also questioned PM Modi's narrative on the Women's Reservation Bill, which was passed in 2023 with Congress support. He said, "Unfortunately, Modi is presenting a different narrative. He claims that, instead of opposing the failed delimitation bill, the party is opposing the Women's Reservation Bill. This is not true. The Women's Reservation Bill was passed in 2023, and we fully supported it."

BJP demands apology from Kharge, Stalin

The BJP has demanded an apology from Kharge and Chief Minister MK Stalin for disrespecting PM Modi. BJP's national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla slammed the Congress for calling the prime minister a "terrorist." He said on social media platform X, "Afzal Yakub & Naxals are innocent. But for Congress - Chaiwala OBC PM is terrorist, RSS is poisonous snake, Sanatan is Disease."

Academician Madhu Kishwar booked over alleged misleading content on social media

CHANDIGARH: (Apr 21) Academician Madhu Kishwar has been booked on charges of criminal defamation, promoting enmity and other offences by Chandigarh Police following a complaint by a resident alleging circulation of forged and misleading content on social media. A Chandigarh Police team on Tuesday served notice to Kishwar in Delhi, asking her

to join the investigation in the case on April 22 in Chandigarh. Sarita Roy, the Station House Officer of Sector-19 police station in Chandigarh, where the FIR was filed, told reporters in the national capital that the notice was issued under Section 35(3) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and that Kishwar has been asked to appear and present her side.

Paramilitary officer killed, six injured in Balochistan attack

Attacks on Pakistani forces continued for the second consecutive day in Balochistan's Mastung district on Tuesday with one paramilitary officer getting killed and six left injured, local media reported citing officials and sources. Reports suggest that an armed group once again targeted Pakistani personnel at multiple locations in the Dasht region of Mastung, destroying two vehicles in separate attacks and reportedly seizing weapons from personnel killed in the clashes.

Pakistani authorities confirmed that anti-terrorism force official Rehmatullah Khilji was killed and six other personnel injured during the attack. Citing local sources, The Balochistan post reported that the death toll could be higher, but authorities have not released further details.

Clashes began on Sunday after Pakistani forces cordoned off parts of the Kambela area and carried out an operation. Armed men attacked troops during the movement, resulting in exchanges of gunfire. Residents reported heavy firing and explosions near a forces' camp in nearby Kund Masuri, where fighting lasted for nearly an hour. Earlier on Sunday, two military vehicles were reportedly ambushed at Daghari Cross while patrolling to secure a train, with one vehicle being hit, leading to casualties. Last week, the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed that it had killed 29 Pakistani military personnel in 14 attacks conducted between April 3 and 14 in several parts of Balochistan province, local media reported.

India emphasises need for greater representation of Global South at UN

India has highlighted the need for greater representation of the Global South, particularly in the permanent category, in the United Nations Security Council.

Secretary, West, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Sibi George, delivered India's national statement at the IGN meeting on the United Nations Security Council in the UN headquarters. "He highlighted the need for greater representation of the Global South, particularly in the permanent category. He underlined the similarities between India's approach to UN Security Council reforms and the African model," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a statement on X.

India has consistently called for reforms of the United Nations (UN), particularly the UNSC, stressing that reform of global institutions is essential to address global challenges. During his visit to New York, George held a meeting with the UN Department of Operational Support's Under-Secretary General, Atul Khare.

Iran-US talks uncertain as Tehran refuses to join before ceasefire deadline

NEW YORK

With the clock ticking on the tenuous ceasefire, the resumption of talks between Iran and the United States was clouded by Tehran's refusal to commit to participating in the negotiations as Tuesday drew to a close, even as President Donald Trump sounded confident it was on.

Leaving open the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint for 20 per cent of global oil and gas transport that has fuelled an economic crisis, hinges on the resumption of negotiations leading to a deal.

Senior Iranian officials quoted by Iranian media said that no delegation had gone to Islamabad and reiterated Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf's assertion that talks would not take place.

"No delegation from Iran has gone to Islamabad, Pakistan; neither a main nor a subsidiary delegation; neither primary nor secondary," IRIB news agency quoted senior officials as saying, according to Iran's PressTV.

But reflecting his optimism, President Trump told an interviewer on CNBC that they had



no choice but to send a delegation to the talks.

"What I think is that we're going to end up with is a great deal," he added, saying that Iran had no choice.

He said on Truth Social that Iranian leaders "will soon be in negotiations with my representatives", adding an appeal to them to free eight Iranian women facing the death penalty. But Vice President JD Vance, who was scheduled to leave for Islamabad on Tuesday morning to lead the United States side in the talks, delayed his departure, according to multiple United States media reports.

Even if the talks resumed, Trump indicated he did not want to extend the 14-day ceasefire, which ends at midnight at the latest. He flatly told CNBC that he did not want to do that. "I expect to be bombing because I think that's a better attitude to go in with," he said, referring to the talks. The uncertainty over the resumption of talks has put Pakistan's diplomacy at risk. Pakistan's Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said on X that, with the ceasefire scheduled to end in hours, Iran's decision to attend the talks before the end of the two-week ceasefire was critical. He confirmed that Islam-

abad had not received confirmation of Iran's participation and that it was in constant touch with Tehran.

The continuation of talks has been complicated by the United States seizure of an Iranian ship on Monday, after Iran reneged on an earlier announcement that it would open the Strait of Hormuz, and Washington imposed a blockade of Iranian ports.

Iran fired on two Indian ships in the Strait of Hormuz when the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps closed it. Trump wants Iran to permanently drop any nuclear ambitions and give up any remnants of enriched uranium in the rubble of nuclear facilities bombed last year, as well as end missile programmes.

On the Iranian side, there appears to be a conflict between hardliners and moderates over how to deal with the United States.

After Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi announced the Strait was open, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps countermanded

him, and Qalibaf, who had participated with him in talks with the United States on April 11, took a harder line on restarting negotiations.

Trump has been vacillating on his negotiating position, blowing hot and cold. On Monday, he said he was offering Iran a better deal than it had received under an international agreement he had denounced as too conciliatory towards Tehran and scrapped in his first term.

In his CNBC interview on Tuesday, he said that Iran could get itself on a very good footing if it made a deal and could become a strong and wonderful nation again, adding that it had incredible people.

But he has also renewed on Truth Social his threat to obliterate Iran's power grid and its bridge network if it did not agree to a deal.

Another contradictory message from Trump has been that Iran had agreed to the United States terms for a deal, which Iran has denied. Trump faces domestic pressure to end the Iran war that he entered with assurances from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that it would end quickly.

Iran has opposed those conditions.

Tehran will not negotiate under threat or force

WASHINGTON

Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam said on Tuesday that negotiations cannot take place under threat or coercion, underscoring Tehran's stance amid ongoing diplomatic efforts involving the United States. In a post on X, the envoy said, "a single country in possession of a large civilisation will not negotiate under threat and force," saying the position is a substantial principle. The remarks come at a time when a ceasefire that took effect on April 8 after 40 days of fighting remains fragile. Pakistan has mediated indirect talks between Tehran and Washington, hosting a first round in Islamabad on April 11 and 12.

North Korea appoints new ambassadors to Britain, Indonesia

PYONGYANG

North Korea has appointed new ambassadors to Britain and Indonesia, the North's foreign ministry said Tuesday, in what would mark the first replacement of its top envoys in major diplomatic outposts in about 10 years.

Mun Myong-sin has been appointed as Pyongyang's envoy to Britain, replacing his predecessor Choe Il, in what is the first personnel reshuffle in nearly a decade, according to the foreign ministry, Yonhap news agency reported.

Mun previously served at the North Korean Embassy in London together with Tae Yong-ho, a high-profile North Korean defector who worked as the North's minister at the same diplomatic mission.



in Indonesia since 2015.

North Korea has also sent a new ambassador to Belarus on April 12, Pyongyang's state media had reported earlier, in a sign of deepening bilateral ties following Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's visit to Pyongyang last month. Ji Kyong-su, a former vice minister of external econom-

ic relations, presented his credentials to Lukashenko, according to the Korean Central News Agency. During the ceremony, Ji conveyed North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's "warm greeting," to which Lukashenko expressed his gratitude, the report said.

Lukashenko visited North Korea on March 25 and 26, holding summit talks with Kim in Pyongyang. The two sides signed a treaty on friendship and cooperation aimed at strengthening bilateral relations and expanding collaboration across various sectors. Observers say North Korea and Belarus have been drawing closer as both countries align diplomatically and politically, particularly in their support for Russia amid the war in Ukraine.

US, Iran ceasefire nears expiry as Hormuz tensions cloud talks

WASHINGTON

The fragile two-week US-Iran ceasefire is set to expire Wednesday evening, clouding prospects for fresh negotiations and the future of the Strait of Hormuz, after US President Donald Trump depicted extension of the truce as "highly unlikely."

Asked if he expects strikes to resume immediately afterwards if no deal is reached, Trump said, "If there's no deal, I would certainly expect."

The remarks came as Washington reportedly sought to keep diplomatic channels open. US Vice President JD Vance, who led the first round of face-to-face talks, is expected to depart for Islamabad by Tuesday for talks, Axios reported, citing US sources.



