

# HYDERABAD HEADLINES

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### JADEJA LEADS ROYALS TO SCRAPPY VICTORY

STADIUM 11

### CITADEL S2 THE SPY SAGA GETS BOLDER



BOX-OFFICE 12



## Former Andhra Pradesh CM Nadendla Bhaskara Rao passes away at 90

Nadendla Bhaskara Rao, former Chief Minister of united Andhra Pradesh, passed away on Wednesday at 90 due to age-related ailments. A founding member of the Telugu Desam Party led by N. T. Rama Rao, he played a key role in its rise to power in 1983. In 1984, he briefly became CM after revolting against NTR, triggering a political crisis that led to NTR's return.

Born in Guntur district in 1935, Bhaskara Rao was a lawyer-turned-politician who served as MLA, minister, and later MP from Khammam. He is survived by his family, including son Nadendla Manohar, a current minister.

Leaders including N. Chandrababu Naidu, Pawan Kalyan, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and A. Revanth Reddy expressed condolences. Last rites will be held in Hyderabad on Thursday.

HYDERABAD

### SHORT TAKES



### DGP congratulates officers promoted as DGPs

HYDERABAD, APRIL 22: The state government has granted promotions to six IPS officers belonging to the 1995 and 1996 batches, elevating them to the rank of Director General of Police (DGP). In this regard, the State Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao issued orders on Wednesday. State Director General of Police B. Shivdhar Reddy extended his congratulations to the officers who received promotions. The DGP congratulated the following officers: From the 1995 batch — V. Venkata Srinivasa Rao, Swati Lakra, and Mahesh Muralidhar Bhagwat; From the 1996 batch — Charu Sinha, Dr. Anil Kumar, and V.C. Sajjanar.

### KTR Slams Union Ministers Bandi Sanjay and BJP

Hyderabad, April 22: Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President K. T. Rama Rao strongly criticised the BJP, alleging that the Congress and BJP are working together in Telangana and share a "Fevicol-like bond." Reacting to Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar's allegations that money bags are being delivered to Congress leaders, KTR questioned whether it is not the responsibility of the Union Home Ministry to seize such illegal funds. He advised Bandi Sanjay to remember that he is a Union Minister and to stop speaking like a corporator in the streets of Karimnagar, and instead behave in a manner befitting his position.

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## Ghose Report "Inoperative" No Action Against KCR, Says Telangana HC

HYDERABAD, APRIL 22 In a huge relief for former Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and Bharat Rashtra Samithi leader T Harish Rao, the Telangana High Court barred the state government from taking action against them and two others on the basis of Justice PC Ghose Commission's report.

The Commission had enquired into alleged irregularities in the execution of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme and management of Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages. The High Court observed that the Ghose Commission did not follow the procedures under the Commission of Inquiry Act.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Apareesh Kumar Singh and

Justice GM Mohiuddin had held a lengthy hearing and reserved its verdict on March 12 on the petitions filed by KCR, Rao, IAS officers SK Joshi and Smita Sabharwal challenging the GO 6 issued on March 14, 2024 appointing the Justice PC Ghose Commission to investigate irregularities in management of the barrages.

The court had announced that the verdict on the Justice Ghose Commission would be delivered on April 8 but later it was postponed to April 22. The petitioners told the court that investigation process undertaken by the Justice Ghose Commission was flawed as their arguments were not taken into consideration before charges were

framed against them. On the other hand, the government's lawyers, while making arguments, said the commission was formed on the Kaleshwaram project dams considering public interest.

"According to the High Court verdict, the Justice PC Ghose Commission report should be thrown in the trash. When the commission suggested that action be taken against KCR and Harish Rao and other officials, arguments on their behalf should also have been heard. The Ghose Commission did not follow the procedure. Due to this, the court has made it clear that no action should be taken against them" said KCR's lawyer

## MoU Implementation: CM Demands Results, Not Just Signatures

Hyderabad, April 22: Chief Minister Shri A. Revanth Reddy instructed the officials to execute the Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed with prominent companies across various platforms expeditiously. The Chief Minister emphasized that the companies which were allotted land and also granted necessary permissions should commence their operations without delay.



The CM, accompanied by State IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu, held a review to assess the progress of the MoUs entered with global and domestic investors at Davos and Telangana Global Summit held in Hyderabad recently. During the meeting, the officials briefed the Chief Minister about the status of the

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## Common Man Pays the Price for Congress Freebie Politics: NRR

### BJP Extends Full Support to RTC Workers' Just Struggle

Hyderabad, April 22: Telangana BJP President N. Ramchander Rao on Tuesday sharply criticized the Congress-led state government over the ongoing RTC crisis, alleging that nearly 15,000 buses going off the roads has severely disrupted public transport and affected lakhs of commuters across

the state.

He said the crisis has hit the common man the hardest, particularly those dependent on RTC services for their daily livelihood. Rao blamed the situation on what he described as the government's "misplaced priorities" and "reckless freebie politics," which he claimed

have weakened the financial stability of the state transport corporation.

Expressing solidarity with the striking RTC workers, Rao stated that their protest was neither sudden nor unjustified. He pointed out that employees had issued a strike notice

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## TG ERUPTS INTO TOTAL POLITICAL COMBAT

### KCR'S HYDRAA ONSLAUGHT COLLIDES WITH REVANTH REDDY'S KALESHWARAM BLAST, IGNITING A NO RETREAT NO SURRENDER BATTLE FOR THE STATE'S SOUL

BY C SUBRAHMANYAM

Demolitions versus dam disaster, welfare claims versus corruption charges, loyalty versus rebellion, Telangana is thrust into a relentless high stakes confrontation where power, perception, and political survival are being fought out in the open with escalating intensity.



K. Chandrashekar Rao reenters the political arena with a direct assault on HYDRAA, framing it as an attack on the poor and promising its immediate dismantling. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy counters with aggressive rhetoric, targeting defectors and escalating the battle with explosive allegations over the Kaleshwaram project. Telangana now witnesses a full scale confrontation where governance, credibility, and political survival collide in public view.

At Jagtial, the former Chief Minister did not attempt a soft reentry. He walked straight into confrontation. His speech was not a general critique of governance but a focused political strike aimed at one institution that he believes can define the Congress government in public perception. HYDRAA. Every argument, every anecdote, every punchline was anchored to that single theme. By doing so, KCR simplified the political battlefield into a question that is easy for voters to grasp. Is the state protecting the poor or unsettling them.

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## TGSRTC Strike Cripples TG: 6K Buses Off Roads

HYDERABAD, APRIL 22:

Workers at the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) launched a strike from midnight, following failed negotiations between management and unions over their 32 demands. Despite deliberations spanning over four hours, both sides were unable to reach a consensus, leading to the strike action by workers. Over 38,000 workers are taking part in the strike. Over 6,000 buses are expected to be taken off the roads, potentially disrupting the travel plans of over five lakh passengers. While the strike is set to have a significant impact on public transport across Telangana, there will also be a huge increase in demand for metro trains and MMTS services. Discussions were held on Tuesday between union representatives and a govt-appointed committee. This committee included the special chief secretary (roads & buildings), special chief secretary (labour), principal secretary (finance), and the managing director of TGSRTC. The workers' key demands include merging RTC with the state govt, conducting labour



union elections and implementing salary structures and benefits on a par with those of government employees. They have also demanded long-overdue wage revisions and the settlement of outstanding payments, including contributions to the provident fund and payments related to the credit cooperative society. RTC MD Y Nagireddy said that a special committee comprising IAS officers has already been constituted to examine the workers' demands in detail. "Some of the demands involve financial and

complex matters, and the govt will require at least four weeks to review them and provide solutions," said Nagireddy, assuring the workers that the issues would be resolved in a phased and systematic manner. He also expressed concern that certain unions are allegedly misleading workers by disregarding the facts and calling for a strike.

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## DGP Shivadhar Reddy unveils 'Business Rules' handbook as a guide for police personnel

HYDERABAD: APRIL 22

The Director General of Police (DGP) of the state, B. Shivadhar Reddy, on Wednesday unveiled a booklet titled "Business Rules and General Instructions" at the DGP office. The booklet provides clarity on staff duties and service regulations. Speaking at the event

held at the DGP office, he expressed confidence that the book would serve as a ready reference and guiding manual for police officers and staff.

The DGP explained that the book includes procedures to be followed while examining files related to service matters of police personnel across the state. He

mentioned that during his tenure as Personal Additional DGP, he had discussed the need for such structured guidelines. Accordingly, Service Rules Revision Committee Chairman Y. Gangadhar, after consulting various stakeholders, prepared these rules.

He also appreciated the committee members for designing

the handbook in a way that is easy for staff to understand, keeping in view newly issued government orders (GOs) and changing procedures.

Committee Chairman Y. Gangadhar stated that inputs were gathered from employees at the grassroots level regarding service rules and the issues they face.

Based on the DGP's suggestions, the information was compiled in a way that would benefit the staff.

The event was attended by TSLPRB Chairman V.V. Srinivasa Rao, SPF DG Swati Lakra, CID Additional DGP Charu Sinha, IGs Chandrasekhar Reddy, Ramesh Naidu, Gajaroo Bhupal, and others.

## A Moment of Solidarity: Hope and Heritage United in Mumbai

HYDERABAD



In a quiet corner of Dadar, a thread of compassion wove through the hum of the city as leaders from diverse Ambedkar communities came together to honor a shared dream. A delegation led by Kark Nagaraj, president of the All India Ambedkar Yuvajana Sanga (AIAYS) in Greater Hyderabad, arrived in Mumbai as part of the Bheema Rao Ambedkar movement, carrying with them a message of dignity, inclusion, and hopeful change.

The day began with a warm welcome at the Ambedkar Bhavan, where Nagaraj and his team met the families of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar—the visionary whose legacy continues to inspire countless lives. As they stood together, the weight of history felt lighter, and the air was filled with a quiet resolve to build a future where every voice is heard and every life is valued.

Bheem Rao Yashwant Ambedkar, with a gracious smile, greeted the visitors and listened intently as they shared Telangana's Flowers of Ambedkar movement—their plans, their struggles, and their aspirations. In that moment, differences faded into a shared purpose: to illuminate corners of society that have long been left in the shadows and to extend a hand of fellowship across generations and geographies.

The conversation stretched beyond formalities. Nagaraj spoke of unity, empathy, and service, while Bhim Rao offered encouragement, reminding them that true progress grows from compassion and collective effort. The exchange was more than a courtesy call; it was a pledge to walk together, shoulder to shoulder, in service of the community.

The gathering included local community leaders who quietly ensured the day's spirit would endure. Their presence underscored a simple belief: when communities rise together, they lift each other up, creating ripples of kindness that reach far beyond the moment.

This heartfelt visit stood as a testament to resilience—the resilience of families who persevere, the resilience of youth who dare to dream, and the resilience of a society that believes in inclusion, dignity, and mutual respect. In a city that never stops, this gathering reminded everyone present that true progress is measured not by applause, but by the compassionate acts that touch a life, a home, and a shared future.

## KTR Slams Union Ministers Bandi Sanjay and BJP

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KTR challenged the Centre to prove its intent by tracking every rupee allegedly being sent from Telangana to the AICC. He further alleged that while "RR Tax" collected in Telangana is reaching leaders in Delhi, BJP leaders are remaining silent spectators.

He questioned what Bandi Sanjay has contributed to Telangana as a Union Minister, apart from allegedly assisting Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. KTR also criticised Sanjay for being unaware that the temple in his own constituency, Vemulawada, was not included in the "Divya Bharat" scheme.

He further alleged that scams are taking place across sectors—from Amrut schemes to Singareni—and accused Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy of remaining silent and moving closely with Congress ministers.

**BRS Extends Support to RTC Strike**

KTR announced that the BRS extends moral support to the ongoing strike by RTC workers in the state. He stated that all the demands raised by RTC employees are justified and urged the Congress government to immediately fulfil the promises made during elections.



He alleged that while the previous BRS government had recognised RTC employees as government staff, the current Congress government has failed to implement it. He demanded that an immediate appointment date be announced and that pending PRC benefits, DA dues, and other arrears be cleared without delay.

KTR criticised the Congress for ignoring commitments made in its manifesto and trying to evade responsibility. He suggested that the state cabinet should convene and discuss pressing public issues like the RTC strike, instead of focusing solely on financial distributions.

He also advised ministers to revisit their own manifesto promises regarding RTC employees and questioned how, even after three budgets, the government appears unaware of its own commitments.



## Ashranapalli Krishnarao's Memorial Ceremony Held in Kukatpally

Hyderabad, April 22: The memorial ceremony (Apara Karma) of the late Ashranapalli Krishnarao was held grandly on Wednesday at Ramky Villas in Kukatpally. The event was attended by prominent judges along with PAC Chairman Arikepudi Gandhi, TPCC Vice

President Bandi Ramesh, and Telangana Movement Activists Welfare Committee Media Cell State President B. Venkateshwarlu as chief guests.

On this occasion, they paid rich tributes by laying floral wreaths on Krishnarao's portrait. The

program, organized under the leadership of Telangana State Film Chamber of Commerce executive member Gottimukkala Panduranga Rao, saw the participation of a large number of public representatives from various political parties, local leaders, and journalists.

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**HYDRAA ON TRIAL: ENFORCEMENT OR INTIMIDATION**

KCR framed HYDRAA not as an administrative necessity but as a mechanism that operates with force against those least equipped to resist. He alleged that under the cover of lake protection and regulation, ordinary families are being pushed into uncertainty. The sharp wordplay around HYDRAA was not casual theatrics. It was crafted to reduce a formal institution into something that sounds arbitrary and excessive. This is political messaging designed for recall, not policy debate.

**"FIRST SIGNATURE, HYDRAA OUT. NO DELAY, NO SECOND THOUGHT."**

That promise lands because it removes complexity. It offers a decisive outcome in place of bureaucratic process.

**PATTA MEMORY VS PRESENT ANXIETY: THE EMOTIONAL CORE OF THE MESSAGE**

KCR did not rely only on criticism. He invoked his own record to create contrast. He spoke of distributing pattas to lakhs of families, projecting his tenure as one that acknowledged ground realities and provided stability. The current regime, in his telling, represents disruption, where enforcement arrives before empathy. This comparison is not technical. It is emotional. It speaks to the fear of losing a home versus the assurance of being allowed to keep it. That distinction carries weight far beyond policy documents.

**CONGRESS HOLDS BACK, BUT THE SILENCE SPEAKS - THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT HAS THE ARGUMENT, BUT IT HAS NOT MATCHED THE MOMENT.**

Its position on HYDRAA is structured and consistent. The agency is projected as essential for reclaiming public land, preventing flooding, restoring water bodies, and correcting years of unchecked encroachments. From an administrative lens, the case is clear. But politics does not reward administrative clarity when the opposition is driving public emotion. In the absence of an immediate and forceful counter, the narrative space is being shaped almost entirely by BRS messaging.

**REVANTH REDDY HITS BACK: LOYALTY, ANGER, AND ESCALATION**  
**REVANTH REDDY DID RESPOND, BUT HE CHOSE TO FIGHT ON A DIFFERENT FRONT.**

At his own public meeting, the Chief Minister directed his sharpest remarks at T. Jeevan Reddy, whose exit from Congress and entry into BRS has stirred local political equations. The tone was charged with accusation. He portrayed the move as a betrayal of party workers who had stood by Jeevan Reddy for decades, questioning both his loyalty and

## TG ERUPTS INTO TOTAL POLITICAL COMBAT

credibility. The message was clear. Defection would not be treated as routine political movement but as abandonment of trust. It was an attempt to hold the party line and deter further exits. However, the rhetoric also crossed into territory that drew attention for its intensity. Remarks interpreted as invoking extreme outcomes have added fuel to the already heated political climate. Whether intended as metaphor or momentary excess, the effect is unmistakable. The discourse has shifted from policy disagreement to personal confrontation.

**KALESHWARAM RETURNS TO THE CENTRE: CORRUPTION CHARGE AS COUNTERSTRIKE THE CHIEF MINISTER THEN EXPANDED THE BATTLEFIELD, SHIFTING FROM POLITICAL ATTACK TO DIRECT CORRUPTION ALLEGATION.**

At Bhupalpally, Revanth Reddy accused K. Chandrashekar Rao of presiding over a massive financial irregularity linked to the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project. He argued that a project once showcased as a landmark achievement had, within a short period, exposed structural and financial concerns, placing a heavy burden on public resources. The allegation was accompanied by a demand for accountability. Referring to findings associated with the Justice P. C. Ghose Commission, he called for a central probe and signalled that responsibility must be fixed at the highest level. The language used was forceful, underscoring the seriousness with which the government intends to pursue the issue.

The political calculation is evident. Move the conversation away from HYDRAA, where the government is under pressure, and anchor it in Kaleshwaram, where the opposition is vulnerable. At the same time, by committing to repair works at the Medigadda barrage instead of abandoning the project, the administration is attempting to present itself as corrective and accountable rather than dismissive.

**MUSI PROJECT: DEVELOPMENT PUSH MEETS PUBLIC UNEASE**  
KCR's extension of his criticism to the Musi river project adds another layer to the confrontation. By presenting it as a move that could lead to large scale displacement, he connects infrastructure development with immediate human

cost. Projects of this scale always operate in contested space. They promise long term urban improvement while simultaneously creat-

ing short term disruption. By emphasising the latter, KCR is tapping into anxieties that are real for many residents. This shifts the conversation from blueprints and budgets to lived experience.

**THE JEEVAN REDDY SHIFT AND ITS SIGNAL**

The entry of T. Jeevan Reddy into BRS is more than an isolated political move. It carries symbolic weight in a region where party loyalties often shape electoral outcomes. Such shifts create the impression of changing ground realities, even before those changes are reflected in vote counts. In political contests, perception of momentum can be as influential as momentum itself.

**HYDRAA IN PUBLIC MEMORY**

HYDRAA is no longer just an administrative acronym. It has become a lived experience for many. Demolitions, disputes over land ownership, and visible enforcement actions have turned it into a subject of everyday conversation. For the Congress, the challenge lies in reassuring affected communities while sustaining its governance argument. For BRS, the opportunity lies in amplifying discomfort and converting it into political support.

**THE CORE CLASH: TWO VISIONS OF THE STATE**

At the heart of this confrontation lies a deeper question. Should governance prioritise enforcement of rules even when it causes disruption, or should it prioritise accommodation when people's lives are directly affected. KCR's argument leans towards protection and stability. Revanth Reddy's position leans towards correction and enforcement. The voter stands at the intersection of these competing visions.

**THE CONTEST HAS ESCALATED, AND THERE IS NO TURNING BACK**

Jagtil has set off a chain reaction that is now unfolding across Telangana. KCR has identified a clear issue, attached a decisive promise to it, and framed himself as the defender of those who feel vulnerable. Revanth Reddy has responded with equal intensity, widening the battle to include questions of loyalty, credibility, and large scale financial accountability. This is no longer a routine political exchange. It is a sustained confrontation across multiple fronts. And in this contest, perception will travel faster than policy, and emotion will often outweigh explanation. The battle for Telangana has entered a phase where every word, every claim, and every silence will carry consequences.

## ..CM Demands Results, Not Just Signatures

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commencement of the operations by the companies, current status of the permissions and pending for clearance due to technical or other issues. The authorities furnished the details of the allocation of lands to the investing agencies in various locations including 'Future City', prevailing market prices of the lands and the managements' readiness to purchase the lands.

CM Revanth Reddy ordered the officials to allocate land to the companies within the 'CURE, PURE AND RARE' zones in accordance with the government policy. The Chief Minister stressed that orders for approval of investments should be granted expeditiously and pay special attention to ensuring that the concerned companies commence their operations promptly.

Further, the CM directed that all pending land acquisition processes pertaining to the lands designated for companies that have signed MoUs be completed at a fast pace. The officials should also collect the details regarding the facilities required by the companies, their future needs and to proceed in a planned and systematic manner.

To meet water needs of the Data Centers, CM Revanth Reddy directed officials to formulate appropriate plans to utilize treated water supplied through Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs). The CM suggested categorizing the companies which signed agreements with the government into 3 distinct groups. Top priority will be given to multinational

corporations and companies with established market reputations ensuring they commence operations fast. The Chief Minister advised that the second priority be assigned to rapidly growing companies and organizations which demonstrate strong performance in the future, while the remaining companies should be placed in the 3rd priority category. Focus should be given more on facilitating the realization of their investments. The officials should also ascertain increasing intense inter-state competition in attracting investments and to remain constantly updated on developments in this regard.

Reviewing the development of the Future City, CM Revanth Reddy directed officials to expedite the completion of office facilities in the new city and establish a continuous monitoring mechanism there to oversee the implementation and progress of the MoUs. The officials were also ordered to hold discussions with representatives of companies which completed the project works and make the necessary arrangements for their inauguration ceremonies. A dashboard will be established to enable the CMO and the ministers of the respective departments to track every detail, specifically status of MoUs, hurdles for implementation, more investment prospects, generation of employment opportunities etc. A comprehensive monitoring system specifically for investments would also be developed and the new system will be monitored by a senior level IAS

officer. The ongoing operations in the IT towers established in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities were also reviewed in the meeting. The Chief Minister emphasized that the IT Towers should be utilised to their full potential. The proposed industrial and IT projects using JICA funding were reviewed and the CM issued several directives to officials regarding these specific projects. Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao, CM's Special Secretary B. Ajith Reddy, TGIIC MD K. Shashanka, Special Secretary to the Industries Department Bhavesh Mishra, Director of Industries Nikhil Chakravarty and others were present in the meeting.

**REVIEW OF METRO RAIL WORKS IN OLD CITY :**

To speed up the Metro Rail works, CM Revanth Reddy directed that the remaining land acquisition required for Metro Rail works in Hyderabad's Old City be completed expeditiously. Before the review of MoUs, the Chief Minister held a separate meeting on Hyderabad Metro Rail project works and instructed that the works up to Chandrayangutta must be completed within two years. Discussions were also held regarding the approvals for Metro Rail Phase II and the extension of the Metro line to the high-speed corridor at Bahadur Guda. State Chief Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao, Special Chief Secretary Jayesh Ranjan, and Metro Rail Advisor N.V.S. Reddy participated in the meeting.

## Common Man Pays the Price for...

FROM PAGE 1

over 40 days ago, questioning the government's inaction and the lack of timely intervention by Transport Minister Ponnamm Prabhakar.

He further alleged that instead of resolving the issue, the minister has been making statements dismissing strikes without offering concrete solutions, reflecting a lack of accountability. Rao also accused the government of adopting delay tactics by holding discussions without addressing key concerns.

Targeting Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Rao said the Congress had failed to deliver on its election promises made during the 2023 polls, including the merger of RTC with the government and ensuring job security and dignity for workers. He noted that commitments such as setting up a Pay Revision Commission, filling vacancies, expanding the fleet, and strengthening RTC finances remain unfulfilled.

Rao alleged that the government's failure to release pending dues, including funds related to

the free bus scheme, has pushed RTC into financial distress. He also highlighted the neglect of rental bus drivers and outsourcing staff as evidence of administrative apathy.

On the impact of the strike, he said commuters are facing severe inconvenience, with chaos reported at railway stations and bus stands. He added that private operators are taking advantage of the situation by charging high fares, while concerns over safety have also emerged due to inadequate alternative arrangements.

# BJP Blasts Revanth Govt for Reducing Kaleshwaram Scam to a Sham

- NV Subhash, BJP Chief Spokesperson and Media Incharge, Telangana

HYDERABAD

The Telangana BJP on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on the Congress government led by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, accusing it of deliberately sabotaging the prosecution of former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and his family in the multi-crore Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project scam.

In a sharply worded statement, BJP Chief Spokesperson N.V. Subash alleged that what was touted as a decisive crackdown on corruption has now been reduced to a political farce. He accused the Congress government of "willful weakening" the case by opting for a judicial commission instead of entrusting the probe to central investigative agencies.

"Where is the resolve that Revanth Reddy thundered during the elections? He promised to send the KCR family to jail over the Kaleshwaram loot. Today, that promise stands hollow. By appointing the P. C. Ghose Commission—which has no prosecutorial pow-



ers—the government has effectively ensured that no real action can follow. If this is not a farce, what is?" Subash questioned.

He said the BJP had long suspected that the Congress government's intent was not to punish corruption, but to politically manage it. "This is nothing short of a scripted drama—loud rhetoric before elections, silent compromise after assuming power," he remarked, likening the Congress' pre-poll claims to empty boasts that have now collapsed under scrutiny.

The controversy intensified after the Telangana High Court ruled that

no action could be taken against KCR and others based on the findings of the Ghose Commission, citing violations of due process and principles of natural justice. The court held that findings prejudicial to the petitioners, including KCR and former minister T. Harish Rao, cannot be acted upon.

Subash squarely blamed the state government for the legal setback. "The High Court order is a direct consequence of the Congress government's incompetence and lack of seriousness. Procedural lapses, legal negligence, and a flawed approach have together demolished whatever case existed," he

said. Echoing this view, Telangana BJP president Ramchander Rao stated that the court's observations clearly expose the government's failure to follow due process. "This is not an isolated judicial intervention—it is a damning indictment of how casually and irresponsibly the inquiry was conducted," he noted.

The BJP alleged that by failing to pursue a legally robust investigation—despite announcing in the Assembly that the case would be handed over to the CBI—the Revanth Reddy government has effectively provided "legal cover" to those accused in what it calls one of the biggest irrigation scams in the state's history.

"The people of Telangana were promised accountability. What they have got instead is evasion. The Congress has turned a massive corruption scandal into a procedural joke," Subash charged, adding that the episode raises serious questions about whether there was ever any genuine intent to bring the guilty to book. The BJP demanded that the state government immediately hand over the entire case to central agencies for an impartial and time-bound investigation, warning that anything less would amount to a betrayal of public trust.



## Communication and Influence Workshop Held at GITAM

HYDERABAD

The Centre for Academic Innovation and Advancement (CAIA) at GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, organized a one-day Leadership Development workshop on "Communication and Influence" on April 22, 2026, aimed at enhancing self-development and professional communication skills among faculty members.



emphasized that effective storytelling should connect emotionally, build common ground, and present relatable contexts, while cautioning against elements such as sarcasm, excessive humor, criticism, or sensitive topics. She also addressed common reasons for communication failure, including the curse of knowledge, abstract language, and lack of context.

The session was facilitated by Joozar (J), a seasoned corporate trainer with over 26 years of experience across diverse sectors, including IT, Manufacturing, BFSI, Pharmaceuticals, GCCs, and Education. Drawing from her extensive expertise, she introduced participants to key frameworks such as the "4 M's" — Mission, Members, Mindset, and Method — emphasizing their role in effective leadership and communication.

The workshop featured a masterclass on storytelling for academic impact, focusing on enhancing lecture delivery, improving classroom engagement, and strengthening faculty presence in academic forums at national and international levels. Participants were also introduced to the Cohen-Bradford Influence Model, enabling them to apply empathy and strategic "currentcies" to build alignment and influence effectively within academic settings. The program included interactive discussions, practical scenarios, and reflective exercises tailored to real institutional contexts. The workshop was coordinated by Moses Kotikela from CAIA.

Highlighting the importance of practice, Joozar elaborated on the "3 E's" — Presence and Power Postures, Influencing without Authority, and Storytelling Techniques. Referencing insights from Amy Cuddy, she demonstrated the impact of high and low power postures, underscoring the idea that "the mind influences the body, and the body, in turn,

shapes the mind." She further explained the proportional significance of communication elements: Elevator Pitch (10%), Empathy Mapping (20%), and Expression (70%). Participants were guided on the effective use of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos while presenting themselves or representing the institution. A key highlight of the workshop was the focus on storytelling as a powerful communication tool. Joozar outlined essential narrative structures involving character, context, conflict, resolution, and message. She also introduced practical frameworks such as Incident-Action-Benefit and Build-Share-Reflect. Through video references featuring Ravi Shankar Iyer, she illustrated how impactful storytelling can drive engagement and influence. The facilitator

## Startup Workshop at Osmania University

HYDERABAD

The Department of Business Management, Osmania University, in association with the Institution's Innovation Council (IIC), organized a workshop titled "Startup Launchpad: Ideation to Innovation" on Wednesday 22nd April 2026 at the DBM Auditorium. The workshop is organized as part of "99-Day Action Plan under Prajapalana-Pragathu Pranalika".

The session was presided by Prof. Y. Jahangir, Head, Department of Business Management and was instructed by Dr. Anjan Kumar, an alumnus of MBA Technology Management, who shared insights on transforming ideas into viable business solutions. He highlighted the importance of structured ideation and entrepreneurial thinking among management students.

The workshop included a



practical session on ideation methods and provided participants with opportunities for interaction and networking. Students actively engaged in presenting their ideas, interaction on startup validation and scaling strategies.

The programme aimed at fostering innovation and entrepreneurial skills among students and concluded with a vote of thanks. The workshop was also graced by Sr. Professor, Dr. Sreeramulu, Dean, Faculty of Management

and is distinguished by Dr. Vidyasagar Rao, Chairman, BoS, Sr. Prof. P. Venkataiah, Prof. Smitha Sambrani, Coordinator for MBA (TM & TTM) and Dr. Samunnatha, Placement Officer & Additional Controller of Exams.