Signalling conditional openness to engagement, Trump told The Washington Post that he will be willing to meet senior Iranian leaders if a breakthrough is reached, and said in a separate interview with Bloomberg that his personal attendance at talks may not be necessary. However, signals from Tehran remained

mixed. Axios reported that the Iranian team received a green light from the supreme leader on Monday night to engage in talks with the United States, but officials stopped short of confirming participation, reports Xinhua news agency.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei

said earlier Monday that Iran currently has no plan for the second round of talks and that US actions are in no way indicative of its seriousness in pursuing a diplomatic process.

The US "provocative actions" and "ceasefire violations" are major obstacles to continuing peace negotiations between the two countries, Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said Monday.

Speaking anonymously to The Washington Post, a senior Iranian official said the tone of Trump's public statements and the ongoing US blockade were the two most serious issues threatening talks. The official added that while both sides largely agreed on the outlines of a deal, Trump's public "maximalism" risked scuttling the diplomatic progress. Tensions

remained elevated in the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway through which about one-fifth of global oil trade passes. Iran briefly reopened the strait after the initial ceasefire but imposed new restrictions following the US Navy's seizure of an Iranian-flagged cargo ship that attempted to run the blockade over the weekend.

The Strait of Hormuz would remain blocked until a peace agreement is finalised, Trump said in a phone interview.

"They want me to open it. The Iranians desperately want it opened. I'm not opening it until a deal is signed," he said.

Despite the maritime standoff, some signs of domestic normalisation were underway in Iran. Iran's Civil Aviation Authority announced Monday that Tehran's main airports.

Two weeks after disciplinary action against Nepal minister, another cabinet incumbent faces questions

KATHMANDU

Soon after the removal of a minister on disciplinary grounds from Nepal's new government led by Balendra Shah, reports from Kathmandu now report financial irregularities allegations against another.

The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) assumed power with a landslide victory in the national election held on March 5, with promises of good governance, transparency, and people-oriented politics. "Following reports of Home Minister Sudan Gurung's investments that put him alongside businessman Deepak Bhatta, who is under investigation for money laundering, leaders within the ruling party are demanding a fair investigation," The Kathmandu Post reported.

Bhatta was arrested on April 1 and is being investigated by the Department of Money Laundering Investigation after being detained by the Nepal Police's Central Investigation Bureau, the report added.

"Two weeks ago, the RSP recalled Labour Minister Deepak Kumar Sah following controversy over the appointment of his wife to the Health Insurance Board. Party insiders say it cannot remain silent now that more serious



allegations have surfaced against Gurung," it noted.

Sah was removed from office after the RSP's central disciplinary commission found he had misused his position to keep his wife on the Health Insurance Board, a move the party said undermined its image and discipline. The Prime Minister acted on the party chair's recommendation and dismissed Sah. Gurung is under scrutiny after reports linked him to shareholdings in companies associated with a businessman under investigation for alleged money laundering.

The Home Minister, however, defended his asset declarations, saying his stock investments were disclosed and that any apparent omission was a matter of classification rather than concealment. His investments in Star Micro Insurance and Liberty Micro Life, he clarified, fall under the same share category as his other stock market holdings and are included accordingly.

Japan officially eases arms export rules to allow weapons sales despite protests

TOKYO

The Japanese government officially revised "the three principles on transfer of defence equipment and technology" and their implementation guidelines on Tuesday to allow overseas sales of weapons, including those with lethal capabilities, despite waves of large-scale protests, local media reported.

The revisions scrap rules that limit Japan's defence equipment exports to five non-combat categories, namely rescue, transport, warning, surveillance, and minesweeping.

Instead, defence equipment will be divided into "weapons" and "non-weapons" categories, based on whether they have lethal or destructive capabilities, reports Xinhua, quoting Kyodo News. The revision maintains unrestricted exports of non-weapons such as warning and control radar systems, while allowing the export of weapons, including destroyers and missiles, previously prohibited, to countries that have signed agreements with Japan on protecting classified information related to defence equipment and technology. Kyodo News commented that the changes mark a significant shift in defence policy for a country that has touted itself as a "peace-loving nation" under its war-renouncing Constitution since its defeat in World War II.

While the revisions in principle prohibit the export of arms to countries engaged in active conflicts, they do allow for exceptions "in special circumstances" that take into consideration Japan's security needs.

Under the revision, weapon exports will not require prior parliamentary approval. Instead, the National Security Council will make the decisions, with the Diet informed only after approval.

The lack of parliamentary involvement in the process has drawn criticism from opposition parties, which argue that prior parliamentary approval is necessary to prevent Japan from becoming involved in exacerbating conflicts or fueling arms races.

Since the revision plan came to light, it has sparked widespread concern and criticism across Japan, triggering waves of large-scale protests.

During an April 16 rally in front of the prime minister's office in Tokyo, protesters held placards reading "Oppose lifting the five-category restriction," "No to arms exports," and "Japan must not become a merchant of death," while chanting slogans such as "No repeating past mistakes" and "We reject war."



Pak enters over 20 IMF programmes, fails to break crisis cycle: Report

NEW DELHI

Pakistan has entered more than 20 programmes with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) over 65 years since 1958, and yet continues to remain trapped in a recurring cycle of economic crises, bailouts and temporary stabilisation without achieving durable structural reform, a report has lamented.

According to a report in The News International, latest concerns were reflected in the IMF's End-of-Mission Statement of March 2026, which once again highlighted familiar priorities such as fiscal consolidation, tight monetary policy, energy sector reforms and



managing external financing pressures.

The statement also flagged rising risks from geopolitical tensions in West Asia, elevated

energy prices and tightening global financial conditions, it said.

Despite repeated engagement with the IMF, Pakistan

has struggled to translate short-term stabilisation into sustained economic recovery.

The report points to deep-rooted structural weak-

nesses, including weak revenue mobilisation, persistent fiscal deficits, rising debt servicing costs and limited export growth. It also highlighted that total public debt reached Rs 79.32 trillion in January 2026, up from Rs 72.12 trillion a year earlier, an increase of about Rs 7.2 trillion or 10 per cent.

Moreover, the composition of debt has also shifted, with domestic borrowing now accounting for around 71 per cent of the total.

Meanwhile, domestic debt stood at Rs 55.98 trillion, while short-term borrowing remained elevated at Rs 8.78 trillion, pointing to ongoing refinancing risks and external debt stood at Rs 23.34 trillion.

At the same time, the country is required to meet gross external financing requirements of \$19.398 billion in 2025-26 and \$19.123 billion in 2026-27, even as it manages immediate repayment obligations, including about \$3.5 billion due to the UAE.

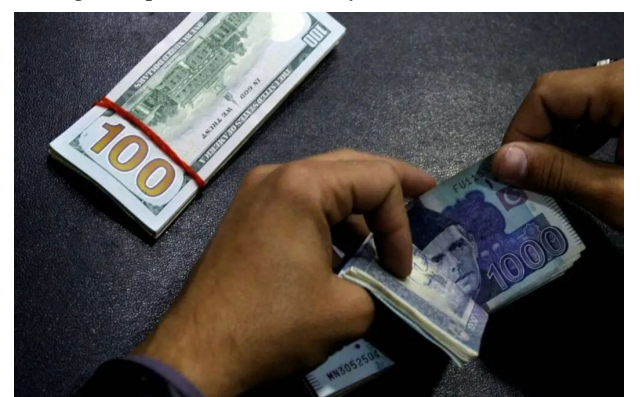
However, foreign exchange reserves remain under pressure, with total liquid reserves at \$21.789 billion as of March 27, 2026, including \$16.381 billion held by the State Bank of Pakistan.

Pakistan continues to rely on external support and rollover arrangements from key partners such as China and Saudi Arabia, alongside multilateral assistance, to manage its short-

term financing gaps, according to the report.

Additionally, government borrowing has crowded out private sector lending, with more than 80 per cent of bank credit flowing to the public sector.

In 2023, the IMF estimated Pakistan's debt-to-GDP ratio stood at around 75 per cent in recent years, which is above its legal threshold of 58 per cent, indicating elevated sustainability risks.



Centre Plans E85 Fuel Rollout, Draft Rules Soon

NEW DELHI:

With the West Asia crisis exposing vulnerabilities in the global oil export chain, the Union government will "very soon" issue draft rules on the roll-out of Ethanol 85 (E85), reported The Hindu, citing a senior government official. As per the official, the roll-out is expected in a couple of years. "Draft regulations will be notified very soon. There is consensus within the government. There is also market consensus and preliminary testing too has been carried out," the official told the newspaper. The E85 blend of fuel is made of up to 85% ethanol and 15% petrol (gasoline). The official said that the E85 blend will be introduced as a separate fuel

grade, different from E20. E20 presently allows ethanol blending up to 27%, under a notification issued in 2023. The official added that high levels of ethanol blending has several benefits, including "greater energy security for the country and a reduction in vehicular pollution, reported The Hindu. Such a high-ethanol fuel will also need engines to be compatible with it along with separate dispensing infrastructure at fuel pumps that will also dispense E20 petrol. Engines which are designed to run on E85 can also operate on lower ethanol blends, including E60 and E50. At present, from April 1, 2026, the government has mandated the sale of petrol with up to 20% ethanol across all States and Union Territories.

Record Rs1.68 Trillion FPI Outflow in Just 4 Months of 2026

The rupee too has weakened by 3-5% in 2026, including a 2.3% drop since the conflict began, to 93.1 per dollar, eroding returns for overseas investors.

NEW DELHI:

The cumulative outflow of Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) so far this year has already exceeded those of any full year previously, with the net sell-off by FPIs so far this year amounting to around Rs 1.68 trillion, reported Business Standard. Owing to the war in West Asia, the biggest exodus of FPIs was witnessed



in March wherein FPIs sold Indian equities worth Rs 1.1 trillion during the month. The increase in oil prices, because of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz widened the fiscal deficit, increased inflation and impacted growth because of India's heavy reliance on energy

imports. The impact of the West Asia crisis has also been felt by the Indian markets, with the Sensex declining 7.9% so far this year and the Nifty 6.8%, reported Business Standard. Similarly, the market capitalisation of Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)-listed

firms has fallen by 10.1 trillion to 465.7 trillion. The rupee too has weakened by 3-5% in 2026, including a 2.3% drop since the conflict began, to 93.1 per dollar, eroding returns for overseas investors. "We have seen significant rupee depreciation. While valuations can adjust, as seen last month, the currency's depreciation has wiped out returns for FPIs. "If the war ends and oil falls below \$80, we could see a rebound in the currency and a reversal in flows," Pramod Gubbi, co-founder of Marcellus Investment Managers, adding structural stability in the rupee is critical told Business Standard.



Sensex ends 753 points higher, Nifty climbs over 24,500; HUL up 4%

Benchmark stock market indices closed higher on Tuesday, supported by positive global cues and robust Q4 results from India Inc. FMCG and banking stocks were the biggest gainers.

bell, Trent Ltd led the Sensex gainers, rising 3.55%. It was followed by Hindustan Unilever Ltd, which gained 3.13%. ICICI Bank Ltd moved up 2.41%, while Bajaj Finance Ltd added 2.28%. HDFC Bank Ltd also ended higher, rising 2.04%.

The S&P BSE Sensex jumped 753.03 points to close at 79,273.33, while the NSE Nifty50 gained 211.75 points to end at 24,576.60.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said that amid hopes for progress in Iran-U.S. peace talks and supportive global cues, India's equity markets rebounded strongly. "FMCG and realty stocks led the rally, backed by solid earnings updates, while banking stocks gained after the RBI eased forex restrictions. Small caps outperformed broader indices," he added. After the closing

On the losing side, Bharat Electronics Ltd saw the sharpest fall, dropping 1.33%. Titan Company Ltd declined 0.88%, Reliance Industries Ltd was down 0.66%, NTPC Ltd slipped 0.45%, and Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd fell 0.39% at the close.

"In the near term, investors are expected to remain focused on corporate earnings, which are tracking in line with expectations, while monitoring developments in the U.S.-Iran conflict and trends in the rupee and crude oil prices, where signals remain positive," said Nair.

FCI Wheat Procurement in Delhi to Benefit 21,000 Farmers

NEW DELHI: (APR 21)

Procurement of wheat by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) will begin in Delhi after a gap of five years, following intervention of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, the CMO said in a statement on Tuesday. Local procurement of wheat, which will strengthen public distribution system in the city, will begin at Narela and Najafgarh mandis from April 24, it said. Gupta had intervened in the matter, urging the Centre for procurement of wheat through FCI that was stopped in 2021. The Centre has accepted the request, as per the statement.

NHC Foods acquires Hong Kong-based Conquer Enterprises

MUMBAI: (APR 21)

NHC Foods on Tuesday said it has completed the acquisition of Hong Kong-based Conquer Enterprises, which will help strengthen its presence in key global markets. The acquisition, through its wholly owned overseas subsidiary, NHC International LLC-FZ (Dubai), is expected to enhance international trading capabilities, strengthen its presence in key global markets, and diversify its product portfolio across high-demand sectors such as metals, steel, and agro commodities, a company statement said.

Raay Neo Pharma Launches with Focus on Quality, Patient-Centric Care

MUMBAI, APRIL 21, 2026

Raay Neo Pharma, a next-generation pharmaceutical company, has officially unveiled its operations with the aim to contribute to quality healthcare for all Indians. Founded using a flexible and scalable operational framework and supported by more than five decades of diverse entrepreneurial success, Raay Neo Pharma will be introducing its range of more than 90 formulations in both acute and specialized therapy segments, along with promising pipeline of novel formulations under development. Established by renowned entrepreneur Amit Patni, who comes from a rich family legacy behind creating Patni Computers and businesses in manufacturing, healthcare infrastructure, energy, and finance sectors, Raay Neo Pharma offers a unique blend of science, ethics, and consumer-centricity to India's emerging pharmaceutical landscape. Raay Neo Pharma caters to a comprehensive range of therapeutic areas including antibiotics, anti-diabetic medication,

gastro-intestinal products, pain & orthopaedic management, allergy & respiratory care, cardiac therapy, dermatology, proton pump inhibitors, among others. It is committed to providing branded generic drugs with precise formulations that cater to general and specific requirements while being dedicated to their efficiency and safety. With a strong geographical presence in a densely populated and highly influential states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi-NCR, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana & Andhra Pradesh and Goa among others - Raay Neo Pharma reaches about 55-60% of the Indian population bringing essential medicines to communities. What distinguishes Raay Neo Pharma is the depth of experience its leadership brings from beyond traditional pharmaceuticals. The promoters and directors have a background of more than 50 years of success in various sectors including finance, media, information technology, software, private equity, manu-



facturing, and energy. All these experiences have been leveraged towards effective implementation, governance, and innovation within the realm of healthcare. "As a company, we do not see pharmaceuticals as any regular business; instead, we see it as an endeavour towards sustainable development and nation building through healthcare. At Raay Neo Pharma, we recognize that the future of healthcare is not only scientific and operational, but deeply human in how it informs, inspires, and empowers the communities it serves. Our commitment extends beyond delivering medicines—we're building trust, fostering transparency, and creating meaningful connections with every stakeholder in the healthcare ecosystem," commented Amit Patni, Founder, Raay Neo Pharma. Raay Neo Pharma oper-

ates on a dynamic business model that integrates its own branded formulations with strategic collaborations with leading manufacturers, enabling broader access to innovative therapies while maintaining rigorous standards of quality and safety. The company's agile operating framework is designed for rapid response to evolving healthcare needs while ensuring uncompromising quality control and sustainable growth. By leveraging global best practices, investing in indigenous research and development, and building a skilled professional team, Raay Neo Pharma is establishing itself as a trusted partner for clinicians, healthcare providers, and patients across India. With one of the fastest-expanding pharmaceutical portfolios in its segment and a foundation built on ethical, patient-first principles, Raay Neo Pharma is poised to become a defining force in India's healthcare transformation. **About Raay Neo Pharma** Raay Neo Pharma is a fast-growing pharmaceutical company committed to advanc-

ing health through high-quality, accessible medicines across acute and specialty therapeutic areas. With 90+ products in the market and new formulations in the pipeline, the company combines its own branded portfolio with strategic licensing collaborations to expand access to innovative therapies. With a strong footprint across high-population and high-impact regions—covering 55-60% of India's population, including Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi-NCR, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Goa—Raay Neo Pharma ensures broad and meaningful patient reach. Built on an agile, scalable operating model designed for speed, uncompromising quality, and long-term sustainable growth, the company is anchored in ethical, patient-first healthcare—combining global best practices with indigenous R&D to consistently deliver dependable, high-quality medicines that strengthen India's healthcare ecosystem.

RBI Cautious Amid Iran War Tensions

NEW DELHI, APRIL 21

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor, Sanjay Malhotra, on Tuesday said the central bank is adopting a cautious "wait-and-watch" approach amid the ongoing Middle East crisis, emphasising the need for policy flexibility in an uncertain global environment. "We are therefore in wait and watch mode now. Moreover, we have been maintaining a neutral stance for the last few policy cycles. It preserves the flexibility to respond as the inflation-growth dynamics evolve," he said.

Governor Malhotra added, "In uncertain times such as these, it is important to be agile and nimble, maintain a broad policy stance, and avoid making firm commitments about the future path of policy. In such circumstances, our broad approach has been to be even more data-dependent and to continuously reassess the balance of risks."

He said the current crisis impacts India, as West Asia contributes about one-sixth of our exports, one-fifth of our imports, half of our crude oil imports, two-fifths of our fertiliser imports, and almost



two-fifths of our inward remittances. "The appropriate monetary policy response to such a supply shock is to look through the first-round effects, to the extent that they do not feed into second-round dynamics. Second-round ef-

fects are the real concern. They can materialise if supply chain disruptions continue for long. Then, what began as a supply shock can become embedded in the general price level. Preventing this entrenchment is where monetary policy has a primary role to play—through its influence on inflation expectations rather than through blunt demand compression," he added.

He said the second-round effects of supply shocks are the real concern, when inflation expectations rise due to prolonged supply disruptions, and preventing such a

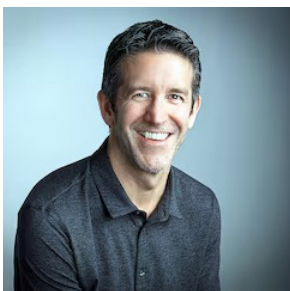
situation is the primary role of monetary policy. The Governor further said that the central bank's intervention in the foreign exchange (forex) market was as warranted and that it did not commit to an "indefensible peg".