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| <p><b>SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY</b><br/>Details of the Tender Notices of S.C. Railway can be seen on our website: <a href="http://www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in">www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in</a></p> <p><b>E-Tender Notice No. : 09-2026</b><br/><b>Dated : 21-04-2026</b></p>   |  |
| <p><b>Senior Divisional Engineer</b><br/>Coordination / Guntakal acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders for the following works.</p> <p><b>Closing date &amp; Time : 18-05-2026 at 15:00 hours.</b></p> <p>The undersigned invites e-tenders on percentage rate basis mentioned on the schedules up to 15:00 hours on 18-05-2026 for Execution of works, supply of materials in various Zones on Guntakal Division for the period from 01-07-2026 to 30-06-2027.</p> <p><b>Group - A :</b> Annual zonal contract for works under Chapter No. 14 (Water proofing) of CPWD DSR-2023 Vol.II items from 14.86 to 14.92 (i.e. For providing APP water proofing treatment) and Chapter No. 22 of CPWD DSR-2023 Vol.II items from 22.8 to 22.13. Chapter No. 13 of CPWD DSR-2023 Vol.II items from 13.37 to 13.115 (White washing, column washing, distemping &amp; painting). Chapter No. 2 of CPWD DSR-2023 Vol-I items (i.e. for clearance). Chapter No. 16 of CPWD DSR-2023 Vol-II items from 16.1 to 16.4, 16.21 to 16.52, 16.54 to 16.59 and 16.72 to 16.96 (Roads &amp; Platform).</p> <p><b>Group - B :</b> (i) Annual zonal contract for works under CPWD DSR-2023 Vol. I, Vol-II excluding all the items mentioned under Group-'A' cited above.</p> <p>(ii) Annual zonal contract for works under CPWD DSR Horticulture and landscaping works.</p> <p><b>Group - C :</b> Annual zonal contract for NS - Items related to supply of materials as per site requirement.</p> <p><b>SI.No. : 1. e-Tender No. : 2065.</b><br/><b>DEN : Co-ord. Zone : North/GTL.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> North Colony of Guntakal including (BG) yard, station building and service buildings.</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 2,18,81,970/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 4,37,600/-.</b></p> <p><b>SI.No. : 2. e-Tender No. : 2066.</b><br/><b>DEN : Co-ord. Zone : South/GTL.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> South Colony of Guntakal including PF 1 &amp; 2, upto outer signal on Dharmavaram line and inclusive of all works.</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 1,98,64,295/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 3,97,300/-.</b></p> <p><b>SI.No. : 3. e-Tender No. : 2067.</b><br/><b>DEN : Co-ord. Zone : WW/GTL.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> Watering arrangements (Guntakal to Nakkanaoddi) Summer storage tank near Guntakal (West) under SSE/Works/Waterworks/Guntakal.</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 50,34,700/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 1,00,700/-.</b></p> <p><b>SI.No. : 4. e-Tender No. : 2068.</b><br/><b>DEN : South. Zone : RU.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> Renigunta (incl) to Gudur (excl).</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 1,51,80,000/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 3,03,600/-.</b></p> <p><b>SI.No. : 5. e-Tender No. : 2069.</b><br/><b>DEN : South. Zone : RUP.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> Renigunta (excl) to Bhakarapet (incl).</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 86,20,264/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 1,72,400/-.</b></p> <p><b>SI.No. : 6. e-Tender No. : 2070.</b><br/><b>DEN : South. Zone : HX.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> Bhakarapet (excl) to Kondapuram (excl) and Yerraguntla to Nossam (incl).</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 1,01,20,000/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 2,02,400/-.</b></p> <p><b>SI.No. : 7. e-Tender No. : 2071.</b><br/><b>DEN : Central. Zone : GY.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> Gooty (incl) to Kondapuram (incl).</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 1,65,65,176/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 3,31,300/-.</b></p> <p><b>SI.No. : 8. e-Tender No. : 2072.</b><br/><b>DEN : Central. Zone : DHNE.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> Guntakal (BG) (excl) to Nandyal (excl), Gooty (excl) to Pendekallu and Nossam (excl) to Nandyal (excl).</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 1,22,93,270/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 2,45,900/-.</b></p> <p><b>SI.No. : 9. e-Tender No. : 2073.</b><br/><b>DEN : North. Zone : North/MG/GTL.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> Gooty (excl) to Molagavalli (excl) and Guntakal (excl) to Bellary (excl) Kalluru (excl) to Guntakal (excl) and Guntakal (excl) to Gooty (excl).</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 63,84,773/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security :</b></p> | <p>1,27,700/-.</p> <p><b>SI.No. : 10. e-Tender No. : 2074.</b><br/><b>DEN : North. Zone : AD.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> Molagavalli (incl) to Raichur (excl).</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 37,95,000/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 75,900/-.</b></p> <p><b>SI.No. : 11. e-Tender No. : 2075.</b><br/><b>DEN : North. Zone : RC.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> Raichur (incl) to Wadi (excl).</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 1,13,85,001/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 2,27,700/-.</b></p> <p><b>SI.No. : 12. e-Tender No. : 2076.</b><br/><b>DEN : West. Zone : ATP.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> Dharmavaram (incl) and Gooty (Jn-Cabin).</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 53,04,145/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 1,06,100/-.</b></p> <p><b>SI.No. : 13. e-Tender No. : 2077.</b><br/><b>DEN : West. Zone : MPL.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> Dharmavaram (excl) to Pakala (excl) and Horsley Hills.</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 74,20,111/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 1,48,400/-.</b></p> <p><b>SI.No. : 14. e-Tender No. : 2078.</b><br/><b>DEN : West. Zone : TPTY.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> Tirupati (incl) to Katpadi (excl) and Tirumala Hills.</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 1,84,65,205/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 3,69,300/-.</b></p> <p><b>SI.No. : 15. e-Tender No. : 2079.</b><br/><b>DEN : West. Zone : CRS/TPTY.</b><br/><b>Jurisdiction :</b> Outside of Work Shop including CRS colonies and all service buildings, Welfare buildings and other buildings.</p> <p><b>Approximate Value in Rs. : 2,76,84,872/-.</b><br/><b>Bid Security : 5,53,700/-.</b></p> <p>For Bid document and other details login to <a href="http://ireps.gov.in">http://ireps.gov.in</a><br/>Any corrigenda will be issued online only.</p> <p><b>Divisional Railway Manager/ Works / Guntakal.</b></p> <p><b>Tender No. : 07 2026 27</b><br/><b>Sr. DEE TRD HYB,</b><br/><b>Dated : 21-04-2026</b></p> <p><b>Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer / Traction Distribution / Hyderabad</b> acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No.07 2026 27 Sr. DEE TRD HYB, Dated : 21-04-2026, Closing Date : 14-05-2026, 15:00 hours. Bidders will be able to submit their original/ revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.</p> <p><b>SI. No. : 1. Description of work Hyderabad Division - Construction of Trip shed at KCG railway station of Hyderabad Division - Electrical TRD Arrangements.</b></p> <p><b>Tender Advertised Cost (Rs.) : Rs.72,60,817.85/-.</b> <b>Earnest Money Deposit (Rs.) : Rs.1,45,200.00/-.</b> <b>Completion period : 12 Months.</b> <b>Date of Closing : 14-05-2026.</b></p> <p><b>Website particulars : www.ireps.gov.in</b></p> <p><b>Notice Board Location where complete details of tender can be seen :</b> Office of the Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer / TrD / Hyderabad, Hyderabad Bhavan, Secunderabad - 500025.</p> <p><b>Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer, TRD, Hyderabad.</b></p> <p><b>E-Tender No. : ELS/ BZA-eTN-02-2026-27, Dated : 20-04-2026</b></p> <p>For and on behalf of the President of India, the undersigned invites E-Tender for the following work up to 15:00 hours on 12-05-2026.</p> <p><b>SI. No. 1. Tender No. : B/E. 221/TRS/RC/574 E-Tender No.ELS-BZA-eTN-02-2026-27 Dated : 20-04-2026. Details of Work : Name of the work : ELS / BZA - Repair / Rehabilitation of RSI blocks. Period of Completion : 12 Months. Tender Value : 38,85,000.01/-.</b> <b>Earnest Money Deposit : 77,700.00.</b> <b>Cost of Tender document : 0.</b> <b>Tender Closing Date &amp; Time : 12-05-2026 @ 15:00 hours.</b></p> <p>1. The prospective tenderers are advised to visit website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> before the date of tender closing to note any changes / corrigenda for any tender.</p> <p><b>SI. No. : 1. Tender Notice No. : B-SG-CN-S AND T-BZA-1-2026-27, Dated : 21-04-2026. Name of the Work : Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Integrated Tunnel Communication Systems, OFC/quad/leaky cable, provision of Emergency Call Points etc in tunnels and stations in connection with doubling of GNT-GTL line in DMT-CMZ &amp; CMZ-GZL section of GNT Division of South Central Railway.</b></p> <p><b>Tender Value : Rs.8,62,29,322.87ps. Completion Period : 09 Months. Date of Closing &amp; Time : 15-05-2026 @ 15:00 hours.</b></p> <p>1. For bid document and other details please login to website <a href="https://ireps.gov.in">https://ireps.gov.in</a>.</p> <p>2. Tenderers can submit their offers online during tender submission / bidding period which is fifteen days period prior to closing of tender.</p> <p>3. Tenderers should watch for any corrigenda (issued online only) upto the date of commencement of the tender submission / bidding period.</p> <p><b>Dy. Chief Signal &amp; Telecom Engineer/ A122 Construction / Vijayawada.</b></p> <p>For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at <a href="https://www.ireps.gov.in">https://www.ireps.gov.in</a> or <a href="http://www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in">www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in</a></p> |

## CRPF embodies courage, nation first spirit: Union Minister Sanjay

HYDERABAD/ GURUGRAM

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Wednesday lauded the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) as the backbone of India's internal security, calling it a symbol of courage, integrity and sacrifice.

Addressing the Passing Out Parade of the 56th batch of gazetted officers at the CRPF Academy in Gurugram, Haryana, he praised jawans for their role in tackling terrorism and Naxalism. Highlighting the force's legacy since 1939, he said CRPF continues to uphold its motto "Service and Loyalty" with distinction. He also appreciated the force for being at the forefront of humanitarian assistance.

The Minister also underscored CRPF's role in humanitarian initiatives and peacekeeping, urging newly inducted officers to uphold professionalism and the "Nation First" principle. This impressive parade stands as a testament to the highest standards of discipline upheld by the CRPF. It is gratifying to see that the officers participating in the parade have successfully completed 52 weeks of rigorous training and are now ready to take up their duties. There is no greater duty than dedicating oneself to the service of the motherland. The sacred pledge of serving the nation is the highest form of commitment, and it is the finest oath any citizen can take for their country", he noted.

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## SHORT TAKES

### Untrained driver sparks bus crash amid RTC strike in Karimnagar

**KARIMNAGAR:** A major accident involving an RTC bus driven by a private driver has triggered outrage in Karimnagar district amid the ongoing RTC strike. Fortunately, everyone breathed a sigh of relief as there was no loss of life. However, several passengers sustained severe injuries. Local people immediately responded to the accident and alerted the 108 ambulance service. The injured have been shifted to the Karimnagar Government Hospital, where they are currently receiving treatment. The bus, pressed into service with a non-regular driver, collided with a lorry near Allunoor after the driver lost control. While no fatalities were reported, several passengers sustained serious injuries and were rushed to the government hospital.

### Digital shift in higher education gains momentum: Experts

**HYDERABAD:** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University hosted a key lecture on "Digital Transformation of Higher Education", highlighting the growing role of technology in academia. Former IAS officer Praveen Prakash noted the importance of the SWAYAM platform and online degree programs aligned with UGC norms. All universities are currently conducting fully online degree programs independently, and have also established a comprehensive learning model to deliver education to students through a Learning Management System (LMS) that complies with UGC guidelines, he added. BRAOU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Ghanta Chakrapani emphasized the need for strategic digital integration to reshape learning, pedagogy, and institutional development. The event saw participation from faculty, researchers and academic leaders focusing on future-ready education systems.

## Cancellation of E-tender is a victory for handloom workers, says BRS MLC L. Ramana

### HYDERABAD

BRS MLC L. Ramana stated in a release that the High Court's decision to cancel the PMU e-tender notification, which the government had planned to implement in a way that would hurt the livelihood of handloom workers, is a victory for handloom families.

He said that there are more than 17,000 handlooms in the state, providing employment to around 40,000 handloom families. However, he alleged that under pressure from big contractors, the state government introduced the e-tender system through a special Government Order, aiming to deprive handloom

workers of their livelihood. He added that justice was served when the handloom workers approached the High Court. MLC Ramana urged the government to immediately implement, on a war footing, the High Court's direction that all bed sheets, carpets, and towels required by Gurukul educational institutions and all government departments and organizations should be procured only through TESCO. He also said that advance planning should be made for the purchase of textiles to ensure employment for handloom workers. For this purpose, he demanded that the government release the necessary funds from time to time.

# A New Experiment in Tourism: "Reverse Tourism", says Jupally



### Minister Jupally Krishna Rao inaugurates the 'Adivasi Tourism Exposure Program'

### Minister travels in a bus along with tribal participants

### 250 tribal individuals head to Hyderabad

### The tribal group is expected to reach Hyderabad at 2 PM

### Tourism officials to welcome them at Taramati Baradari

city dwellers visiting villages to experience nature, the government has launched an initiative where tribal communities get the opportunity to witness modern development and historical heritage firsthand. With this vision, Tourism and Culture Minister Jupally Krishna Rao introduced the concept of "Reverse Tourism." On Wednesday, he flagged off the "Adivasi Tourism Exposure Program" at Gond Gudem village in Utnoor mandal of Adilabad district.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister explained that the program aims to provide new experiences to tribal communities, familiarize them with urban lifestyles, boost their confidence, and foster mutual understanding between cultures. The broader goal is cultural exchange and ultimately improving the standard of living among tribal populations.

### Minister Connects with Tribal Participants

Not only did the minister inaugurate the program, but he also surprised many by personally traveling with the tribal participants on a bus. Throughout the journey, he interacted with them and explained the purpose of the tour.

He expressed hope that exposure to the outside world would increase confidence among children, inspire interest in education, and motivate them to pursue higher studies,

which in turn could improve their living standards.

### A Bridge Between Cultures

The minister described the initiative as a bridge between the unique culture of tribal communities and urban civilization. Around 250 tribal participants, traveling in five special buses, are expected to reach Hyderabad by the afternoon and will be welcomed at Taramati Baradari. During the two-day tour, they will visit major landmarks such as Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Charminar, Golconda Fort, Lumbini Park, and Shilparam. Several public representatives and officials, including local leaders and district authorities, participated in the program.

A new chapter has begun in the history of the state's tourism sector. Moving beyond the usual trend of

## Rs.148 crore sanctioned for construction of approach roads

- Submit proposals in a 1:4 ratio
- Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu at the Infrastructure & Capital Works Cabinet Sub-Committee meeting

### HYDERABAD

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu directed officials to immediately take up the construction of long-pending approach roads to bridges. He noted that several bridges built three years ago have remained underutilized due to the absence of proper approach roads.

A meeting of the Infrastructure and Capital Works Cabinet Sub-Committee was held on Wednesday at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Secretariat under his chair-



manship. Ministers and sub-committee members Komatireddy Venkata Reddy and Duddilla Sridhar Babu attended the meeting. The Deputy Chief Minister announced that the sub-committee has

approved the release of ₹148 crore for the construction of approach roads. He stated that if proposals are submitted in a proper format, approvals and execution would become easier and help expedite

the works. He advised officials that if departments send proposals to the Finance Department in a 1:4 ratio, the sub-committee would examine and approve them promptly.

Keeping the upcoming monsoon season in view, Minister Komatireddy Venkata Reddy instructed officials to complete the construction of approach roads by June 8. He also stated that he would personally review the progress on a weekly basis and closely monitor all aspects, including tendering, execution, and quality of works. Finance Department Principal Secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultan, Special Chief Secretary Vikas Raj, Deputy CM's Special Secretary Krishna Bhaskar, and other officials were present at the meeting.

## Rs.5 Lakh Ex-Gratia to Families of Deceased Gig Workers

### Government Stands by Gig Workers' Welfare: Minister Dr. G. Vivek Venkatswamy

### HYDERABAD

Labour and Mines Minister Dr. G. Vivek Venkatswamy handed over ex-gratia cheques to the family members of gig workers who lost their lives while on duty. Financial assistance of ₹5 lakh each was provided through the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF).

The Minister personally handed over cheques to the families of gig workers Lokurthi Naresh, G. Shyam Sundar, and Ahmed Bin Abdul Khader on Wednesday.

Speaking to the bereaved family members at the programme held in his chamber at the Secretariat, the Minister said that the Telangana government, inspired by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's vision, has stood firmly by gig workers and passed the Gig Workers Welfare Act in the Assembly. He reiterated that gig workers require such protection and a strong social safety net.

He assured that the state government would stand by every worker in times of distress. Whether gig workers or hamalis, all



workers deserve support and protection from the government, he said.

The Minister appreciated the role of the gig workers' union, noting that their continuous follow-up with labour department officials made this initiative possible. He reiterated that the government will never neglect gig workers and weaker sections and will always remain committed to safeguarding their rights and welfare. Labour Department Spe-

cial Chief Secretary Dana Kishore, Additional Commissioner E. Gangadhar, gig workers' union leader Salauddin, and others were present on the occasion.

The bereaved family members expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Labour and Mines Minister Dr. G. Vivek Venkatswamy for extending financial assistance and supporting them during their difficult time.

## Stop attacks by forest officials on podu farmers

- If KCR gave podu land titles, Revanth is making people homeless
- We will approach the National SC, ST, BC and Human Rights Commission
- Demand to provide podu land titles to all eligible as per the Chevella Declaration
- Dr. R.S. Praveen Kumar, State General Secretary, BRS

### HYDERABAD

We welcome the High Court's judgment on the illegal P.C. Ghose Commission report regarding the Kaleshwaram project. Rahul Gandhi, who carries the Constitution daily, and Revanth Reddy, who calls him his mentor, came to power in the name of Chevella, Kamareddy

and Warangal declarations, but are now violating the right to life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

During his 10-year rule, KCR understood the problems of people living in forest areas and, in 2023, distributed podu land titles for 4 lakh acres to those dependent on forests. 1.5 lakh farmers received land titles. They were also provided Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bima, free electricity and borewell facilities under Indira Jal Prabha.

People living in forest areas have endured attacks from wild animals; some have died and were buried there, living for generations. Yet, attacks by forest officials are still continuing. The Congress government is unjustly evicting people from forest areas across the state, from Mananur to Asifabad. They are not allowing construction of houses or schools in forest villages. In Gundepalli of Panchikalpet



mandal, toilets built are being demolished.

Even when farmers cultivate lands for which they received podu titles earlier, their vehicles are being seized. If they confront forest officials, cases are being filed under Section 352 and they are being jailed. This is not people's governance; it is an anti-people government.

Although all ministers—Revenue, Housing and Forest—belong to the Congress party, there is no

coordination among them, causing public hardship. In Sirpur (Asifabad district), even those who pay house tax and electricity bills are not being allowed basic activities like drawing rangoli in front of their homes, despite being sanctioned Indiramma houses. Officials are not even allowing roof slabs to be constructed.

Poor farmers are forced to roam around forest offices daily, but officials are not accessible. Public grievance platforms like Prajavani are ineffective, no issue has been resolved through them. Has the Housing Minister ever reviewed the Indiramma housing scheme? Even when houses are sanctioned, forest officials under Konda Surekha are obstructing them. Have Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Konda Surekha ever conducted a joint review? No.

It appears that as long as land grabbing and illegal activities continue, public welfare is ig-

nored. Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy should not limit his attention to only certain areas but also consider forest dwellers. Konda Surekha should understand Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution and stop discrimination against forest people.

The Forest Rights Act, 2006, enacted during Congress rule, grants land rights to tribal and long-term non-tribal forest dwellers under Section 3. If aware of this law, why are officials preventing farmers from accessing their land? Titles given during KCR's tenure are being labeled fake. Are government-issued titles fake? Then are the ministers and officials genuine?

In the Amrabad region, there are plans to relocate Chenchu tribes. When they refuse, they are being offered ₹15 lakh to leave. Would Revanth Reddy's own family vacate if asked? Why double standards? Article 15 prohibits discrimination based

on caste, religion or region—are officials unaware? Why different justice for tribals and non-tribals? Non-tribals have lived in forests for generations too.

Civil service rules (1968) require compassion toward the poor—why is it being ignored? During protests in Central University, when forests were being destroyed and wildlife killed, why did forest officials not act? KCR stopped migration and provided shelter; now this government is making people homeless again. People in forest areas of Sirpur constituency are migrating to Maharashtra as laborers.

Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy appears focused on land acquisition rather than welfare of the poor. Tiger Reserve GO No. 49 is anti-people and was introduced with fake consent. Though opposition forced a rollback earlier, harassment has resumed. If tigers are more important, keep them in the Secretariat.



## India poised to emerge as leading advanced nation globally: TGCHE Chairman Prof Balakista Reddy

### Dr Srinivas Vooradi

### WARANGAL

"In the near future, India is poised to emerge as the leading advanced nation globally," stated Chairman of the Telangana Council of Higher Education (TGCHE) Prof. V. Balakista Reddy, addressing the chief guest at the two-day National Conference on "Emerging Challenges in the Contemporary Business World, Strategies for Success," hosted by the MBA Department of Vaagdevi Degree and PG (Autonomous) College in Nayeem Nagar, Hanmakonda, Prof. Balakista Reddy addressed the impact of artificial intelligence and the digital era on business and emphasized the essential role of the youth in navigating these challenges. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor of Kakatiya University, Prof. K. Pratap Reddy advocated for the introduction of new courses aimed at boosting employability in the future, while also stressing the significance of MBA education in today's business landscape. In his

keynote address, Prof and Advisor of Industrial and International Collaborations (IIC), CBIT, Hyderabad Dr. V. Barla examined various case studies and their implications for the contemporary business sector.

Presiding over the inaugural of the conference, Prof. P. Krishnamachari noted that such seminars are vital for tackling the numerous challenges faced in the field of management. According to the Director of the conference Dr. S. Mahender Kumar, faculty members and 60 research scholars from various institutions are set to present their research papers. Vaagdevi Colleges Founder Dr. Ch. Devender Reddy, Academic Director (Academics) Dr. Ch. Vahini Devi, VIBA CEO Ch. Vishwambhar Reddy, College Principal Dr. A. Seshachalam along with MBA Senior Faculty members Prof. K. Raji Reddy and Prof. Kunati Raji Reddy, as well as Seminar Convener Dr. Ch. Srikanth Varma, Co-Convener Dr. B. Chandrakala Naik, and several other teachers and contributors participated.

## Grand Arrangements for Hajj-2026

- Under the Leadership of Minister Mohammad Azharuddin
- Top Facilities for 10,000 Pilgrims from Hyderabad

### HYDERABAD

The Telangana Minorities Welfare Minister Mohammad Azharuddin conducted a high-level review meeting on Hajj-2026 arrangements and directed all departments to ensure the best possible facilities for approximately 10,000 pilgrims traveling from Hyderabad. Under his leadership, transportation, security, medical services, airport coordination, and pilgrim welfare measures are being implemented efficiently.

Reaffirming his commitment to minority welfare, Minister Mohammad Azharuddin personally chaired a high-level review meeting at the Telangana Secretariat regarding Hajj-2026 preparations. He instructed all departments to ensure safe, comfortable, and world-class arrangements for nearly 10,000 pilgrims departing from the Hyderabad embarkation point for this year's Hajj pilgrimage.

The minister conducted a comprehensive review of arrangements related to accommodation, transportation, airport operations, medical services, security, baggage handling, and distribution of Zamzam water.

Flights operated by Flynas will run charter services from Hyderabad to Jeddah between May 4 and May 21, 2026. Return flights will operate from Medina to Hyderabad between June 11 and June 26, 2026.

### Special Focus by the Minister

Minister Azharuddin instructed officials to ensure the following facilities:

- Comfortable accommodation at Haj House
- Fast-track documentation and boarding pass services
- Proper medical check-ups and vaccination camps
- Special buses from Haj House to the airport
- Efficient luggage management system
- Dedicated facilities for women pilgrims
- Special assistance for the elderly, including aerobridge access
- Facilities for prayers, ablution, and sanitation
- 24/7 security and crowd management
- Priority to Welfare

Officials stated that the minister is giving top priority to elderly pilgrims, women, and first-time Hajj travelers, ensuring they complete their spiritual journey with dignity and comfort.

### Strong Inter-Departmental Coordination

Senior officials from the police, airport authorities, GHMC, RTC, health department, TS Transco, fire services, BSNL, banks, and the Hajj Committee participated in the meeting and assured full cooperation.

### Growing Trust Among Minorities

Since assuming office, Minister Mohammad Azharuddin has emerged as a strong voice for minority welfare in Telangana. His active role in Hajj arrangements, educational support, and welfare initiatives has increased trust among minority communities.

### Official Statement

Officials stated that under the direct supervision of Minister Mohammad Azharuddin, the Hajj-2026 arrangements from Hyderabad are expected to be among the best in recent years.

## Delhi Police nab fugitive in 14-year-old Chandigarh robbery-abduction case

NEW DELHI: (APR 22)

Delhi Police have arrested a Rs 20,000 rewarder and proclaimed offender who had been evading capture for 14 years in connection with a 2012 robbery-cum-abduction case in Dwarka South, officials said Wednesday. The accused, identified as Virkesh alias Birkesh alias Vicky (47), a native of Pratapgarh in Uttar Pradesh, was apprehended by a team of the Crime Branch's Central Range from Chandigarh, where he had been living under a false identity, they said. According to the police, the case dates back to February 6, 2012, when a cab driver was intercepted by two unidentified men during duty in Dwarka South. The assailants overpowered him, robbed him of cash and a mobile phone, abducted him, and later threw him out before fleeing with his vehicle. A case under relevant sections of the IPC was registered at the time.

## Allahabad HC flags shortage of ventilators in UP hospitals

LUCKNOW: (APR 22)

Allahabad High Court on Wednesday raised serious concerns over the shortage of ventilators in hospitals, observing that statistical claims hold little value if critical care equipment is not accessible to patients in time. Hearing a PIL, a division bench of Justices Rajan Roy and Manjive Shukla questioned whether any hospital could state on affidavit that a ventilator would be provided promptly whenever required.

# CM Mamata warns of 'false voting', urges vigilance on poll day

KOLKATA, APRIL 22

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would use central forces to indulge in false voting during the ongoing Assembly elections and urged them not to become a part of such political activities. Addressing an election rally at Haripal in Hooghly district on Wednesday, Banerjee asked people to remain vigilant and alert on the day of polling and to ensure that their voting rights are exercised without any interference or intimidation. "The central forces will vote in droves. The



BJP will use them to indulge in false voting. I will tell them, do not do politics. We salute you. You protect the country. But the central forces are saying 'BJP Zindabad' now! How dare they do so much?" CM Banerjee alleged while

addressing the gathering. She further said, "The central forces will check you at the polling booth. If they touch women, you will take the legal route. No one will take up arms or resort to violence. You know what to do in such

situations." The Chief Minister also claimed that the BJP is running a minority government at the Centre and is at risk of falling at any time in the near future. "We defeated the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections a few days ago. The BJP government will fall within this year. This is a minority government. It is surviving at the mercy of some people," she said while continuing her address. Mamata Banerjee also appealed to people belonging to minority communities to cast their votes before embarking on the Hajj pilgrimage. "They have opened flight services for Hajj from April 27. It has been done very cleverly. There is an election here on April 29, and before that they have done this. I will request you not to go for Hajj without voting. First cast your votes and then go for Hajj. If you do not cast your votes, then they will drive you out through NRC. Do not waste your vote. I will make all arrangements for Hajj," CM Banerjee said.

The first phase of the two-phase Assembly elections in West Bengal will be held on Thursday. Polling will be conducted in as many as 152 Assembly constituencies across several districts amid tight and elaborate security arrangements.



## ECI reports seizures exceeding Rs 1,000 crore in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal

NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has announced that seizures in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have crossed the Rs 1,000 crore mark, underscoring the unprecedented scale and intensity of enforcement operations aimed at ensuring free, fair, and transparent polls in both states. According to the Commission, the seizures include cash, liquor, narcotic substances, precious metals, and various forms of freebies, all of which were allegedly intended to influence voters and manipulate electoral outcomes, an official ECI press note stated while elaborating on the nature and extent of the confiscations. The Commission revealed that since the activation of the Election Seizure Management System on February 26, 2026, enforcement agencies have confiscated illegal inducements worth Rs 472.89 crore in West Bengal and Rs 599.24 crore in Tamil Nadu, thereby bringing the combined total value of seizures

to Rs 1,072.13 crore across the two poll-bound states. In West Bengal, the seizures included Rs 27.48 crore in unaccounted cash, over 39 lakh litres of liquor valued at Rs 102.45 crore, drugs worth Rs 108.11 crore, precious metals worth Rs 55.88 crore, and freebies valued at Rs 178.83 crore, reflecting a wide range of inducements being tracked and intercepted by enforcement agencies. Tamil Nadu accounted for seizures amounting to Rs 100.19 crore in cash, 1.17 lakh litres of liquor valued at Rs 3.85 crore, drugs worth Rs 76.72 crore, precious metals worth Rs 159.31 crore, and freebies valued at Rs 259.14 crore, the Commission said while providing a detailed state-wise break-up of the seizures. To achieve this level of enforcement and monitoring, the Commission deployed as many as 5,011 Flying Squad Teams and 5,363 Static Surveillance Teams across the two states, tasked with responding swiftly to complaints and carrying out checks and inspections at multiple locations.

# North Andhra Emerges as Renewable and Industrial Hub

AMARAVATI

CM to lay foundation for Rs 5400 cr ReNew Energy Global plant in Anakapalli district tomorrow

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will lay foundation stone for Rs 5,400 crore ReNew Energy Global plant in Rambilli of Anakapalli district tomorrow giving a big boost to industrial sector in North Andhra. As part of the initiative the ReNew Energy Global will set up a 6 GW solar ingot-wafer manufacturing unit with an investment of Rs 4,200 crore and a 125 MW hybrid captive renewable power project with an investment of Rs 1,200 crore and both the projects are expected to be completed within the next two years. With this Anakapalli district is once again set to emerge as a major industrial hub in Andhra Pradesh. Following the foundation laying ceremony of the ArcelorMittal steel plant, which brought national and international attention to the district, another major industrial investment is now poised to strengthen Anakapalli's industrial



prominence. At a time when countries across the globe are accelerating investments in renewable energy production, the coalition government is giving high priority to the clean energy sector. As part of this effort, the government is encouraging large-scale investments in renewable energy projects. Leading clean energy company ReNew Energy Global has now come forward to establish a major renewable en-

ergy plant in Andhra Pradesh with substantial investments. ReNew Energy Global, one of the leading players in the clean energy sector, has already established renewable energy projects with a capacity of 19.2 GW across various parts of India. The solar ingot-wafer unit and hybrid renewable power project are expected to create employment opportunities for around 2,100 people, providing significant job prospects for local youth. Chief Minister

Chandrababu Naidu is moving ahead with the goal of making Andhra Pradesh a major clean energy hub. The government believes that strengthening the energy sector will drive rapid growth in industrial, agricultural, and service sectors, thereby transforming Andhra Pradesh into a renewable energy powerhouse. It may be noted that during the CII Partnership Summit held in Visakhapatnam in November last year, ReNew Energy Global announced plans to invest Rs 82,000 crore in Andhra Pradesh in a phased manner. The company will soon initiate another mega project worth around Rs 22,000 crore in Anantapur district, which is expected to become one of the largest hybrid renewable energy projects in India. ReNew Energy Global had first entered Andhra Pradesh during the Telugu Desam Party government in 2015, setting up a wind project at Kalyan-

durg. The company currently operates renewable plants in the state with a capacity of 717 MW wind power and 60 MW solar power. Since the coalition government assumed office, North Andhra has been witnessing a surge in industrial investments. Foundation stones have already been laid for projects by ArcelorMittal and Cognizant, while TCS has already commenced operations. This month, the foundation stone is also set to be laid for Google's major international investment project, further boosting the region's growth trajectory. Additionally, the Bhogapuram Airport is expected to become operational soon, while tourism and spiritual development are also progressing rapidly across the region. As per schedule the Chief Minister will participate in ReNew Energy Global foundation stone ceremony at 11.10 a.m tomorrow and return to Amaravati at 2.35 p.m.

# Pappu Yadav's remark on politicians triggers controversy

Independent MP Pappu Yadav sparked fresh controversy after claiming that 70-80 per cent of politicians watch pornography. He earlier sparked a row when he claimed that "90 per cent of women cannot enter politics without going into a male leader's room".

Independent MP Pappu Yadav, who earlier sparked a row with his sexist remarks on women joining politics, courted another controversy on Wednesday, when he claimed that 70-80 per cent of politicians watched pornography. Pappu Yadav, whose

original name is Rajesh Ranjan, demanded that their phones, including his, be checked for such adult content. The Independent MP from Purnea, backed by the Congress, earlier faced backlash after he spoke about the women's reservation issue, claiming that "90 per cent of women cannot enter politics without going into a male leader's room," drawing sharp criticism for being misogynistic. He was then served a notice by the Bihar State Women's Commission over his sexist comments. Responding to the notice, Pappu Yadav defended



his earlier remarks and said, "I have said this on the Floor of the House too, that 70-80 per cent of politicians watch porn. So, get everyone checked. If there is porn on my phone, check me too.

Who are these people who have served me a notice? Who are they with?" Pappu Yadav also claimed he had photographs of Sajal Jha, a women's commission member, with several leaders and said he would make them public. "There are several photos of former ministers. People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. I had said that male politicians do not let women enter politics without exploiting them. Is that incorrect? I am fighting a women's fight. They exploit women," he said. He said there

were allegations of sexual exploitation involving 755 male politicians across the country and questioned why the Women's Commission was objecting to his remarks. He alleged that some politicians exploit women while simultaneously advocating for the implementation of women's reservation law. "There is sexual exploitation against 755 male politicians and there are chargesheets against 155. The whole of India is tainted. If I speak of male politicians, why are they (Women's Commission) troubled? These politicians ex-

ploit women and then they speak of the Women's Reservation Act," he said. Both the Congress and BJP lashed out at Pappu Yadav for his controversial remarks. The Purnea MP's remarks came against the backdrop of the Constitutional Amendment Bill, which sought to fast-track 33 per cent of women's reservation in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, failed to get a two-thirds majority in the Lower House. With 298 votes in favour and 230 against, the bill fell short of the 352 votes required to amend the Constitution.

## Asaduddin Owaisi slams Uniform Civil Code ahead of Gujarat civic polls

AHMEDABAD: (APR 22)

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Wednesday criticised the BJP over the Uniform Civil Code and urged people to vote against the ruling party ahead of the local polls.

Owaisi was addressing a public gathering in Ahmedabad to appeal for votes for the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin (AIMIM) candidates ahead of the April 26 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections.

"I request you all to use your votes wisely. BJP has challenged our Shariat; by bringing uniform civil code, they want to destroy the Shariat. I appeal to everyone to think before voting on April 26 and vote against BJP," Owaisi said.

# TN set to vote today; 4.18 lakh postal ballots recorded, security stepped up

CHENNAI, APRIL 22

Ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections scheduled to be held in the state, Chief Electoral Officer Archana Patnaik said that a total of 4,18,541 postal votes have been recorded so far across the state, reflecting steady and sustained participation from service voters, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities across various districts.

Addressing reporters at the Secretariat in Chennai on Tuesday, she outlined the extensive, multi-layered, and comprehensive arrangements made by the Election Commission of India to ensure smooth, orderly, and peaceful polling in the state, which is set to go to the polls in a single phase on April 23.

Patnaik said that Tamil Nadu has a total electorate of approximately 5.73 crore voters, covering a diverse demographic spread across



urban, semi-urban, and rural regions of the state. Polling will be conducted across all 234 Assembly constituencies in Tamil Nadu, with as many as 75,064 polling stations established across the state to facilitate voter participation and ensure accessibility.

To facilitate the voting process in an efficient and seamless manner, authorities have deployed 1,06,418 electronic voting machines (EVMs), ensuring adequate availability, redundancy, and backup systems in case of any technical contingencies during polling hours. Security arrangements have been significantly strengthened and scaled up, with as many as 83,875 police personnel deployed across the state at polling stations, strong rooms, and other sensitive locations to maintain law and order. In addition to the state police deployment, a total of 300 companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), including personnel from the Central Reserve

Police Force (CRPF), have been stationed across sensitive and vulnerable areas to maintain peace and prevent any untoward incidents during the polling process. The Chief Electoral Officer also highlighted the intensified enforcement measures undertaken in the run-up to the elections, with a focus on curbing electoral malpractices and illegal inducements. She revealed that authorities have seized cash, gifts, liquor, and other inducements worth Rs 1,262 crore so far as part of sustained efforts to ensure a level playing field for all candidates and political parties contesting the elections.