"India's current account deficit was manageable and foreign currency exposure reasonable. The lesson is that, for a country at India's stage of development, the sequencing of capital account liberalisation is not a technicality—it is a first-order question of macroeconomic sovereignty," he said.

John Ternus set to become new CEO of Apple

NEW DELHI, APR 21

John Ternus, Senior Vice President of Hardware Engineering at Apple, is set to become the new chief executive officer (CEO) of the company on September 1, 2026, an Apple blog said here on Tuesday. Apple's current CEO, Tim Cook, will become Executive Chairman of Apple's Board of Directors. This transition was approved unanimously by the Board of Directors following a thoughtful and long-term succession planning process. To ensure a smooth transition, Cook will continue to remain CEO this summer. On his appointment as CEO, John Ternus said, "I am profoundly grateful for this opportunity to carry Apple's mission forward. Having spent almost my entire career at Apple, I have been lucky to work under Steve Jobs and to have had Tim Cook as my mentor." "It has been a privilege to help shape the product and experiences that have changed so much of how we interact with the world and with one another," Ternus added. Sharing his experiences as Apple's CEO for many years, Tim Cook said, "It has been the greatest privilege of my life to be the



CEO of Apple and to have been trusted to lead such an extraordinary company. I love Apple with all of my being, and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with the team of such ingenious, innovative, creative and deeply caring people who have been unwavering in their dedication to enriching the lives of our customers and creating the best products and services in the world." Under Tim Cook's leadership, the company reduced its carbon footprint by more than 60% below 2015 levels during a period in which revenue doubled. Ternus joined Apple's product design team in 2001 and rose to the post of Senior Vice President of Hardware Engineering in 2013. During his tenure, Ternus contributed a lot to releasing Apple's different product lines, like iPad and AirPods.

Apple shares rise 1% after Tim Cook exit, John Ternus named CEO

The stock closed at \$273.05, up \$2.82 or 1.04%, reflecting a measured but positive reaction from investors to the unexpected leadership change as John Ternus steps up to lead Apple. Tim Cook leaves behind a \$4 trillion market cap legacy after 15 years at helm.



Shares of Apple ended higher on Monday after the company announced that Tim Cook will step down as chief executive and be replaced by longtime insider John Ternus. The stock closed at \$273.05, up \$2.82 or 1.04%, reflecting a measured but positive reaction from investors to the unexpected leadership change. The gains suggest that markets are viewing the transition as stable, given that Apple has once again chosen an internal candidate to lead the company. Apple said Ternus, currently its hardware chief, will take over as CEO from September 1, while Cook will move into the role of executive chairman. The decision

came as a surprise to Wall Street, raising immediate questions about whether the new leadership can sustain Apple's growth trajectory. Despite the uncertainty, the stock's rise indicates investor confidence in Apple's succession planning and its ability to maintain continuity at the top.

TERNUS TAKES CHARGE AT A CRUCIAL TIME

Ternus, who joined Apple in 2001, has been a key figure behind the company's core products, including Macs, iPads and AirPods. He has also been credited with helping revive the Mac business and sharpening Apple's product

lineup with both premium and more affordable offerings. His appointment comes at a critical moment for Apple, which is facing increasing pressure in artificial intelligence and semiconductor innovation. The company recently lost its position as the world's most valuable firm to chipmaker Nvidia, as investors grow concerned about its pace in AI development.

AI PUSH TO DEFINE NEXT PHASE

One of the biggest challenges for Ternus will be integrating artificial intelligence more deeply into Apple's ecosystem, especially the iPhone, widely regarded as the most successful consumer product globally. Earlier this year, Apple partnered with Google to bring its Gemini AI model into Siri, signalling a push to strengthen its capabilities in the fast-evolving AI space. Analysts expect Apple under Ternus to accelerate work on new categories such as AI-powered devices, smart wearables and potentially foldable hardware, as it looks to regain momentum in

COOK ERA LEAVES A MASSIVE LEGACY

Cook's exit marks the end of a 15-year tenure that transformed Apple into a global powerhouse. When he took over from Steve Jobs in 2011, Apple's market value stood at around \$350 billion. Under his leadership, it surged to nearly \$4 trillion. Revenue also saw a sharp rise, growing from \$108 billion in 2011 to over \$416 billion in 2025. Apple expanded its retail footprint to more than 500 stores globally and built an installed base of over 2.5 billion devices. The modest rise in Apple shares suggests that investors are not alarmed by the leadership change, but are taking a wait-and-watch approach. While the internal transition provides stability, the real test for the stock will depend on how quickly the company can deliver on innovation, particularly in artificial intelligence. For now, the market response indicates cautious optimism as Apple prepares for its next chapter under John Ternus.

US begins USD 166 billion tariff refunds, Indian exporters left without direct claim route

NEW DELHI, APR 21

The United States government has initiated the long-awaited process of refunding billions of dollars in tariffs after the Supreme Court of the United States struck down duties imposed by President Donald Trump earlier this year. While the move unlocks an estimated USD 166 billion in refunds, Indian exporters impacted by the tariff regime are unlikely to benefit directly. According to the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), Indian exporters do not have a legal mechanism to claim refunds from US authorities. The refunded duties are payable only to US-based importers who had originally borne the tariff burden at the time of entry. GTRI has advised Indian exporters to proactively engage with their American buyers to negotiate a share of the refunded amounts. "The refunds will flow only to US importers, making commercial negotiations critical for exporters seeking compensation," the think tank noted. The tariffs, introduced on April 2, 2025, targeted multiple countries, in-



cluding India, and significantly impacted outbound shipments. Of the total USD 166 billion eligible for refunds, nearly USD 12 billion is estimated to be linked to imports of Indian-origin goods. Tariffs on Indian exports began at 10 per cent and were subsequently raised in phases—touching 25 pc by August 7 and escalating further to 50 pc by August 28, where they remained until early February 2026. The sweeping tariff framework was eventually invalidated by the US Supreme Court on February 20, rendering the duties legally void. The refund process, however, comes with procedural constraints. As per reports, US importers must file detailed claims through an online system, including shipment-level data, tariff classifications and proof of duty payments.



Bengaluru Farm Grows 25,000 Mango Trees with Drones & AI

At this farm in Bengaluru, a unique confluence of tradition and technology is reshaping the contours of mango cultivation. Here lies MangoMaze – a thriving orchard of 25,000 mango trees, where mangoes are being grown using drones, drip irrigation systems, and sensors to manage resources precisely. The AI-driven drones quietly hum across the canopy, collecting vital data on tree health and pest presence. These flying marvels send real-time imagery and analytics back to the farm's nerve centre, where adjustments in care can be curated with precision. Drip irrigation systems reduce water use by a remarkable

70 percent by using technology to target specific needs rather than blanket irrigation, ensuring that every droplet counts in nurturing the luscious Ratnagiri Alphonso mangoes to perfection. This minimises wastage and ensures that each tree receives the necessary nourishment. Interestingly, this method intensively plants 1,450 trees per acre – 15 times the traditional amount. Behind this is the quantum density farming technique employed by Suraj Panigrahy. We sat down with him to learn how this technique can redefine the way mangoes are grown in India.

Why Europe has all the fun

A BITS Pilani alumnus, Suraj worked for about two decades in the corporate sector at companies like Wipro, Nokia, and Make My Trip, before embarking on this unique journey that takes him back to his roots. With his father serving in the Indian Navy, Suraj's formative years were spent across various parts of India, unknowingly sowing the seeds of a global perspective. His professional stints took him across continents, from the US to Europe, where he absorbed diverse agricultural practices, notably grapevine farming in Europe.

During his time working with an agritech startup focused on the vineyards and wine industry, Suraj was exposed to a fusion of advanced analytics and farming methods across various European countries, including Austria, Italy, Germany, and France. This exposure introduced him to the high efficiency and market sophistication of the European grape cultivation methods. "Those grapevines flourished in tight proximity, each precisely nurtured with an exact mix of nutrients and care. I was impressed by how these practices elevated the humble grape into a celebrated commodity within the glorified wine industry," he shares. "What if Indian mangoes could be cultivated with the same precision?" he pondered. Recognising the scalable model and potential for replication, Suraj began to envision similar possibilities for Indian crops, particularly the globally recognised Alphonso mango. Thus, the concept of MangoMaze took root.