Reiterating the Election Commission's commitment to conducting free, fair, and transparent elections, Patnaik said that strict monitoring and vigilance measures will continue until the completion of polling and the sealing of all EVMs. Flying squads,

surveillance teams, and static monitoring units have been actively deployed and are continuously working across districts to check violations of the Model Code of Conduct and to respond promptly to any complaints. She also issued a reminder to voters regarding polling day protocols and guidelines that need to be followed at polling stations.

Mobile phones will not be allowed inside polling stations, and special arrangements have been made at polling booths for voters to safely deposit their devices before entering the polling premises to cast their votes.

With elaborate logistical arrangements, robust security deployment, and strict enforcement measures in place, the Election Commission has expressed confidence in conducting peaceful, orderly, and transparent elections across Tamil Nadu without any major disruptions.

## National Public Relations Day Celebrated by PRSI Hyderabad Chapter

HYDERABAD, 21ST APRIL 2026:

The Public Relations Society of India (PRSI), Hyderabad Chapter, celebrated National Public Relations Day held on 21st April, 2026 (Tuesday) at the Press Club, Somajiguda, Hyderabad, on the theme "Public Relations - 5th Pillar of Democracy".

- Hon'ble Justice Smt T Rajani\*, Judge (Retd), High Court of Telangana, graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Addressing the gathering, Justice Rajani said that in a vibrant democracy, responsible and ethical communication acts as a bridge between institutions and citizens. She observed that Public Relations, when practiced with integrity, strengthens transparency and accountability, making it worthy of being called the 5th Pillar of Democracy. Every citizen is a Pillar of Democracy. She said Judiciary has limits and limitations and Judges while dispensing Justice will generally go by constitutional spirit and Conscience.
- Shri Sanjay Kumar, IPS\*, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad, and "Smt C Vanaja", Independent Senior Journalist and Media Educator, participated as Guests of Honour.
- Shri Sanjay Kumar underlined that timely, factual, and empathetic communication by enforcement agencies is vital to maintaining public trust, especially during crises and law-and-order situations. He commended PR professionals for their role in translating policy into public understanding and urged stronger collaboration between police and communicators for community outreach.
- Smt C Vanaja stressed that in an era of information overload, PR professionals and journalists share a joint responsibility to uphold truth, verify facts and counter misinformation. She called for ethical synergy between the media and PR fraternity to protect democratic discourse and ensure citizens receive credible information.
- Sri Y Babji\*, Editor, \_Public

Relations Voice\_, said that PRSI is committed to promoting professional standards and ethical practices in communication. He called upon young professionals to see PR not just as a career but as a responsibility towards society and democracy. He said PRSI across all chapters is debating on this theme to claim the status of 4th Estate.

- Shri U.S. Sharma, National Vice President (South), PRSI\*, representing the PRSI National Council, elaborated on the significance of the day. He said that as per the clarion call of National President Shri Ajith Pathak, all PRSI Chapters across the country are organising gatherings to deliberate on the theme. He congratulated the Hyderabad Chapter team for proactively conducting the event and taking the initiative forward. Earlier,
- Dr Yadagiri Kambhampati\*, Chairman, PRSI Hyderabad Chapter, welcomed the dignitaries and members. He said that PRSI Hyderabad has been consistently creating platforms for dialogue between PR professionals, media, academia, and government. The theme "5th Pillar of Democracy" was chosen to reaffirm the profession's role in strengthening democratic values through credible communication. The event saw enthusiastic participation from eminent PR professionals, corporate communicators, media representatives, PRSI office bearers, and students of journalism and mass communication.
- Sri Rajesh Kalyana\*, Chapter Secretary, PRSI Hyderabad Chapter, proposed the Vote of Thanks. He expressed gratitude to all dignitaries, speakers, media friends, and participants for making the National Public Relations Day celebrations meaningful. PRSI, established in 1958, is the apex body of PR professionals in India and observes 21st April as National Public Relations Day every year to mark the contribution of PR to nation building.

EDITORIAL

A STRATEGIC TRANSITION IN PATNA:  
SAMRAT CHOUDHARY AND  
THE BJP'S NEW BIHAR CALCULUS

On April 15, 2026, Samrat Choudhary was officially sworn in as the 24th Chief Minister of Bihar, a landmark event that signaled the first time a politician from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has ever occupied the state's highest executive office. His promotion is emblematic of a broader, highly successful strategic blueprint employed by the BJP for national expansion—a process characterized by gradually outgrowing regional allies and eventually inverting the political hierarchy to its own advantage. The fundamental power dynamics within the state had begun to shift significantly as far back as the 2020 Bihar elections, when the BJP secured 74 seats, notably surpassing the Janata Dal (United), which saw an unexpected decline to just 43 seats in the 243-member Assembly. This trend was further solidified during the 2025 Assembly elections, where the BJP clinched 89 seats against the JD(U)'s 85. The BJP exhibited strategic patience, waiting for the opportune moment before transitioning JD(U) supremo Nitish Kumar out of the role he had held for two decades and into the Rajya Sabha.

Mr. Choudhary's ascent also highlights another recurring pattern within the BJP's modern organizational philosophy: a remarkable flexibility in awarding top leadership positions to individuals who joined the party relatively recently. Having previously been a member of both the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and the JD(U) before his 2017 entry into the BJP, Mr. Choudhary represents a pragmatic choice. As a member of the Koeri Kushwaha caste, he has functioned as the BJP's primary OBC face. Historically, the BJP-JD(U) coalition, supported by smaller regional players, has maintained its dominance over Bihar's political landscape by successfully mobilizing a coalition of upper castes, non-Yadav OBCs, and Extremely Backward Classes (EBC). While the upper-caste vote bank typically finds fewer viable alternatives outside the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the EBC segments are known for being considerably more volatile and fluid in their political allegiances.

The BJP's decision to wait six years after becoming the numerically dominant partner before claiming the Chief Minister's post was a calculated move driven by the risk of alienating EBC voters who maintained deep trust in Mr. Kumar. Consequently, the appointment of Samrat Choudhary serves as the BJP's direct attempt to engage with the OBC-EBC demographic without relying on Mr. Kumar as a secondary negotiator. This transition is likely to trigger a reshuffling of social alignments within both the BJP and the JD(U). Furthermore, the future of the JD(U) as an independent entity remains increasingly precarious now that its long-time leader is no longer at the helm. While Mr. Choudhary has achieved the Chief Minister's office through the robust backing of the BJP's central leadership, the responsibility of earning the genuine trust of grassroots party workers and the wider electorate remains his alone to fulfill.

Beyond the immediate political maneuvers, Bihar continues to struggle with a significant governance deficit that demands immediate and focused intervention. Despite possessing a vibrant and youthful population, the state's critical education and healthcare sectors remain in a state of distress. To be successful, Mr. Choudhary must demonstrate a clear vision and an unwavering commitment to building upon the incremental gains achieved in recent years. He must place a renewed emphasis on human development, recognizing that without such a foundation, any level of investment in physical infrastructure will yield suboptimal returns. Given that Bihar's progress has the potential to create a powerful multiplier effect across the entire nation, the new Chief Minister must move swiftly to consolidate his power and direct all state resources toward comprehensive development.

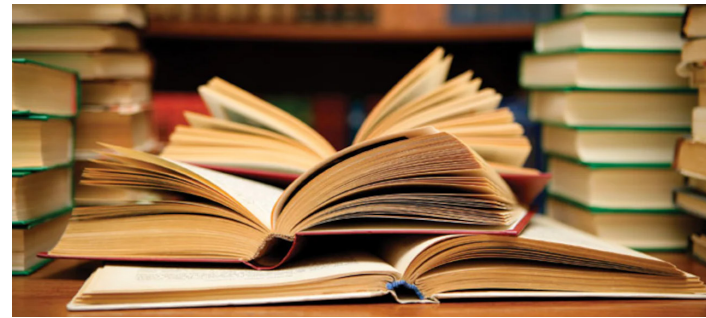
World Book and Copyright Day, 23 April 2026

Books: The Lamp of Life, the Bridge to Solutions

Every year on April 23, the world comes together to celebrate the enduring power of books as vessels of knowledge, imagination, and human connection. World Book and Copyright Day, established by UNESCO, is more than a symbolic observance—it is a global reminder of the transformative role reading plays in shaping thoughtful, compassionate societies. Marking the legacy of literary icons like Shakespeare and Cervantes, the day inspires individuals to rediscover the joy of reading and embrace books not as obligations, but as lifelong companions in learning and self-discovery.

Every year on 23 April, the world celebrates books—the priceless heritage of knowledge, creativity, and human civilization. Initiated by UNESCO in 1995, this day is not merely a formal observance; it is a global commitment to honor authors, protect creative rights, and promote a culture of reading. The choice of this date is deeply meaningful, as it marks the passing of literary giants like William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes, whose works have profoundly shaped human civilization. The central message of 2026 emphasizes reading according to one's interests and transforming reading into a joyful experience. Today, it is essential to view reading not as a burden, but as a pathway to self-development and inner fulfillment. In this spirit, Rabat has been designated as the World Book Capital for 2026, underscoring that book culture is not confined to any one nation, but belongs to all humanity.

Books are not merely a combination of paper and words; they embody lived experience. They are vibrant chronicles of time, society, and human sensitivity. The great poet Rabindranath Tagore once observed that higher education does not simply impart information but harmonizes life and brings peace. Books fulfill this very role—they nurture wisdom, compassion, and tolerance within individuals. In times of crisis, books stand as true companions. This truth became especially evident during global crises like pandemics, when people sought refuge in books amidst isolation and uncertainty. India's book culture boasts an ancient and glorious legacy. Sacred texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, and Mahabharata have not only guided Indian society but illuminated the world with their wisdom. Renowned centers of learning like Nalanda University and Takshashila University attracted students from distant lands. Manuscripts written on palm leaves and birch



bark preserved this knowledge across generations. This tradition extended beyond religious texts to encompass science, medicine, literature, and philosophy.

In the darkest moments of life, books truly act as a lamp, illuminating the path forward. When individuals are overwhelmed by problems, stress, and inner conflict, books offer fresh perspectives. They are not just reservoirs of knowledge but true friends, philosophers, and guides that awaken consciousness. Books teach us that solutions often lie not outside, but within our own understanding. The Chinese philosopher Confucius rightly said that ignorance is the darkness of the mind, and knowledge is its light. Similarly, the great Jain philosopher Acharya Mahapragya emphasized simplicity and balance, asserting that true knowledge is that which calms and harmonizes the mind. Books cultivate this balance—they enable us to think clearly, understand deeply, and make patient decisions. In modern India, numerous efforts have strengthened book culture. Initiatives such as the Sarvodaya Sahitya Bhandar established by Vinoba Bhawe and the Adarsh Sahitya Sangh founded by Acharya Tulsi have played a significant role in bringing ethical and inspirational literature to the masses. These endeavors aim not only at disseminating knowledge but also at fostering character and human values. Even in today's age of expanding technology, the relevance of books remains undiminished. While new mediums of learning have emerged, the intimate touch and depth of printed books re-

main unparalleled. Books broaden perspectives, sharpen moral judgment, and provide a balanced outlook on life.

In India, under the leadership of Narendra Modi, several noteworthy initiatives have been undertaken to promote book culture. His suggestion of gifting books instead of bouquets has reinforced respect for knowledge in society. Nationwide campaigns have also been launched to develop reading habits and strengthen libraries, particularly among youth. These efforts go beyond literacy—they aim to build a conscious, sensitive, and empowered society. The eminent scientist and former President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam once remarked that a good book is equivalent to many friends. Indeed, books play a vital role in the intellectual, social, cultural, and moral development of individuals. They inspire self-reflection, deepen our understanding of societal complexities, and motivate positive change. As the renowned author Toni Morrison aptly said, if there is a book you wish to read but it has not been written, you must write it yourself. This thought encourages creativity and self-confidence. In today's fast-paced information age, where distractions are abundant, the need for deep reading and contemplation has grown even stronger. Books provide focus, patience, and depth. They do not merely inform; they transform. They guide life and inspire individuals to become better human beings.

Books also serve as a foundation for mental peace and emotional stability. Amid the chaos of daily life, a good book functions like

meditation, calming and centering the mind. The Chinese thinker Mencius believed that human nature is inherently good and only requires the right direction—books provide that direction. They become companions in solitude, support in sorrow, and sources of hope in despair. Through books, we connect with the experiences of great individuals, understand their struggles, and draw inspiration for our own lives. Truly, books are like the mythical wish-fulfilling tree and divine cow—sources of knowledge, wisdom, peace, and solutions. They cultivate a mindset that seeks solutions in every situation. They expand our thinking, refine our sensitivity, and guide us toward becoming better human beings. Thus, books not only illuminate life but also make it meaningful, balanced, and enriched.

As we celebrate World Book Day, it becomes evident that books are not merely relics of the past but foundations of the future. They possess the power to bring about lasting and positive transformation—not through external pressure, but through inner awakening. It is therefore essential to make reading an integral part of our lives, to foster a culture of books in every home, and to connect future generations with this invaluable source of knowledge. World Book and Copyright Day inspire us to cultivate the habit of reading, to respect books, and to contribute to building a society rooted in knowledge, sensitivity, and human values.



LALIT GARGG  
Writer, Journalist, Columnist

I SOLDIER



Through raging storms he forges on,  
Through whistling bullets, dusk till dawn.  
He crushes foes with fearless might,  
He scales the peaks in darkest night.  
He stands, steadfast, for his land—  
A soul of honor, bold and grand.  
That proud and noble soul: the soldier.

He knows no festival or feast,  
No silken bed, no moment's peace.  
No borders bind his tireless tread,  
No fear can cloud his lion's head.  
He walks where only courage dares—  
The one who always, always cares.  
That proud and noble soul: the soldier.

Through desert winds and snow-clad heights,  
He walks through days and sleeps through fights.  
No comfort calls, no quilted bed,  
A gun his pillow, dreams unsaid.  
A bunker's chill becomes his home—  
In steel and grit, he stands alone.

That proud and noble soul: the soldier.  
Though wounds may burn, though blood may spill,  
His heart holds fast, his soul is still.  
He fights with fire, endures the flame,  
For freedom's cause, not pride or fame.  
He gives his all, his very breath,  
To shield his land, to fight till death.  
That proud and noble soul: the soldier.

He dreams not of a rich man's throne,  
But of a land that's safe, his own.  
No rank, no gold, no fleeting pride—  
Just peace for those he's sworn to guide.  
That proud and noble soul: the soldier.

So if you seek to honor him,  
Then let your eyes with truth not dim.  
Know what he bears, the path he treads,  
The silent tears, the words unsaid.  
Then you will truly understand  
What builds and breaks a soldier's stand.  
That proud and noble soul: the soldier.

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

Improving People's Living Standards is the Core Objective of the 99-Day Praja Palana – Pragati Pranalika

The primary objective of the Government's 99-Day Praja Palana – Pragati Pranalika is to ensure that governance reaches the people directly, instead of making citizens run around government offices. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy envisions a system where ministers and officials step out of their offices, engage directly with citizens, listen to their grievances, and resolve them on the spot, ensuring that welfare schemes reach genuine beneficiaries.

Launched on March 6, this ambitious programme will continue uninterrupted for 99 days until June 12 of the Telangana Formation Day.

The Chief Minister has conducted detailed review meetings last month with ministers, MLAs, MPs, and district collectors to guide its implementation.

Key Focus Areas

- The programme is being implemented across the state in five phases, covering major sectors such as:
  - Healthcare
  - Education
  - Agriculture
  - Sanitation
  - Drinking Water Supply
  - Roads and Infrastructure
  - Electricity
  - Housing (Indiramma Houses)
  - Ration Cards
  - Employment Generation
  - Drug Eradication

A special mobile application is being used for real-time monitoring, along with active public participation through Gram Sabhas led by elected representatives.

Special Initiatives

As part of the programme: Reforms in education and healthcare sectors are being undertaken 100 Telangana Public Schools will be identified and strengthened Job fairs and skill development programmes are being organized In April, the government launched a special road safety awareness campaign titled "Arrive Alive", aimed at reducing road acci-



dents and fatalities.

The campaign emphasizes:

- Following traffic rules
- Wearing helmets and seat belts
- Avoiding over-speeding
- Not using mobile phones while driving
- Strict action against drunk driving

It also highlights that road safety is a shared responsibility of every citizen.

Governance in Mission Mode

The 99-day plan represents a mission-mode governance approach, bringing administration closer to people—from village panchayats to urban municipalities. Public meetings, grievance redressal camps, and direct interactions with elected representatives form its backbone.