The science behind the sweetness

Suraj began transforming his vision into reality by acquiring a 15-acre plot of barren land in Bengaluru. In 2018, he began setting up the infrastructure and planting the saplings, and formally launched MangoMaze in

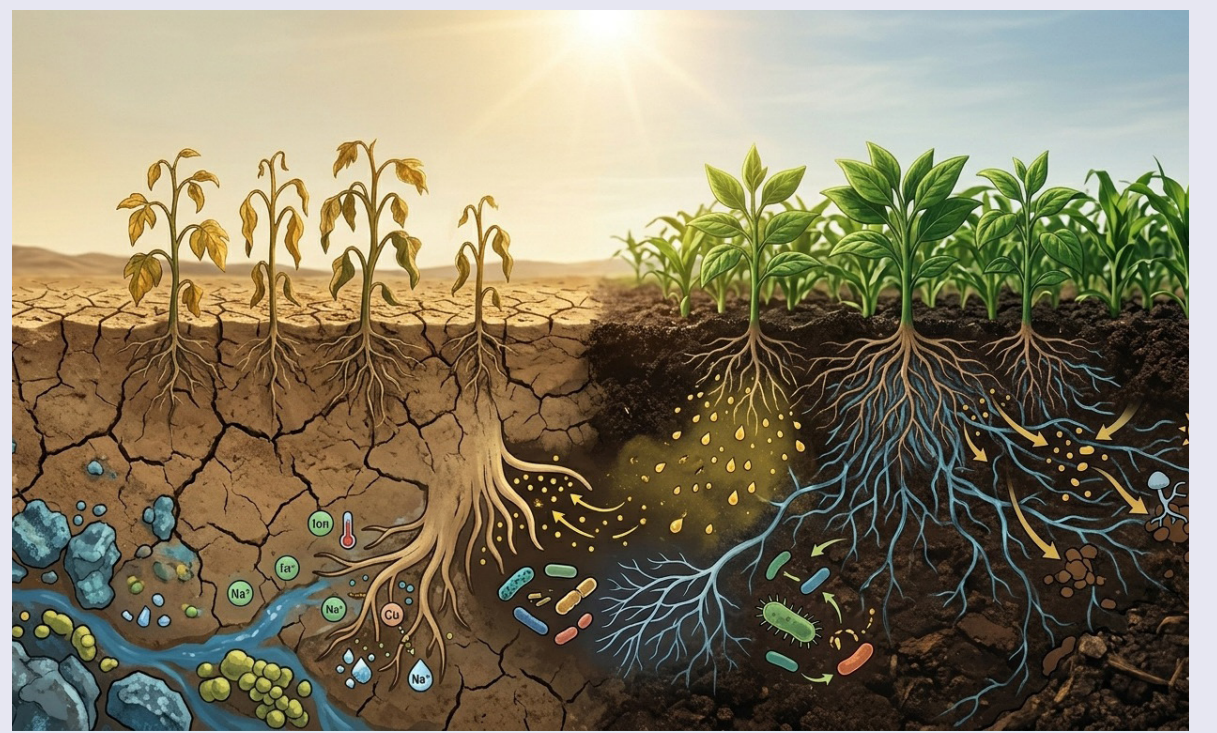
2021. Through his efforts, Suraj has adopted advanced technologies such as drones and IoT-driven drip irrigation systems to optimise resource efficiency. In stark contrast to conventional methods, where 50 to 80 mango trees spread languidly across an acre, Suraj's farm boasts a bustling orchard with 25,000 trees on 15 acres. The strategy hinges on precision: trees are planted just three feet apart, with seven feet between rows. "The strategic planting involves positioning trees three feet apart with a seven-foot gap between rows. This allows us to maximise yield by planting 1,450 trees per acre, at least 15 times denser than traditional farming. This significantly boosts the yield up to seven times. We estimate a production of about 40 tonnes of mangoes this season. So far in 2025 alone, we have sold over 50,000 boxes of Alphonso mangoes," he explains. Behind maintaining such density without overcrowding lies the real magic in the farm's orchestration of advanced technology – a symphonic harmony of artificial intelligence, drones, and sensors. Prashant Patalay, who leads the innovative tech vision behind MangoMaze's AI-powered platform for farm digitisation, shares, "By utilising IoT sensors, satellite imagery, and AI dashboards, we diligently monitor soil health, irrigation, and pest activity. Our cutting-edge tools include precision irrigation systems, microclimate sensors, solar weather stations, and AI yield prediction models." The use of AI-driven drones and advanced soil and plant health monitoring systems ensures no need is overlooked. Drones elegantly glide over the orchard, analysing crop health and guiding interventions. Drip irrigation systems precisely regulate water use, whereas sensors monitor soil nutrients, ensuring each tree receives tailored nutrition. The traditional method relies heavily on natural rainfall or flood irrigation, which can lead to inefficient water usage. Pest control often involves the

use of chemical pesticides that can affect the soil health and plant quality over time.

This intelligent use of data to inform planting, fertilization, and harvesting schedules leads to enhanced productivity and quality. Prashant, the chief technology officer, reiterates, "The benefits of this setup include higher crop yields, reduced water usage, improved disease control, and consistent fruit quality. The data-driven approach optimises yield density per acre while minimising inputs. Crucially, it empowers farmers with data-driven decision-making, export readiness, and enhanced market access through our digital ecosystem." By integrating these learned practices, MangoMaze redefined traditional Indian mango farming methods, channeling the same strategic vision he saw in Europe into the development of India's first Quantum Density Mango Farm. Suraj, who is currently based out of Barcelona, manages the farm with the help of local labourers and farmers, who have been engaged through their smart farm management systems software.

'Why shouldn't Alphonso stand in equal to Europe's finest wines?'

Suraj's ambition stretches beyond cultivation; he aims to reposition Indian mangoes in the global market. "Why shouldn't the Alphonso stand on equal footing with Europe's finest wines?" he questions. Indeed, despite being the largest mango producer, India exports only a fraction of its fruits. Due to less intensive agronomic practices, Suraj says, the yield in traditional farms is relatively lower. "The quality and consistency of mangoes might vary, affecting the marketability on a global scale. Only about 10-12 percent of Indian mangoes are exported due to these quality constraints. A significant barrier has been inconsistent quality; MangoMaze seeks to change that narrative through standardisation.



Hidden Helpers

Plant Microbiomes Boost Climate Resilience

In the shadow of a rapidly warming planet, the quest for agricultural sustainability has often focused on the visible: the genetic modification of seeds, the precision of chemical fertilizers, and the engineering of massive irrigation systems. However, a profound biological revolution is taking place beneath the soil surface, centered on a hidden world that has existed for hundreds of millions of years. This is the realm of the plant microbiome—a complex, invisible community of bacteria, fungi,

viruses, and archaea that colonize every part of a plant, from its deepest roots to its highest leaves. Much like the human gut microbiome dictates our health and immunity, the plant microbiome acts as an externalized digestive and immune system. As the climate crisis intensifies, characterized by prolonged droughts, saline soils, and unprecedented heat waves, these microbial partners are emerging as the most potent tools in our arsenal for building climate-resilience in the crops that feed the world.

The Holobiont: Plants and Microbes as One System

To understand the power of the plant microbiome, one must first appreciate the "holobiont" concept, which posits that a plant and its associated microbes are not separate entities but a single, integrated evolutionary unit. In the rhizosphere—the narrow zone of soil surrounding a plant's roots—a sophisticated chemical dialogue occurs. Plants expend up to 40% of the carbon they fix through photosynthesis to secrete "exudates," a cocktail of sugars, organic acids, and proteins. This is not a wasteful leak; it is a calculated investment. These exudates serve as a calling card, recruiting specific beneficial microbes that can perform tasks the plant cannot do alone. In exchange for carbon, these microbes unlock essential nutrients like phosphorus, fix atmospheric nitrogen, and produce growth-stimulating hormones. In the context of climate change, this partnership shifts from a mere nutritional exchange to a critical survival strategy.

These microbes produce ACC deaminase, an enzyme that lowers the levels of ethylene—a stress hormone that normally inhibits root growth during drought. By suppressing this "panic signal," microbes allow the plant to continue developing its root system, reaching deeper into the soil to tap into dwindling water reserves.

Fungal Networks: Extending the Plant's Reach

Furthermore, many fungi, particularly Arbuscular Mycorrhizal Fungi (AMF), extend long, thread-like structures called hyphae far beyond the reach of the roots. These hyphae act as a secondary plumbing system, transporting water and minerals back to the host plant from pores in the soil that are too small for even the finest root hairs to penetrate.

Induced Systemic Tolerance: Internal Stress Protection

Beyond physical water acquisition, the microbiome facilitates a process known as Induced Systemic Tolerance (IST). When a plant is colonised by beneficial microbes, its internal chemistry undergoes a fundamental shift. Microbes can trigger the accumulation of osmoprotectants—solutes like proline and glycine betaine—that help plant cells retain water and maintain structural integrity under high temperatures. They also bolster the plant's antioxidant defense systems, neutralizing reactive oxygen species

(ROS) that typically damage cells during heat stress.

Microbial Solutions to Soil Salinity

As sea levels rise and erratic rainfall patterns increase soil salinity, microbes play a vital role in stress mitigation. Salt-tolerant bacteria help plants maintain ion balance by regulating sodium levels, either storing excess salt in roots or pushing it back into the soil. This protects the plant's photosynthetic system and allows crops to survive in degraded soils.

Microbial Engineering and Synthetic Communities

The emerging field of microbial engineering aims to restore balance through "synthetic communities" (SynComs)—carefully designed groups of microbes that enhance specific plant traits like drought or salt tolerance. These are more stable and effective than traditional microbial applications.

Microbiome and Carbon Sequestration

A healthy microbiome also contributes to climate mitigation. Microbes, especially fungi, help trap carbon in the soil through substances like glomalin, improving soil structure and preventing carbon release into the atmosphere.

Challenges in Real-World Application

Despite its promise, microbiome-based agriculture faces challenges. Soil conditions vary

Natural Protection Against Pests and Diseases

The microbiome also acts as the plant's first line of defense against pests and pathogens. Beneficial microbes produce natural antibiotics and antifungal compounds. They can also trigger Induced Systemic Resistance (ISR), effectively preparing the plant's immune system to respond faster and stronger to future attacks.

Rethinking Agriculture: Beyond the Green Revolution

Harnessing microbial power requires a shift from the traditional Green Revolution approach, which relied heavily on chemical inputs and monocultures. Over time, such practices have reduced soil microbial diversity, weakening plant resilience.

widely, making it difficult to apply a one-size-fits-all solution. Additionally, regulatory frameworks and delivery systems for microbial products are still evolving.

Conclusion: Embracing Invisible Allies

Ultimately, plant microbiomes offer a powerful, nature-based solution to climate challenges. By working with these invisible allies, agriculture can become more resilient, sustainable, and capable of feeding a growing global population in an uncertain future.

For decades, the sprawling cotton fields of India have been both a source of national pride and a theater of persistent agrarian struggle. As the world's largest producer of cotton, India sustains millions of livelihoods through this "White Gold." However, despite the massive acreage dedicated to the crop, India's average productivity has historically lagged behind global benchmarks. The conventional cultivation model, characterized by widely spaced plants and a heavy reliance on Bt hybrid seeds, has hit a plateau, further threatened by erratic monsoons and evolving pest pressures like the Pink Bollworm. Enter the High-Density Planting System (HDPS)—a transformative agronomic shift that promises to break this cycle of stagnation by reimagining the very architecture of the cotton farm.

The traditional Indian cotton model is built on "low-density" logic. Farmers typically plant roughly 5,000 to 7,000 plants per acre, allowing each hybrid plant to grow large and bushy. While this worked for a time, it created significant vulnerabilities. Large, spreading plants take longer to mature, leaving them exposed to late-season pests and moisture stress. In contrast, HDPS turns this philosophy on its head. By utilizing compact, short-duration varieties and planting them much closer together, farmers can increase plant populations to anywhere

between 25,000 and 30,000 plants per acre. This is not merely about crowding more seeds into the soil; it is a sophisticated system of resource optimization that synchronizes plant growth with environmental availability.

At the heart of the HDPS transformation is the transition from hybrids to straight-line varieties. In the conventional system, expensive hybrid seeds are a major recurring cost for farmers. HDPS favors varieties that are genetically predisposed to be "compact"—plants that grow vertically with shorter branches. These varieties have a shorter phenological cycle, maturing in about 150 to 160 days compared to the 180 to 210 days required by traditional hybrids. This condensed timeframe is a game-changer for climate resilience. By maturing earlier, the crop often escapes the peak infestation period of the Pink Bollworm, which typically intensifies late in the season. Furthermore, in rainfed regions like Vidarbha and Telangana, an early-maturing crop can be harvested before the soil moisture completely depletes following the withdrawal of the monsoon.

The economic implications of HDPS are profound. While the initial seed requirement is higher due to the increased density, the use of non-hybrid, straight-line varieties can actually lower the overall cost of cultivation over time. More importantly, the concentrated "boll-setting" in HDPS leads to a more uniform harvest. In traditional systems, bolls at the bottom of the plant mature much earlier than those at the top, lead-



HDPS Transforms India's 'White Gold' Cotton Farming

ing to multiple pickings and inconsistent fiber quality. In a high-density setup, the majority of bolls mature simultaneously. This synchronized bursting not only improves the efficiency of manual labor but also paves the way for the eventual introduction of mechanical harvesters—a necessity as agricultural labor becomes increasingly scarce and expensive in rural India.

However, implementing HDPS is not as simple as changing the spacing on a seed drill; it requires a holistic management approach. Canopy management is critical. Because the plants are so close together, there is a risk of excessive vegetative growth, which can lead to poor aeration and increased humidity within the crop rows—conditions that invite sucking pests and boll rot. To counter

this, HDPS relies on the strategic use of growth regulators, such as Mepiquat Chloride. These chemical "brakes" prevent the plants from becoming too tall and leafy, instead forcing the plant to divert its energy into reproductive growth, namely the cotton bolls. This precision ensures that the "fruiting zone" is optimized for maximum yield per unit area.

The role of technology and mechanization in the success of HDPS cannot be overstated. For the system to be viable at scale, precision sowing is essential. Traditional manual dibbling is too slow and imprecise for the high seed rates required by HDPS. Pneumatic planters and tractor-drawn seed drills are now being adapted to ensure uniform depth and spacing, which is vital for a synchronized crop stand. Moreover, because HDPS creates a more structured field environment, it allows for more efficient application of fertilizers and pesticides. Instead of broad-spectrum spraying, farmers can utilize narrow-boom sprayers or even drone technology to target the crop more effectively, reducing chemical runoff and environmental impact.

Soil health and nutrient management also take on a new dimension under HDPS. With five times the number of plants per acre, the demand for nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium is concentrated in a shorter window. This necessitates a move toward "spoon-feeding" the crop through fertigation or split applications of fertilizer. While this requires more active management, it results in higher nutrient-use efficiency. The dense canopy

also serves as a natural mulch, shading the soil more quickly than widely spaced crops. This "early ground cover" reduces soil evaporation and suppresses weed growth, which is one of the most significant hidden costs in cotton farming.

Despite the clear benefits, the transition to HDPS in India faces several hurdles. The most significant is the mindset shift required from the farming community. For generations, a "good" cotton plant was seen as a large, tree-like bush laden with bolls. Persuading farmers that a field of smaller, "thinner" plants can actually yield more requires intensive extension work and successful demonstration plots. Furthermore, the availability of high-quality, compact varieties suited for different agro-climatic zones is still catching up with the demand. Public research institutions and private seed companies must collaborate to fast-track the breeding of varieties that are not only compact but also carry the necessary resistance to local pests and diseases.

The government's role is equally pivotal. Policies that incentivize the adoption of HDPS—such as subsidies for specialized sowing machinery or the promotion of compact varieties through the National Food Security Mission—can accelerate the shift. In states like Maharashtra and Karnataka, pilot projects have already shown that HDPS can increase yields by 20% to 30% while reducing the duration of the crop. These success stories need to be scaled up through a "hub-and-spoke" model where lead farmers act as ambassadors for the technology.



Abhishek's century powers SRH to third spot with 47-run win over DC



HYDERABAD

Opener Abhishek Sharma scored an impressive unbeaten 135 from 68 balls as Sunrisers Hyderabad reached 242 for 2 and secured a 47-run victory over Delhi Capitals in Match 31 of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad on Monday.

The left-hander's innings was a lesson in controlled aggression. He reached his fifty in just 25 balls and got his ninth T20 hundred in 47 balls, pacing the innings well before launching a fierce attack. By the 15-over mark, he moved ahead of Heinrich Klaasen in the Orange Cap race, highlighting his dominance this season.

SRH started their innings steadily but quickly gained momentum. Delhi briefly regained some control with Nitish Rana's offspin during the Power-play, allowing just six runs while SRH scored 15 for no loss after two overs. However, the strategy backfired once the batters found their rhythm. When Rana returned after SRH reached 36 for no loss in four overs,



he was taken apart in a 20-run over with three sixes, pushing the score to 56 without loss. Abhishek led the way, scoring 21 off 12 and dominating the attack along with Travis Head. The two put together another smooth partnership in the Power-play, taking SRH to 67 for no loss. The final ball of this phase marked the team's 70th six of the season, surpassing Royal Challengers Bengaluru's total of 69.

Head, who began cautiously, accel-

erated to 37 off 26 before getting out at 97 for 1 in 8.5 overs. He mis-hit a long hop from Axar Patel to deep mid-wicket after hitting two sixes in the over. However, this breakthrough did not slow SRH. Ishan Kishan added a quick 25 off 13 before being run out at the non-striker's end, bringing Klaasen to the crease at a key moment. The South African finished the innings with a powerful 37 off just 13 balls, helping SRH easily exceed the 240-mark.

In the middle overs, Kuldeep Yadav struggled as SRH raced to 126 for 1 in 11 overs, with Abhishek and Kishan attacking aggressively. Even though conditions looked perfect for reverse swing on a dry pitch, Delhi's seamers, including Mukesh Kumar, could not find any movement, allowing SRH to take control.

Delhi's chase, though spirited, faced the challenge of a huge target. They fought hard and had moments of resistance, but early mistakes in the field—dropped catches, a missed run-out, and poor bowling changes—proved costly. With spinners Axar and Kuldeep bowling only two overs each and Rana conceding 55 runs in his four overs, DC struggled to take control. Nitish Rana, brought into the playing XI for this match, top-scored with 57 while Sameer Rizvi contributed 41 runs but in the end that proved insufficient.

The defeat leaves Delhi regretting missed chances, while SRH, fueled by Abhishek's outstanding century, celebrated their third straight win and climbed to third on the points table, overtaking the Rajasthan Royals.

Boost for Mumbai Indians as Will Jacks joins squad ahead of CSK clash

MUMBAI

Ahead of their key clash with fellow five-time champions Chennai Super Kings, the Mumbai Indians got some good news as England all-rounder Will Jacks joined the squad and attended an optional training session at the Wankhede Stadium on Tuesday.