Welfare and Development

- Special emphasis is placed on welfare initiatives in May, including:
  - Farmer welfare and Rythu Bandhu implementation
  - Irrigation and continuous water supply for agriculture
  - Subsidies for farm equipment and fertilizers
  - Procurement of paddy
  - Subsidized LPG cylinders

- Free electricity for limited consumption
- Expansion of Aarogyasri healthcare services
- Housing schemes

Digital Governance

The plan also promotes digital governance by enabling online approvals for building permissions and utility services, aiming to enhance transparency, reduce corruption, and improve efficiency.

Youth and Employment

Employment generation is a key priority. Job fairs and skill development programmes are being conducted, with a long-term focus on creating sustainable employment opportunities.

Administrative Challenges

The plan involves clearing pending files, improving inter-departmental coordination, and ensuring accountability among thousands of officials. Continuous monitoring at the highest level is being carried out to ensure effective implementation.

Critical Observations

While the programme has been widely noted as an innovative governance model, some analysts have raised concerns about:

- Financial sustainability

- Long-term impact
- Uniform implementation across diverse regions.

Conclusion

The success of the Praja Palana – Pragati Pranalika cannot be measured merely by the number of meetings held or grievances resolved within 99 days. Its true success lies in building a responsive, transparent, and citizen-centric governance system that continues beyond this period.

Ultimately, governance is not a race against time, but a continuous journey of progress. Ensuring its success is the collective responsibility of the administrative machinery.



SURESH KASYAP  
Senior Journalist  
Hyderabad

## Delhi horror: IRS officer's daughter raped, murdered by former domestic help

NEW DELHI: (APR 22)

A 22-year-old IIT graduate and daughter of a senior Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer was allegedly raped and murdered at her residence by their former house-help in southeast Delhi's upscale Kailash Hills locality on Wednesday morning, hours after the accused and his associates allegedly sexually assaulted another woman in Rajasthan's Alwar. Rahul Meena, the 19-year-old domestic help who had worked with the family for around eight months and was sacked around a month ago, has been arrested for the crime, police said this evening. The woman, who was preparing for the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) examination, was alone in her house at the time of the incident and was found murdered in a room by her family members when they returned from the gym, they said.

## India, Japan hold first AI dialogue, explore cooperation avenues

NEW DELHI: (APR 22)

Top officials of India and Japan have held discussions on strategic cooperation with a view to promoting co-creation, enhancing policy convergence and encouraging development of solutions in industrial domains to foster a robust, innovative and trustworthy AI ecosystem, the MEA said on Wednesday. The inaugural India-Japan Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategic Dialogue was held on April 21 in Mumbai. "Both sides engaged in substantive discussions on strategic cooperation across the entire AI stack, with a view to promoting co-creation, enhancing policy convergence and encouraging the development of AI solutions in industrial domains to foster a robust, innovative and trustworthy AI ecosystem," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

## CM Nayab Singh Saini Urges Industrialists to Make Products that Give "Make in India" a Global Identity

CHANDIGARH, APRIL 22

Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini has urged industrialists to manufacture products that can give "Make in India" a strong global identity. He said that the Prime Minister has also emphasized that Indian products should not only meet international standards but surpass them. The Chief Minister stated that companies should produce goods in such a way that "Make in India" becomes synonymous with superior quality. Sh. Nayab Singh Saini was interacting with investors at Haryana Bhawan in New Delhi on Wednesday regarding the state's upcoming Industrial Policy. During the interaction, he held separate meetings with industrialists from the auto, manufacturing, electronics, and other sectors. He not only sought their suggestions on the new policy but also shared his own views. He said that Haryana is the best



Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini interacting with industry representatives at New Delhi on April 22, 2026. Industry and Commerce Minister Rao Narbir Singh is also seen in the picture.

state for industrial investment. Whether it is infrastructure, road connectivity, or basic facilities, Haryana excels in every sector. The state is providing top-class amenities for industries. Paperwork is being streamlined through a single-window system. Haryana offers an excellent ecosystem for industries, which is why it is the preferred destination for leading manufacturing companies in the country. He further stated that Haryana will soon introduce its new Industrial Policy, and direct consultations with industrialists are being held to refine it further so that industries can derive maximum benefit and the state can achieve greater progress. **Set Up Industries with Focus on Import Substitution** Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that industrialists investing in different sectors should also focus on import substitution while setting up industries and manufacturing products. This will not only increase the availability of products currently imported from other countries but also generate local employment. It will be beneficial

for the nation and promote domestic industries.

Meanwhile, ASSOCHAM Secretary General Saurabh Sanyal appreciated the Haryana Government for organizing the meeting on the new Industrial Policy. He said this is the first time that direct consultations are being held with industrialists before finalizing an industrial policy, and thanked the Chief Minister for this initiative.

### Important Role of Industries in a Viksit Bharat

Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that industries will play a crucial role in achieving the goal of a Viksit Bharat by 2047. Keeping this in mind, the Haryana Government has presented its vision document. Industrial development in the state will boost growth and generate more employment opportunities. NTF Company MD Naveen Jain expressed interest in purchasing land through HSIIDC to set up an industry in Haryana. He

also suggested replacing diesel vehicles used in municipal bodies with electric vehicles. Responding to this, the Chief Minister said that the government may consider the use of EVs in municipal bodies in the future. The meeting was attended by PWD, Forest and Environment Minister Sh. Rao Narbir Singh, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister, Sh. Arun Kumar Gupta, Commissioner and Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department, Dr. Amit Kumar Agrawal, Director General, Industries, Sh. Yash Garg, along with other senior officials. Representatives from various companies, including Chairman Sanjay Seth of Proterial Company, Chief Marketing Officer Anuj Sharma, Horizon Industrial Park CEO Urwish, CFO Kunal Shah, Nilesh from Satvik Group, JBM Vice Chairman Nishant Arya, and MD Vivek Gupta from India Cell Alliance, also shared their suggestions.



## GM of NFR Conducts Comprehensive Safety Inspection

Bairabi-Badarpur-Patharkhola Sections under Lumding Division Ahead of Monsoon

MALIGAON, 22 APRIL, 2026:

The General Manager of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), Shri Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Bairabi-Badarpur and Badarpur-Patharkhola sections under Lumding Division on 21st April 2026. The inspection was carried out as part of an on-going safety drive and review of infrastructural preparedness, particularly in view of the approaching monsoon season. During the inspection, a detailed window trailing inspection of the tracks was undertaken to assess track fitness and the structural integrity of the sections. This exercise is crucial for identifying vulnerabilities and ensuring resilience of railway infrastructure against monsoon related challenges such as waterlogging, soil erosion and track instability. The General Manager reviewed key safety parameters and directed officials to ensure stringent monitoring and timely maintenance interventions. On the occasion, the General Manager visited the newly constructed Sub-Divisional Training Centre and an Ultrason-

ic Flaw Detection (USFD) Laboratory at Badarpur. These facilities are aimed at strengthening the technical capabilities of railway personnel and enhancing the efficiency of track inspection and defect detection systems. The initiatives reflect NFR's commitment towards capacity building and adoption of advanced technologies for safer and more reliable railway operations. He also inspected Badarpur railway station and took stock of the ongoing development works during the visit.

The inspection assumes added significance in the context of the strategically important railway connectivity project extending from Bairabi to Sairang in Mizoram. Commissioned in 2025, this link has significantly enhanced regional connectivity and contributed to the economic integration of Mizoram with the rest of the country. The introduction of railway connectivity to Sairang has provided a major boost to tourism and the state's economy. Ensuring the safety and robustness of the existing sections upto Bairabi remains critical, as they form a vital link in this extended network.

## Grand Inauguration of "Vatsalya Peeth" at the Memorial Site of Shasanmata

The compassion, spirituality and dedication of Sadhvipramukha Kanakprabha emerge as a timeless source of inspiration

NEW DELHI, APRIL 21, 2026

The grand inauguration of "Vatsalya Peeth," constructed at the memorial site of Shasanmata, the extraordinary Sadhvipramukha Kanakprabha Ji, was held with deep reverence, dignity, and spiritual fervor. The august presence of Shasan Shri Muni Vimal Kumar Ji, Bahushrut Muni Udit Kumar Ji, Dr. Muni Abhijit Kumar Ji, and Sadhvi Kundan Rekha Ji elevated the event to profound spiritual heights.

The function was graced by Union Minister of State Harsh Malhotra as the Chief Guest, renowned industrialist Savitri Jindal as the Guest of Honour, and President of Jain Shwetambar Terapanthi Mahasabha Mahendra Nahata as Special Guest. The occasion also witnessed the presence of Mrs. Suman Nahata, President of Akhil Bharatiya Terapanth Mahila Mandal, Mr. Kanhaiyalal Jain Patawari, President of Acharya Mahashraman Pravasa



Yvavastha Samiti, along with several distinguished personalities. Addressing the gathering, Union Minister Harsh Malhotra remarked, "This is not merely the inauguration of a memorial, but a moment of re-establishing a divine consciousness." He described Sadhvipramukha Kanakprabha Ji as "the living embodiment of compassion, tenderness, and sensitivity," and expressed confidence that Vatsalya Peeth would serve as a vibrant center of inspiration for future generations. Muni Vimal Kumar Ji stated, "Vatsalya (affectionate compassion)

further acknowledged Sadhvipramukha Kanakprabha Ji as an inspiring force for women, whose life serves as a guiding path for empowerment and dignity. President Mahendra Nahata emphasized that the event was not just an inauguration, but a celebration of a living spiritual legacy. He described the Peeth as a "divine pilgrimage of compassion and spiritual practice" that will guide generations to come. Mr. Kanhaiyalal Jain Patawari noted that "Vatsalya Peeth is a living embodiment of Shasanmata's values, inspiring society towards service, discipline, and dedication." He also referred to the special benevolence of Acharya Mahashraman towards Delhi, expressing hope that this site would emerge as a center of values and spiritual awakening for the youth. On this occasion, President of Jain Shwetambar Terapanth Sabha Delhi, Mr. Sukhraj Sethia, highlighted the multifaceted personality and literary contributions of Sadhvipramukha Kanakprab-

ha Ji, calling her "a unique creation of Acharya Tulsi." Coordinator Mr. Lakshmi- at Bothra elaborated on the architectural and conceptual features of Vatsalya Peeth, while the event was skillfully conducted by General Secretary Mr. Pramod Ghodawat. Youth representative Mr. Pukhraj Sethia presented key milestones from her inspiring life journey. During the function, all contributors involved in the construction and organizational arrangements were honored with shields and certificates of appreciation. The mother of chief donor Mr. Vikas Malu also expressed her heartfelt sentiments, describing this initiative as a spiritually meritorious endeavor.

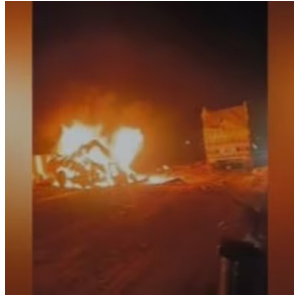
In unison, all speakers affirmed that "Vatsalya Peeth is not merely a memorial, but a living center of compassion, spiritual practice, and inner elevation." It is envisioned as a significant pilgrimage site of faith, inspiration, and spiritual energy for generations to come.

## Mirzapur horror: 11 killed in truck collision, Bolero burns

The state authorities responded swiftly to the incident by deploying police personnel and fire brigade teams to the spot. However, the efforts failed to prevent the loss of lives.

At least 11 people died in a road accident in Uttar

Pradesh's Mirzapur after a truck lost control and hit multiple vehicles. The incident occurred on Wednesday (April 22) evening. The truck driver lost control and first hit a Maruti Swift. The impact was so severe that the Swift was shoved into a Bolero car, which was heavily loaded with gravel and was



moving ahead of the Bolero. A fire broke out in the Bolero as soon as the Swift hit it, leading to the loss of 11 lives, who were trapped inside the car. The truck driver is currently undergoing treatment in a critical condition. Aparna Rajat Kaushik, a senior police officer from the region, has confirmed

the number of deaths while talking to the press about the incident. "So far, 11 deaths have been reported, and efforts are underway to establish the identities of the victims," she said. She also mentioned that the police personnel and the fire brigade immediately rushed to the spot upon learning about

the incident. Police personnel remain deployed at the site, and efforts are ongoing to restore traffic movement on the affected route, a report by news agency PTI said. Further probe into this incident is ongoing. The police are trying to ascertain why the truck driver lost control while driving.

## Pahalgam Attack Exposes Cross-Border Terror Pattern

NEW DELHI, APRIL 22

It was on this date, 22 April, 2025, when terrorists in Pahalgam massacred more than 26 innocent tourists and injured many others in the Baisaran valley after asking their religious identity first. The attack was carried out in a brutal and targeted manner in a peaceful tourist destination, creating panic and chaos and leaving civilians with a very limited chance to escape in the difficult terrain of the valley. These terrorists, who carried out this attack, were later neutralised under Operation Mahadev. They were identified as Suleman Shah (Hashim Musa/Musa), Abu Hamza (Hamza Afghani), and Jibrin, and were linked to Pakistan-based terror networks. Soon after this terror attack, TRF, an offshoot of the terrorist organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba, initially claimed responsibility for the Pahalgam attack twice, on the day of the attack and the following day, through its affiliated on-

line communication channels. However, following widespread public outrage and the way the massacre unfolded, Pakistan pressured them to disown the attack and deny any involvement.

Even Pakistan, at that time, said that it did not know anything about TRF, but later at the United Nations Security Council, it got the TRF name removed from the statement, reflecting complicity and diplomatic manoeuvring in shaping the final wording, with China also reported to have been involved in discussions around the language of the statement. Later, Pakistan Defence Minister Ishaq Dar boasted about this incident in the National Assembly and said that he got the TRF name deleted, reflecting their complicity and the dilution of the United Nations Security Council statement on the condemnation of terrorism. He said that they had had the reference to The Resistance Front removed from the United Nations Security Council



statement, confirming that Pakistan ensured changes to the final wording. These statements are widely cited in political and media discourse as part of the broader controversy surrounding the diplomatic handling of the incident and its implications for the sponsorship and condemnation of terrorism against Indians. This terror attack in Pahalgam came shortly after Pakistan's Field Marshal Asim Munir, in a public address, reiterated the Two-Nation Theory, stating that their forefathers believed they were different

from Hindus in every possible aspect of life, including religion, culture, traditions, thoughts, and ambitions, and that they were two nations, not one nation. He further emphasised that Hindus and Muslims are fundamentally distinct in their identity and worldview. Later, these terrorists came to Pahalgam and killed people based on their Hindu identity. Moreover, Pakistanis constantly justify their terror against India. They use different narratives to justify terror against India, including Islamophobia, vic-

timhood, and other frames. Through a well-orchestrated strategy, it presents India's actions in Kashmir as settler colonialism, comparing it with Gaza, or as demographic change. It is also widely reported that people in Pakistan are told that in Jammu and Kashmir, all mosques are closed and people cannot offer prayers, which contributes to propaganda and radicalisation against India. They radicalise the youth of Kashmir and Pakistan alike and tell them to fight against India. Pakistan has a long history of sponsoring terrorism against India and causing the deaths of numerous innocent civilians, ranging from 26/11 to Pulwama, Uri, and other recent terror attacks. It has constantly spread terror against India, and the terror infrastructure and ecosystem are largely based in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, including networks of madrassas, terror launch pads, and other logistical and training facilities.

Now, the problem is that this "terror state" is being courted by Donald Trump, which emboldens it further to spread more terror against India, including its neighbouring regions like Afghanistan, where it recently bombed hospitals, killing more than 400 patients. If they can kill patients, they can kill anyone. This is why India has a problem when Washington or any other country courts it, because it is seen as emboldening such behaviour and indirectly encouraging the continuation or escalation of terror activities against India. Today, the situation in Jammu and Kashmir would have been different if Pakistan had not started sponsoring terrorism in Kashmir from the 1980s onwards, when it initiated this jihad against India. For decades, there has been a constant effort on the part of Pakistan to keep Kashmir in a state of instability and tension, preventing it from moving towards sustained peace and development.