The Mumbai Indians on Tuesday put up a post through their social media handles explaining that Will Jacks has joined the squad after seeking an exemption for personal reasons. Jacks missed the first six matches of the season as he requested a "slightly extended time [off] for personal reasons."

"Bas! No more 'Where is?' 'Kidhar hai?' 'Joining when?'" comments! Mumbai Indians wrote in a social media post, which was accompanied by a video showing Jacks in the Wankhede Stadium stands.

Later, Jacks, a batting all-rounder who bowls spin, also participated in an optional training session organised by the team ahead of their upcoming clash with Chennai Super Kings at the Wankhede



Stadium in Mumbai.

Mumbai Indians have finally won their second match of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 on Monday night, handing the Gujarat Titans a massive 99-run defeat at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

The win took them to the seventh position in the points table, joining Gujarat Titans and Chennai Super Kings on four points from six matches. However, they are placed ahead of GT and CSK thanks to a better Net Run Rate.

Victory against CSK will

catapult them higher into the points table and propel them towards a spot in the playoffs.

Mumbai Indians had won their opening match against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Wankhede before suffering four successive defeats. They have struggled with their bowling as space spearhead Jasprit Bumrah had failed to claim a wicket in the first five matches. The win against GT has revived their hopes of making it to the next stage of IPL 2026 for a second successive year after losing to Punjab Kings in Qualifier 2 last year.

'Always special to perform in front of the orange army', says Abhishek Sharma

HYDERABAD

Sunrisers Hyderabad opener Abhishek Sharma credited clarity of role and support from teammates for his match-defining hundred, saying performing in front of the 'Orange Army' made the effort even more special.

Hyderabad rode on a sensational, controlled assault from Abhishek, whose blistering yet calculated century powered them to a commanding 242/2 in 20 overs against Delhi Capitals in the 31st match of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium.

The left-handed southpaw struck 135 off 68 including ten sixes and as many boundaries. Abhishek underlined the significance of delivering at home, while also acknowledging the



opposition's execution at the death. "I mean of course it's always special to perform in front of the orange army. The way they bowled in the death overs, I thought they were executing their plans. I think I haven't practiced death batting much. But the way (Heinrich) Klaasen played, it helped us get to that total."

The left-hander revealed

that Klaasen played a key role in helping him stay composed when he began forcing the pace. "He just wanted me to maintain the shape. I was trying too hard to find the boundary. That was because I don't play much in the death overs. I just wanted to give him the strike because we know how dangerous he can be in the death overs."



Haryana crowned champions at Senior National Rugby 7s, Maharashtra finish runners-up

RAJGIR

Haryana were crowned champions in the men's category of the 13th Senior National Rugby Sevens after a hard-fought 17-12 victory over Maharashtra in the final at the State Sports Complex, here on Tuesday.

The final lived up to expectations as a closely contested encounter, with both teams showcasing high-intensity rugby. Haryana held their nerve in key moments to edge past Maharashtra, reclaiming the national title after finishing runners-up last year. Earlier in the day, West Bengal secured the bronze medal with a 26-5 win over Rajasthan in the 3rd place playoff, delivering a composed performance to finish on the podium once again.

The knockout stage began with the Pre-Quarterfinals on Day 1, where teams battled through high-pressure encounters to secure their place in the last eight. The Quarterfinals saw a mix of dominant performances and closely fought matches, with Maharashtra, West Bengal, Haryana, and Rajasthan

advancing to the semi-finals.

In the semi-finals, Maharashtra ended West Bengal's title defence with a 36-5 victory, while Haryana defeated Rajasthan 38-0, setting up a repeat of the 2021 final between two of the most consistent teams in this year's competition.

The final was a closely contested encounter, with Haryana taking an early lead through Neeraj Khatri. Maharashtra responded through Sunil Chawan, but Mohit Khatri restored Haryana's advantage soon after. A crucial try by Ajay Deswal, followed by a conversion from Deepak Kumar Punia, extended Haryana's lead heading into the closing stages. Maharashtra fought back with a try from Prashant Singh, along with a conversion by Shridhar Nigade, to close the gap. Despite the late surge, Haryana held their composure in the final moments to secure a 17-12 victory and reclaim the national title.

Rahul Bose, President, Rugby India, said, "The Senior National Rugby 7s Championship 2026 was a clear indicator of how the sport has progressed in

the country. Players are faster, stronger, and fitter. They have greater skill on the run, defences are more technical and fearless, and almost every team has realised the importance of playing to a structure. Congratulations to Haryana on a well-deserved title in the Men's category, and to Odisha for their outstanding victory in the Women's competition. My compliments to all the players for being excellent ambassadors of the sport, both on and off the field."

Individually, Rajan Rawat of Rajasthan finished as the top scorer of the tournament with an impressive 76 points (eight tries and 18 conversions). Maharashtra's Shridhar Nigade followed with 59 points, while West Bengal's Karan Rajbhar secured third place with 55 points, underlining the attacking quality on display throughout the competition.

With the conclusion of the men's competition, the 13th edition of the Senior National Rugby Sevens Championship comes to a close, marking another successful chapter in the growth of rugby in India.

ISL 2026: Chennaiyin FC held to a draw by Mohammedan SC at home

CHENNAI: Chennaiyin FC were forced to settle for a goalless draw against Mohammedan SC at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Tuesday, despite controlling large spells of the contest and creating the better chances.

The Marina Machans showed attacking intent throughout but were unable to find the decisive breakthrough in front of home support.

Head coach Clifford Rayes Miranda handed Klusner Pereira his first start of the Indian Super League (ISL). Further ahead, Maheson Singh and Imran Khan returned to the starting eleven, while Irfan Yadwad joined Daniel Chima Chukwu in attack.

Chennaiyin began on the front foot, looking to build on their previous victory with early attacking intent.

Venus Williams loses 10 matches in a row with defeat at the Madrid Open

MADRID

Former World No.1 Venus Williams's struggles continued on her return to the circuit as the veteran American star, who has won seven Grand Slam titles in her career, lost her 10th singles match in a row at the Madrid Open on Tuesday.

The 45-year-old Williams lost her 6-2, 6-4 to Kaitlin Quevedo in the first round at the Madrid Open and became the first former number one to lose 10 matches in a row since the rankings were first published in 1975.

According to the WTA Tour records, the veteran last won a match in July 2025 when she defeated fellow American Peyton Stearns at the Washington Open. The American star has won the Wimbledon title five times, triumphing on the hallowed grass courts in 2000, 2001, 2005, 2007, and 2008.

Besides that, she won the U.S. Open in 2000 and 2001. She holds the record for most appearances at a Grand



Slam, with this year's Australian Open her 95th tournament. The 20-year-old Quevedo of Spain is ranked 140 in the world and was playing in her first WTS 1000 match.

The wildcard came from 3-0 down in the second set to defeat 2010 finalist Williams, who had won six of her eight Grand Slam titles before her opponent

was born. Williams was granted a wild card entry into this year's Indian Wells tournament, organisers confirmed. The 45-year-old American is scheduled to compete in doubles, too, at the prestigious event in the Southern California desert.

Meanwhile, fresh off a Sunshine Double sweep and Miami Open title defense, World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka will now begin her clay-court season eyeing to defend her 2025 Madrid crown. The Spanish capital has been a historically successful city for Sabalenka, who's reached the final four of the past five editions with three championships in 2021, 2023 and 2025. She dropped only one set all tournament last year.

"I'm always excited to come back to Madrid to feel the atmosphere in the stadium and I think that's the key," Sabalenka said during Tuesday's media day. "And the food is incredible. So that's all I care [about]. Support and food," Sabalenka laughed.

Jannik Sinner focuses on 'performing well' in Madrid Open

NEW DELHI

Italian star Jannik Sinner has made it clear that the Madrid Open is an important part of his clay-court season, but his main focus is on performing well at Roland Garros as he aims for a career Grand Slam.

The world number one arrives in Madrid after a significant breakthrough on clay. He recently defeated Carlos Alcaraz in straight sets to win the Monte Carlo Masters. However, Sinner admitted that he hasn't had the best results in the Spanish capital.

"I never played very well here, so let's see how it goes this year," Sinner said ahead of the tournament. "I'm trying to improve as a player, and this might be one of the toughest challenges because of certain factors like altitude and wind."



Even though he is one of the favourites and is aiming for a fifth consecutive Masters title, Sinner emphasized that his larger goal is in Paris. "The most important is Roland Garros," he said. "We try to be in the best shape possible there, but I'm here to do my

best, and then we'll see how it goes."

Sinner's motivation is heightened by last year's disappointment at Roland Garros, where he lost a dramatic final to Alcaraz despite having three championship points. The 24-year-old has another chance to complete

his Grand Slam collection, as the French Open is the only major title he still needs. The Madrid Open will miss two of tennis's biggest stars, with Alcaraz out due to a wrist injury and Novak Djokovic also absent. Sinner acknowledged that their absence creates a void.

"It's a very big pity not to have Alcaraz here and also Novak, the two biggest stars in tennis," he said. "We have shared many tournaments since last year, but in my mind, I also know that if I want to play against Carlos, it's in the final, and the path to the final is very long."

Top seed Sinner will start his Madrid campaign in the second round against an opponent yet to be determined. He views the tournament as an essential step in refining his game before the clay-court showcase in Paris.

NTR-Neel's Long Wait Should Deliver a Bigger Payoff

The much-awaited collaboration between Jr NTR and Prashanth Neel has been a long journey in the making. First announced in May 2022, the project took its time to materialize, eventually getting officially launched in August 2024.

The shoot finally commenced in February 2025, raising expectations among fans. However, the film has since faced multiple delays due to various reasons, with the latest announcement confirming a release date of June 11, 2027. This would make it over five years since the initial announcement, an unusually long timeline even for a big-ticket project.

Despite the delays, there is some positive news for fans. The makers have officially confirmed that a small glimpse or teaser will be unveiled on May 20, coinciding with Jr NTR's birthday. This will finally give audiences a first look into the film's world and tone.

Adding to the excitement is speculation that the makers might be planning a two-part release, shooting both installments simultaneously. If executed well, similar to how Dhurandhar 2 was planned, it could turn into a major advantage.

A well-structured release strategy with a short gap between parts may build strong momentum. While the wait has been long, the scale, ambition, and the combination of Jr NTR and Prashanth Neel still hold massive potential, and it should deliver a bigger payoff for fans who have been waiting for years.

If everything falls into place, this extended timeline could ultimately translate into a big win at the box office. Rukmini Vasanth plays the female lead in the film, which also features a noted Hindi actor in a key role. Mythri Movie Makers and NTR Arts are jointly producing the film, with T-Series presenting it.



Allu Arjun Looking At KGF, But How?

"Pushpa" star Allu Arjun is clearly going all-in on the pan-India space. His next with Atlee, Raaka, is already making huge noise after the first-look release. And his frequent Mumbai trips and dedication towards the roles he is playing inside the movie are creating lots of buzz. Now, a new buzz is doing rounds that Allu Arjun is looking forward to teaming up with KGF maker Prashanth Neel. Well, earlier, this buzz also popped up, but here's the realistic look at it.

Because right now, his slate is already packed with a series of movies with A-list directors. A film with Lokesh Kanagaraj is locked and announced already, with an interesting poster. A project with Basil Joseph is also in the pipeline, and the director's presence at the

Michael Jackson Biopic 'Michael': First Reactions



The King of Pop is back! Well, kinda. The first reactions to the much-anticipated Michael Jackson biopic Michael have hit social media after the film's star-studded U.S. premiere in Los Angeles on Monday night.

The Antoine Fuqua-directed feature actually had its world premiere in Berlin on April 10, but social media reaction from American press has been limited. Full critics reviews for Michael drop on April 22, with the film released in theaters worldwide on April 24.

The first official biopic of the late Michael Jackson, Michael tells the story of the music phenomenon from his early Motown days performing with his brothers in the Jackson 5 to his breakout as a solo artist. There has been much speculation about whether the film will include the more controversial aspects of Jackson's singular life.

The long-gestating Lionsgate film notably has the rights to use Jackson's music, and is produced by Graham King, the man behind the four-time Oscar-winning Freddie Mercury/Queen biopic Bohemian Rhapsody which made a massive \$911 million at the global box office.

Michael is led by Jaafar Jackson

(Jackson's nephew and son of Jermaine Jackson) who plays the singer during his transition from a member of an immensely popular boy band to becoming the era-defining solo artist the world fell in love with. The young Michael is played by Julian Krue Valdi. The cast also includes Colman Domingo as Michael's father Joe Jackson, Nia Long as Michael's mother Katherine Jackson and Miles Teller as John Branca, an entertainment lawyer and manager.

Lauren Farrier plays the music exec Suzanne de Passe, Kendrick Sampson plays legendary producer Quincy Jones, Larenz Tate plays the all-powerful Motown chief Berry Gordy, Liv Symone plays singer Gladys Knight and Kevin Shinick plays TV legend Dick Clark.

Michael's brothers, both older and younger versions are played by: Jamal R. Henderson (Jermaine) and Jayden Harville (young Jermaine); Tre Horton (Marlon) and Jaylen Lyndon Hunter (young Marlon); Rhyann Hill (Tito) and Judah Edwards (young Tito); Joseph David-Jones (Jackie) and Nathaniel Logan McIntyre (young Jackie); with Jessica Sula playing Michael's older sister La Toya Jackson. Janet Jackson does not feature in the film.

THE PARADISE SHOULDN'T MISS THIS MOMENT



The Paradise, starring Nani and directed by Srikanth Odela, is progressing at a steady pace with its shoot nearing completion. The team has already wrapped up 95 days of filming, with just around 40 days of shoot left to be completed. With the film targeting an August 2026 release, the makers currently have a window of roughly four months to wrap up the remaining shoot and complete post-production formalities. If the pending schedule is executed on time, the team is well-positioned to meet the planned release date without any last-minute hurdles. Adding to the momentum, the buzz around the film has grown significantly in recent weeks. Despite distractions like the IPL season, the response to the "Aya Sher" song has generated strong interest among audiences.

However, the real challenge lies ahead. The team must capitalize on this rising buzz and avoid any further delays. Another postponement could dilute the current hype, which is working strongly in the film's favor. If everything falls into place, The Paradise could arrive as one of the most anticipated releases of the season.

The Paradise carries strong expectations with Nani in the lead and direction by Srikanth Odela. Backed by music from Anirudh Ravichander and produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri under the SLV Cinemas, the film has all the right elements in place. If the team maintains this pace and avoids delays, The Paradise has every chance to live up to its growing hype.



wedding of Allu Sirish almost confirmed the same. And on top of that, talks are happening with Sandeep Reddy Vanga, through T-Series, which itself means a long, intensive film if it materialises. That's already three major films in the pipeline, and now add Prashanth Neel into the mix.

In fact, Prashanth Neel doesn't make quick films. His projects take time. Sampe Salhaar or the latest Dragon, to get more about this. From Pre-production to world-building and long schedules, he takes a huge amount of time to wrap it up. He's not a plug-and-play director where you can jump in and out. Given the current schedule of Allu Arjun, a film with the KGF maker means both have to wait for more than 3-4 years now.

On the other hand, all the upcoming projects of Allu Arjun are being made with hefty investments, so all of them need to turn into superhits at the box office. For that reason, the actor will be focusing on one film at a time, and even if he has KGF dreams, it will take time to shape up.

Will Dhanush & Mrunal Take This Risk Now ?

Despite not sharing screen together, both Dhanush and Mrunal Thakur have given a lot of feed to rumours after getting spotted together for a couple of filmy events in recent times. Their silence has further raised the eyebrows and speculation was thick and fast that they might soon get married. However, Mrunal quickly laughed off the rumours, while Dhanush did not respond at all. While murmurs continue over their relationship, another interesting scoop involving these actors started making rounds in the Tamil media circles.

As per the latest reports, Dhanush is likely to wield the megaphone for a lady-oriented period drama set in the backdrop of 1960/70s with Mrunal Thakur headlining it as the lead actor. Kollywood is abuzz with this news as both these actors are currently the toast of the town because of the recent ru-

mours. A few months ago, there were reports that both Dhanush and Mrunal might actually together in an upcoming film. But, the news turned out to be false. Though it is not yet official that Dhanush will direct a film for Mrunal, the industry has once again started speculating about their close bonding. Both Dhanush and Mrunal are currently busy with a handful of projects. Moreover, the rumours about their romantic link are refusing to die down. So, it would be interesting to see if they really take the risk and join hands for a professional collaboration at this juncture to keep the rumours alive further.

Mrunal already had a couple of releases this year and now gearing up for her third outing. She appeared in the Bollywood rom-com Do Deewane Seher Mein and Telugu film Dacoit. Her next release Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai will hit the screens very soon.

In the last couple of weeks, various rumours are popping up that trouble is brewing in another star hero's paradise. Many Reddit threads and Twitter chats are busy decoding who might be that hero and various rumours pointed out towards various stars. However, it looks like with just one single act, now Sharwanand has come under the scanner regarding his personal life. Running high with the appreciation he got for movies like Nari Nari Naduma Murari and Biker, Sharwanand is currently working on his next film Bhogi, which is being directed by Sampath Nandi. Afterwards, he will be joining the sets of his other film, being directed by Sreenu Vaitla. Amidst this, Sharwanand cleaned up his Instagram and removed all the family pictures from the wall, and that's leading to lots of doubts now. He got married in 2023 to software engineer Rakshitha Reddy, who has later moved to the USA, running a software company there. Even Sharwa moved to the USA for a short while, and had a baby girl in 2024, and now it's coming up that something is not well between the couple.

Vatican to Host Private Screening of Scorsese-Produced Pope Documentary 'Aldeas'



The Vatican will host a private screening of Aldeas: The Final Dream of Pope Francis on April 21 in Rome, marking one year since Pope Francis' death. The documentary, produced by Martin Scorsese, follows a global youth filmmaking project and includes the Pope's final in-depth interview. The film highlights the Aldeas initiative, part of the Pope's

educational movement, which empowers communities worldwide to create short films reflecting their cultures and values. It spans locations including Italy, Indonesia, and The Gambia. The screening comes amid tensions involving Pope Leo XIV and Donald Trump over global conflicts, adding a broader political backdrop to the event.

Sharwa Deletes Family Pictures What's Up?



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