## Yogi Adityanath slams 'aunt-nephew' duo, says Bengal will vote for change

KOLKATA, APRIL 22

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on a whirlwind tour of West Bengal, on Wednesday hit out at the Mamata Banerjee government for "pushing the state on a downward trajectory" and predicted an emphatic victory for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) when the election results are announced on May 4. Addressing a mega rally in Jorasanko, the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister went all guns blazing at the "aunt-nephew" duo (referring to Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee), holding them responsible for West Bengal's "slide from prosperity to miserable condition". He said that they (Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee) want to erase West Bengal's identity and rich heritage and also took note of Kolkata Mayor's Firhad Hakim's "Urdu will prevail in city" remark, cautioning that no one should dare to tamper with the state's sanctity. The public rally, witnessing a huge turnout of BJP supporters saw many holding posters and banners which said, "Yogi ji, bring the bulldozer. We are with you." Roaring before the large gathering, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister said, "The first phase of elections is scheduled for April 23, and the public's desire for change is clearly visible. BJP is set to win 80 per cent of the seats in the first phase. When the results are declared on May 4, the saf-

ron flag will be hoisted across Bengal." Taking pride in West Bengal's rich cultural past and once-existent economic might, Chief Minister Adityanath promised to restore the legacy of West Bengal and turn the 'darkness' into "Sonar Bangla" while emphasising the need to protect the state's identity and stopping fanatical elements. "Bengal has made an unparalleled contribution to nation-building through the sacrifice, dedication, and efforts of great personalities born on its soil," he said while hailing its rich cultural and intellectual legacy. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that West Bengal, once a land of knowledge, is now struggling in the darkness of unemployment. "Over the past decade, more than 7,000 large industries and thousands of MSME units have shut down, leaving over 30 lakh youth unemployed, yet the state government remains indifferent and turns a blind eye to changing realities," he added. He also sought to draw a contrast with the Uttar Pradesh model of growth, on how the later ended "the culture" of chaos, riots, curfews and goonda tax in the state. He said that before 2017, Uttar Pradesh faced chaos, riots, and curfews, and "goonda tax" was collected. "Taking the name of Lord Ram would invite violence, but today such disturbances are no longer possible in Uttar Pradesh," Chief Minister Adityanath added.

## Rajnath Singh visits submarine facility in Germany, observes Naval capabilities

NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited the TKMS submarine building facility in Kiel, Germany, during his ongoing official visit, where he was briefed on advanced Naval technologies and capabilities.

He was accompanied by German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius during the visit to the shipbuilding facility, which is known for manufacturing cutting-edge submarines.

In a post on X, the Defence Minister on Wednesday described the visit as "insightful", highlighting the technological advancements and operational capabilities showcased at the facility.

He noted that the interaction provided a closer understanding of modern submarine construction and developments in the maritime domain, which are increasingly significant in the context of global security and strategic cooperation.

The visit included a tour of the submarine yard and interactions with officials, during which aspects related to design, engineering, and deployment capabilities were explained.

Photographs shared by him showed the Defence Minister at the dockyard



with senior officials from India and Germany, interacting with his counterparts and being briefed on various features of the platform.

He said that such engagements would be mutually beneficial in strengthening cooperation between the two countries in the maritime domain.

The visit comes amid growing defence ties between India and Germany, with a

focus on technology sharing, joint development, and strengthening naval capabilities.

India has been looking to enhance its submarine fleet and overall maritime strength, and engagements with countries like Germany are part of that broader strategic effort.

Earlier on Wednesday, Rajnath Singh held a meeting with his German coun-

terpart Boris Pistorius in Berlin, discussing deepening defence cooperation and tackling emerging geopolitical challenges.

The two ministers discussed bilateral security and defence issues, including priority areas for co-development and co-production of defence equipment, especially in the field of niche technologies. They also reaffirmed the commitment

to enhance military-to-military cooperation as a key pillar of the Strategic Partnership, according to a statement released by the Ministry of Defence.

India and Germany also signed Defence Industrial Roadmap and Implementing Arrangement for Cooperation in UN Peacekeeping.

"Delighted to meet Mr. Boris Pistorius, Federal Minister of Defence, Germany in Berlin. Exchanged views on a wide range of issues including deepening our defence cooperation and tackling emerging geopolitical challenges. Witnessed signing of the Defence Industrial Roadmap and Implementing Arrangement for Cooperation in UN Peacekeeping," Rajnath Singh posted on X.

The Defence Minister termed his visit to Germany as a symbol of deep friendship, synergy and trust.

Rajnath Singh mentioned that the recent India-EU Security and Defence Partnership marks a significant step in deepening the collective engagement. The two ministers agreed to leverage this framework, bilaterally and in the wider European context for tangible outcomes that will strengthen regional stability, enhance joint capabilities, and reinforce the enduring Indo-German strategic alignment.



## Italy shootings expose Khalistani extremism-driven division in diaspora: Report

ROME

The execution-style killing of two Sikh men in Italy's Bergamo province underscores internal rivalries, financial stakes and political divisions within sections of the Indian diaspora in Europe, a report said. According to a report in the Italian news website 'Decode 39', last week on the eve of Baisakhi, one of the most important festivals in the Sikh calendar – a targeted killing unfolded in the Covo region in Bergamo, where two Indian nationals from Punjab – 47-year-old Rajinder Singh and 48-year-old Gurmit Singh – were shot dead outside a Sikh cultural centre. "The attack bore the hallmarks of an execution: around a dozen shots fired at close range, in front of witnesses and under CCTV cameras," it noted.

According to initial findings, the gunman – another Indian national based in nearby Antegnate – carried out the attack with at least three accomplices.

The killing occurred on the eve of Baisakhi, which was set to draw 2,000 worshippers to the area, prompting the cancellation of the planned procession, the report stated. Ra-

inder Singh, a former president of the Sikh association in Italy, had reportedly clashed with a rival Antegnate-based group, with tensions intensifying into formal complaints in recent months. While control over the religious centre and its leadership was at stake, the divisions seem to extend beyond local rivalries. Claims circulating from Khalistani extremist groups like Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) stated that the victim was involved in disputes during Khalsa Day celebrations.

"While unverified, such claims reflect broader political and identity fractures present within segments of the Sikh diaspora," the report noted. Beyond its criminal dimension, it said, the case raises wider concerns about cohesion and security within the Indian diaspora in Italy and across Europe. Episodes of intra-community violence – often linked to religious leadership disputes, local influence or personal rivalries – are becoming increasingly visible. "The Sikh community in Italy, long regarded as well-integrated and central to sectors such as agriculture and logistics, now faces increasing exposure to transnational dynamics.

## Pakistan-based terror groups pose growing security risk to Europe: Report

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan-incubated terrorism is no longer a distant or abstract threat but has evolved into a direct security challenge for Europe, risking the spillover of external unrest into a persistent internal instability, a report said on Wednesday.

Writing for 'Eurasia Review', Dimitra Staikou, a Greek lawyer, writer, and journalist, noted that while Pakistan is attempting to reshape its global image by leveraging the recognition of its perceived mediating role in US-Iran tensions, the ground reality remains unchanged. She stressed that Pakistan continues to serve as a "breeding ground and safe haven" for terrorist groups that persist, regenerate and steadily erode regional stability and security.

"One year has passed since the terrorist attack in Pahalgam that killed 26 innocent people, leaving behind not only human loss but also a deep imprint of fear and instability across the region of Jammu and Kashmir. The cold-blooded execution of the victims—after they were segregated based on their religion—laid bare the human cost of terrorism and the systematic targeting of civilians as an instrument of political violence," Staikou detailed.

The expert stressed that the Pahalgam terror attack carried



out by the Pakistan-based terrorist outfit cannot be viewed as an isolated incident but reflected a systematic and deeply entrenched machinery of violence. "At the core of this mechanism lies The Resistance Front (TRF), an offshoot of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), underscoring the deliberate and continued use of extremist proxies by Pakistan. The operations of such groups are neither accidental nor spontaneous; they form part of a broader strategy aimed at destabilising the region, sustaining tension, and undermining any prospects for peace. In this context, terrorism does not merely function as a tool of pressure—it constitutes a structural component of a policy that continues to generate violence with consistency and intent," Staikou emphasised.

According to the report, recent years have witnessed a clear trend toward the "mainstreaming" of terrorist organisations within Pakistan, with groups including Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) expanding their activities beyond conventional operational domains. In 2025, under the leadership of Masood Azhar, JeM intensified recruitment networks in Punjab and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and established a women's wing, 'Jamaat-ul-Mominat', functioning as a mechanism of ideological dissemination and social mobilisation. At the same time, between 2024 and 2026, LeT expanded its training infrastructure by developing specialised units such as the so-called 'Water

Wing', aimed at maritime operations, it mentioned.

"These developments, combined with ongoing recruitment campaigns, public mobilisation rallies, and anti-India rhetoric, indicate that these organisations are no longer operating solely as underground networks but as structures with increasing social presence and the capacity to systematically reproduce radicalisation," it further added.

Asserting that the implications for Europe are immediate, the report said that the historical record shows terror networks with "operational or logistical" links to Pakistan have operated far beyond South Asia, targeting the West through "transnational planning, training, and financing structures".  
IANS



## India and Germany sign Defence Industrial Roadmap during Rajnath Singh's Berlin visit

BERLIN

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held a meeting with his German counterpart Boris Pistorius in Berlin on Wednesday, discussing deepening defence cooperation and tackling emerging geopolitical challenges.

The two ministers discussed bilateral security and defence issues, including priority areas for co-development and co-production of defence equipment, especially in the field of niche technologies. They also reaffirmed the commitment to enhance military-to-military cooperation as a key pillar of the Strategic Partnership, according to a statement released by the Ministry of Defence.

India and Germany also signed Defence Industrial Roadmap and Implementing Arrangement for Cooperation in UN Peacekeeping. "Delighted to meet Mr. Boris

Pistorius, Federal Minister of Defence, Germany in Berlin. Exchanged views on a wide range of issues including deepening our defence cooperation and tackling emerging geopolitical challenges.

Witnessed signing of the Defence Industrial Roadmap and Implementing Arrangement for Cooperation in UN Peacekeeping," Singh posted on X. Singh termed his visit to Germany as a symbol of deep friendship, synergy and trust. Rajnath Singh mentioned that the recent India-EU Security and Defence Partnership marks a significant step in deepening the collective engagement.

The two ministers agreed to leverage this framework, bilaterally and in the wider European context for tangible outcomes that will strengthen regional stability, enhance joint capabilities, and reinforce the enduring Indo-German strategic alignment.

## South Asian countries prefer India to China for help to tide over fuel crisis: Report

NEW DELHI

With the conflict in the Middle East leading to disruption in oil supplies and soaring prices in global market, South Asian countries are turning to India, rather than China, to tide over the fuel crisis, according to an article published by OCRA (Organisation for Research on China and Asia).

For South Asian economies already operating with limited buffers, a prolonged disruption could translate into sustained price pressures and mounting fiscal strain.

In this context, how India and China, the two regional powers, choose to respond, whether by extending sustained assistance, scaling up engagement, or retreating inward, will shape longer-term regional alignments, the article written by Ophelia Yumlembam states.

For smaller South Asian countries, the implications are severe and immediate. These economies depend heavily on Gulf-based hydrocarbon imports and have limited buffers



to absorb shocks. In such conditions, the value of a regional power is defined by its ability to respond quickly and reliably to a crisis.

Despite deep economic and infrastructure ties with China, South Asian states have preferred to turn to India when the crisis unfolds. That choice is not incidental. It reflects a consistent pattern across crises, where India emerges as the preferred partner and first responder, a perception that could be leveraged for long-term strategic influence, the article states.

It highlights that over the

past decade, both India and China have significantly expanded their energy footprints across South Asia, but in different ways.

China's approach has been anchored in large-scale infrastructure development under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with investments in ports, pipelines, and refining capacity aimed at strengthening connectivity.

For instance, last year, Sri Lanka received \$3.7 billion from China as foreign direct investment for an oil refinery with a 200,000-barrel capacity at southern Hambantota. On

the other hand, India has operated a less financially-intensive, but functional approach.

Leveraging its geographical proximity to Bangladesh, New Delhi has built a cross-border energy pipeline with Dhaka, transporting diesel from the Numaligarh refinery in Assam to Parbatipur in Bangladesh since 2023.

With Nepal, India has a B2B agreement between the Indian Oil Corporation and the Nepal Oil Corporation since 2024 to enhance petroleum infrastructure, integrating its energy system with neighbouring economies. It has enabled faster mobilisation of supply, making its energy partnerships more immediately actionable under stress conditions.

The article points out that Sri Lanka, after receiving urgent fuel assistance from India in March, sought additional support from China only in early April. Although Beijing subsequently offered assurances, the scale and modalities of its assistance remain unclear.

A similar dynamic is visible with the Maldives. De-

spite the Maldives' pro-China alignment during the initial phase of President Mohamed Muizzu's tenure, Male did not approach Beijing for fuel assistance and, instead, turned to India to meet its immediate needs. Taken together, these cases show a clear pattern of smaller South Asian states prioritising responsiveness over depth of economic or political ties in times of acute stress.

India, despite facing significant energy supply disruptions, has positioned itself as a regional first-responder. It has stepped in to supply crude oil, Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), LNG, petrol and diesel to its neighbours during a period of acute supply scarcity, thus positioning itself as a stabilising force in the region.

Since March, India has supplied 38,000 metric tonnes of petroleum to Sri Lanka following Colombo's request, delivered 22,000 metric tonnes of diesel to Bangladesh via the Friendship Pipeline and is currently examining additional supply requests from Nepal and the Maldives.

## Hindu businessman brutally killed in Pakistan, rights body raises alarm

ISLAMABAD

A leading minority rights organisation on Wednesday brought to light the brutal killing of a young Hindu businessman in Pakistan's Sindh, raising concerns about the safety of the minority communities across the country.

According to the Voice of Pakistan Minority (VOPM), Vishal Kumar was shot dead in "cold blood" in Sukkur city of Sindh in front of horrified onlookers. It noted that the killing took place in broad daylight, leaving the city gripped in fear and heightened insecurity.

Citing eyewitnesses, the rights body stated that armed assailants stormed Vishal's shop and indiscriminately opened fire, leaving him critically injured. He later succumbed to his injuries, leaving behind a wife, children, and a grieving family. The attackers, it said, reportedly fled the scene and remained at large – "mocking the very idea of justice".

"Sukkur, once a vibrant hub, now covers under a shadow of dread. Parents clutch their chil-



dren closer, shopkeepers bolt doors early, and minorities like Vishal – a Hindu in a troubled land – live in constant terror. "How can we sleep at night?" wails a neighbour, voice breaking. This isn't just murder; it's a dagger to the heart of public safety, signalling that no one is safe, nowhere is secure," the VOPM mentioned.

Expressing concern over the incident, the rights body said that Pakistani authorities quickly described it as "robbery gone wrong", a claim rejected by Vishal's brother. "Nothing was stolen! They shot him point-blank, execution-style. This was no robbery—it was a hit!" the VOPM quoted him as saying.

Asserting that the tragedy has deeply shaken the Hindu

community in Sindh, the rights body said, "Repeated daylight killings, botched probes, and rising criminal gangs have turned communities into ghost towns of anxiety. Experts scream warnings: without swift, transparent justice, fear will consume us all. Civil society roars for action – demand the real motive, hunt the killers, and restore order—before Sukkur descends into anarchy." The rights body stressed that Vishal's death isn't a statistic but a devastating loss for his family and a blow to the city's sense of security. "Justice isn't optional—it's the only thread holding society together. Will authorities act before the next bullet flies? Sukkur waits, hearts pounding, in terrified silence," the VOPM stated.

## Redwood Software inaugurates global centre in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD: (APR 22)

US firm Redwood Software on Wednesday said it has inaugurated its global centre here, designating it as its primary operational location. The new centre will accelerate innovation in AI-powered automation and further strengthen Redwood's ability to orchestrate mission-critical operations across complex hybrid IT landscapes, a press release said. Redwood plans to significantly expand its local workforce, with more than 300 new hires across engineering, cloud, and business operations expected by the end of 2027, it said.

## India reports double-digit growth in Q1 for Reckitt, led by brands as Dettol and Durex

NEW DELHI: (APR 22)

British FMCG major Reckitt's India business reported a "double-digit growth" in the first quarter of 2026, led by a strong growth of its key brands, such as Dettol, Durex and expansion in the coverage area.

In India, two of Reckitt's brands, Dettol in the Germ Protection segment and Durex in Intimate Wellness, reported double-digit growth in the quarter. While at the group level, the net revenue of Reckitt, which owns power brands such as Dettol, Lysol, Mucinex, Finish, and Durex, was at 3.24 billion pounds, with a LFL growth of 0.6 per cent in Q1 of 2026. Its volume growth was 2 per cent.

# RBI updates e-mandate rules for transactions over Rs 15,000. Check details

Under the new guidelines, recurring payments of up to Rs 15,000 will not require a one-time password (OTP). However, transactions above this threshold will need additional authentication. Pre- and post-debit alerts mandatory for users.



### WHAT HAS CHANGED

The biggest takeaway from the new framework is the Rs 15,000 limit. Payments up to Rs 15,000 can be processed automatically without OTP. Payments above Rs 15,000 will require additional factor authentication. There is, however, a key exception. Payments such as insurance premiums, mutual fund subscriptions and credit card bills between Rs 15,000 and Rs 1 lakh can still go through without OTP under specific conditions.

The new rules apply across:

- UPI auto-pay
- Debit and credit cards
- Prepaid payment instruments

### MANDATORY ALERTS BEFORE AND AFTER PAYMENT

To strengthen customer control, RBI has made alerts compulsory.

Customers must receive a pre-debit notification at least 24 hours before the transaction, clearly mentioning:

- Merchant name, amount, and date of debit
- Users will also have the op-

tion to cancel or opt out before the money is deducted.

In addition, post-debit alerts are also mandatory, ensuring customers are informed after every transaction along with details on grievance redressal.

### NO CHARGES FOR E-MANDATE

The central bank has also clarified that no charges can be levied on customers for setting up or using e-mandates.

For card users, existing mandates can be mapped to reissued cards, ensuring continuity. Banks and payment service providers have been tasked with ensuring merchants comply with these rules. RBI has extended its existing rules on limiting customer liability in unauthorised electronic transactions to recurring payments as well. This means users are protected even in case of fraudulent auto-debits, provided they report it within the prescribed timeline.

### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR

### USERS

For consumers, the changes bring a mix of convenience and control. Smaller payments such as OTT subscriptions, utility bills and app renewals will now be processed seamlessly without OTP interruptions. At the same time, higher-value transactions will continue to have additional safeguards. The 24-hour alert system also gives users a window to stop unwanted deductions, addressing one of the biggest concerns around auto-debits. The updated e-mandate framework reflects RBI's broader push towards frictionless digital payments while maintaining strong consumer protection. As recurring payments become more common in everyday life, the regulator is trying to strike a balance between ease of use and security. For users, the key is to stay alert to notifications and regularly track subscriptions, even as the system becomes more automated.

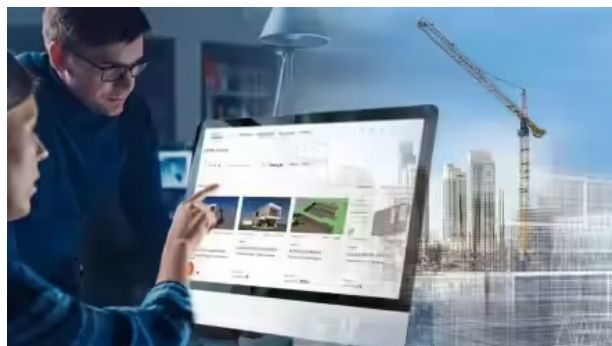
# German software giant Nemetschek bets on India's Infra growth, expands AI and BIM push

SOURAV SHEKHAR

New Delhi, Apr 22: Backed by India's accelerating infrastructure build-out and rising urbanisation, German software major Nemetschek Group is scaling up its presence in the country, positioning itself as a key technology partner for the design, construction, and operations ecosystem.

The company sees strong momentum across sectors, including housing, railways, roads, and airports, as migration to urban centres fuels demand for large-scale infrastructure development.

"There is investment happening across the entire infrastructure value chain—from housing to transport networks like rail, road, and airports," said Alok Sharma, Managing Director and Vice President,



Nemetschek India, in an exclusive interaction with UNI here. Having operated in India for nearly two decades through partners, the group set up its own headquarters in Mumbai two years ago to deepen market engagement.

It has also established Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in Bengaluru and Hyderabad, employing around 300 professionals. Unlike traditional offshore centres focused on

cost arbitrage, these GCCs are positioned as innovation hubs, with India playing a leading role in research and development, including the creation of an AI hub for the group's global operations.

"We have set up centres of excellence cutting across different parts of our organisation, and India is leading innovation globally for us, especially in AI," Sharma said. Emphasising the trans-

formative potential of emerging technologies, Pete Nicholson, Senior Vice President, said that artificial intelligence is reshaping the architecture, engineering, and construction (AEC) industry. "Just as Computer-Aided Design (CAD) transformed design from manual drafting, AI is now improving efficiency, enhancing safety, reducing timelines, and enabling better outcomes across the project lifecycle," he noted. The company is embedding AI across its product portfolio, while maintaining a strong focus on ethical deployment and data privacy, ensuring customer data is not used to train models. Despite India's progress in adopting digital technologies, Sharma highlighted that construction remains one of the least digitised sectors, offering significant scope for improvement.

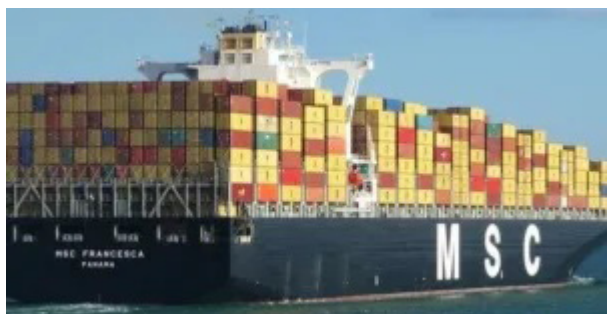
"AI adoption in India has been more visible in sectors like finance, but construction still lags. There is a huge opportunity to use technology to deliver projects on time and within budget," he said. On Building Information Modelling (BIM), the executives pointed out that adoption in India is still at a nascent stage compared to global benchmarks, primarily due to the shortage of skilled professionals and the complexity of implementation. To address this gap, Nemetschek is collaborating with academic institutions and has signed memoranda of understanding with multiple universities to build a future-ready talent pool.

Nicholson said education will be critical to driving wider BIM adoption, while Sharma underlined the need for policy support.

# India's marine exports hit record Rs 72,326 Cr in FY26 despite US tariffs, West Asia disruptions

NEW DELHI, APR 22

India's marine product exports touched an all-time high of Rs 72,326.82 crore (USD 8.28 billion) in FY 2025-26, overcoming geopolitical tensions in West Asia, tariff pressures in the United States, and volatile global trade conditions.



stable market, with imports rising 6.55 per cent in value. In contrast, exports to West Asia saw a marginal decline of 0.55 per cent, largely attributed to regional instability and logistical uncertainties during the lag end of the financial year, according to a MPEDA statement. The United States (US) retained its position as India's largest seafood market, importing marine products worth USD 2.32 billion. Exports to the country registered a decline of 19.8 per cent in volume and 14.5 per cent in value due to the impact of reciprocal tariff measures and changing buying patterns. However, exporters were able to offset the slowdown in the American market through stronger penetration into other regions. Exports to China, the second-largest destination, recorded impressive growth, with imports from India rising 22.7 per cent in value and 20.1 per cent in volume. The European union also posted robust gains, with exports jumping 37.9 per cent in value and 35.2 per

cent in volume, indicating stronger demand recovery and widening acceptance of Indian seafood products.

Exports of frozen fish, squid, cuttlefish, dried marine items, and live products registered positive growth, while chilled products declined. Surimi, fishmeal, and fish oil also reported improved performance. However, chilled products witnessed a decline, likely due to shorter shelf-life constraints and higher transportation costs, the MPEDA said. Notably, imposition of a 50 per cent tariff by the United States since August 2025 on Indian seafood imports had posed a significant challenge to the sector.

As per the data, in FY25, India exported 3,46,868 tonnes of seafood worth USD 2.71 billion to the US, accounting for 36.4 per cent of total seafood exports. The steep tariff had created a substantial duty disadvantage for Indian exporters, especially in comparison to key competitors such as Ecuador, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

# Advertising of illegal online games in focus as govt expands enforcement powers

Advertising of illegal online games is set to come under sharper regulatory scrutiny as the Centre moves to expand enforcement powers under its proposed gaming framework, with MeitY Secretary S Krishnan indicating that promotions of unregistered platforms will be treated as a key offence alongside their operation and associated financial transactions.

The move signals a broader attempt to plug regulatory gaps by targeting the visibility and reach of such platforms, even as the government works to establish a dedicated authority to determine compliance and mandate registration based on user risk and public interest considerations.

The government is seeking to strike a calibrated balance between enforcement and accessibility in its evolving framework for regulating online gaming, with provisions that widen investigative powers while introducing safeguards and structured oversight, according to MeitY Secretary S Krishnan.

Krishnan indicated that the upcoming regulatory architecture under the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act will empower designated law enforcement officials, particularly those attached to cyber units, to investigate offences linked to



online games. These offences broadly fall into three categories: offering unregulated online games, advertising such platforms, and facilitating financial transactions tied to them. Krishnan acknowledged concerns around potential misuse of investigative authority but maintained that the framework is designed to avoid arbitrary enforcement. "Somebody has to be authorised to investigate," he said, adding that the system attempts to balance the need for local access to enforcement with the technical expertise required to handle cyber-related offences. While officers at the level of police stations may be empowered, the emphasis will remain on cyber police stations and specialised units to handle such cases. He noted that existing provisions under the Information Technology Act already allow inspectors to investigate cyber offences, but the new framework aims to streamline and contextualise these powers specifically for online gaming. "You don't want a rural police station investigating

a complex cyber issue without capacity, but at the same time, people should not have to travel long distances to seek recourse," he said. A key pillar of the proposed framework is the establishment of a regulatory authority, which will be tasked with making determinations on whether specific online games or categories of games require registration. The authority will rely on a set of guiding principles, including the risk of harm to users, the nature of gameplay outcomes, and potential adverse impact on the public. Krishnan outlined several factors that could trigger mandatory registration. These include the scale of user participation, the nature and volume of financial transactions involved, and the geographical origin of the service provider. "These are guiding principles based on which the requirement of registration can be determined in public interest or to protect users," he said. The framework also introduces the concept of "user safety features" as a key consideration in regulatory assessments.

# AU SFB Expands Gold Loan Reach Across 501 Branches

HYDERABAD, APRIL 22, 2026:

AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB), India's largest Small Finance Bank and the first in over a decade to receive in-principle approval to transition into a Universal Bank, today announced the successful activation of 501 existing branches for Gold Loan product. The initiative marks a significant step in strengthening AU SFB's institution-led secured lending footprint, bringing faster, transparent and reliable gold loan services closer to customers across the country. The addition of new set of branches is strategically located in regions with high household gold ownership and sustained demand for short-tenure, collateral-backed credit, reflecting the enduring role of gold as a trusted financial asset in India. Each Gold Loan branch is purpose-built to deliver a seamless customer experience, supported by trained appraisers, standardised processes, and robust risk and compliance systems. This enables customers to access timely liquidity against their gold with confidence, transparency and peace of mind. From a strategic perspective, the rollout underscores AU SFB's ability to execute at scale, align branch-led distribution with strong backend capabilities,

and design solutions that respond to real customer needs - particularly in semi-urban and rural markets across Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. By covering 488 pin codes nationwide, the initiative significantly broadens access to gold loans, making financing more accessible for customers across India. Commenting on the development, Uttam Tibrewal, Deputy CEO, AU Small Finance Bank, said, "Gold has long been a trusted household asset in India, often serving as a financial anchor during moments of need. Through the activation of 501 branches for Gold Loan, our objective is to help customers responsibly unlock the value of this asset through a process that is fast, transparent and dependable. This initiative reflects AU SFB's long-term commitment to building a strong, scalable and customer-first secured lending franchise across markets." Gold loans continue to play a critical role in meeting customers' short-term liquidity needs, supporting uses ranging from business expansion and agricultural requirements to working capital and personal contingencies, while offering banks a highly secure and stable asset class. For AU SFB, this expansion further strengthens portfolio resilience and supports sustainable, diversified growth.

# BITS Pilani turns Bengaluru into Industry

BENGALURU, APRIL 22

India's factory future took a decisive step forward on Wednesday as BITS Pilani transformed Bengaluru into a "live lab" for Industry 4.0 with the inauguration of its Smart Manufacturing Competency Centre (SMCC). Moving beyond conventional classrooms, the Centre is designed to simulate real factory conditions, allowing companies, engineers and students to test, validate and deploy advanced manufacturing solutions before taking them to the shop floor. The initiative signals a shift from theory-led learning to industry-driven problem solving, at a time when India is pushing to strengthen its global manufacturing competitiveness. The SMCC, launched under BITS Pilani's Work Integrated Learning Programmes (WILP), is the second such facility in a nationwide network planned for 2026. It builds on the earlier Automotive Competency Centre in Chennai and aims to create a distributed innovation ecosystem aligned with industry needs. Positioned in Bengaluru's dense industrial and technology landscape, the Centre brings together sectors such as aerospace, defence, electronics and automotive, enabling direct collaboration between academia and industry. This convergence is expected to accelerate adoption of Industry 4.0 technologies, particularly among micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which often face cost and capability barriers. At the heart of the facility is

a "learning factory" environment where real-world manufacturing challenges can be recreated and addressed using integrated technologies such as industrial automation, Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), artificial intelligence and machine learning, digital twins, and advanced robotics. Companies can prototype solutions, assess returns on investment, and minimise risks before full-scale deployment. A key thrust of the initiative is to democratise access to advanced manufacturing tools. MSMEs will be able to experiment without heavy capital investment, collaborate with domain experts, and co-develop scalable solutions—bridging a critical gap in India's industrial transformation journey. The Centre is equipped with specialised laboratories in mechatronics, machine vision, Industry 4.0/5.0 systems, robotics, extended reality, and rapid prototyping, enabling an end-to-end innovation pipeline from concept to execution. Speaking at the launch, V. Ramgopal Rao said the initiative aligns academic rigour with real industrial challenges and will contribute to India's push for self-reliance in advanced manufacturing. Prof. G. Sundar, Director of the WILP Division, emphasised that the Centre is designed to create job-ready skills that evolve with industry demands. Industry leaders from Wipro, Tata Advanced Systems Limited, ELCIA and Walvoil Fluid Power India Pvt Ltd attended the inauguration, underscoring strong industry backing for the initiative.

# AI defining force in risk management, improving operational efficiency, mkt surveillance: SBI Chief

MUMBAI: (APR 22)

Artificial intelligence will play a central role in transforming financial market infrastructure by strengthening risk management, improving operational efficiency and enabling real-time market surveillance, State Bank of India chairman CS Setty said on Wednesday. "Artificial intelligence (AI) will be a defining force in this transfor-

mation, having the potential to significantly enhance risk management, improve operational efficiency and enable real-time market surveillance," Setty said while addressing the 25-year milestone celebration of Clearing Corporation of India (CCIL) in Mumbai. Setty said AI could transform operational processes by leveraging large volumes of transaction and market data.



# Scientists found a 'bathtub ring' on Mars

A huge geological structure on Mars resembling a bathtub ring may be evidence of an ocean that once covered a third of the Red Planet's surface, a new study finds. Decades of previous research have suggested that although Mars is now famously the "Red Planet," it once possessed liquid water on its surface. However, it remains uncertain whether that water was limited to lakes and streams, or if there was enough to form long-lasting oceans. Solving this mystery could shed light on whether ancient Mars once hosted life as we know it. Past missions to Mars have discovered many geological features that resemble shorelines. However, the shorelines are found at varying elevations across the planet. If they were truly signs of a stable ocean, they would ideally all line up at the same elevation in much the same way sea levels are consistent on Earth. In the new study, researchers instead searched for other geological features that might serve as signs of lost Martian oceans. Using computer simulations, they essentially dried up Earth's oceans to see which details remained. The scientists discovered the most distinct

feature of Earth's oceans, besides their water, are flat bands of land up to several hundred miles wide and ranging in elevation from about 50 to 1,345 feet (15 to 410 meters) below sea level. These bands, known as the coastal plains and continental shelves, wrap the contours of where land meets ocean like a ring that remains around a drained bathtub. Sea levels on Earth and the locations of shorelines have fluctuated over many years. In contrast, the researchers found that coastal shelves kept relatively stable over time. The scientists then analyzed Martian topographic data captured by orbiters. They discovered a flat zone on Mars that was suggestive of a coastal shelf of an ocean in the Martian northern hemisphere that covered a third of the planet's surface. It would have existed about 5,900 to 12,470 feet (1,800 to 3,800 m) below Martian sea level. A coastal shelf that size would have taken a lot of time to form, and would not be found around lakes. These new findings suggest that an ocean on Mars must have survived stably for possibly millions of years.

"Mars possibly had a coastal shelf, which adds a

simple new piece of evidence for the presence of an ocean," study lead author Abdallah Zaki, a planetary geologist at the University of Texas at Austin, told Space.com. "The possible existence of an ocean suggests that a large body of water may have persisted for a long time. That could have been an important ingredient for life." In addition, the researchers saw evidence that river deltas — the triangle-shaped plains of sediment created when rivers spill into oceans — lined up with the coastal shelf. On Earth, deltas cluster on continental shelves as well. Future missions can analyze this coastal shelf on Mars. If there was once life on the red planet, sedimentary deposits in the coastal shelf might have preserved evidence of it, just as Earth's coastal sediments at times hold fossils from the continents, the researchers noted. A question that remains "is what formed the Martian coastal shelf," Zaki said. "Even on Earth, we do not have a definitive answer to that question." Zaki and Caltech professor of geology Michael Lamb detailed their findings online April 15 in the journal Nature.



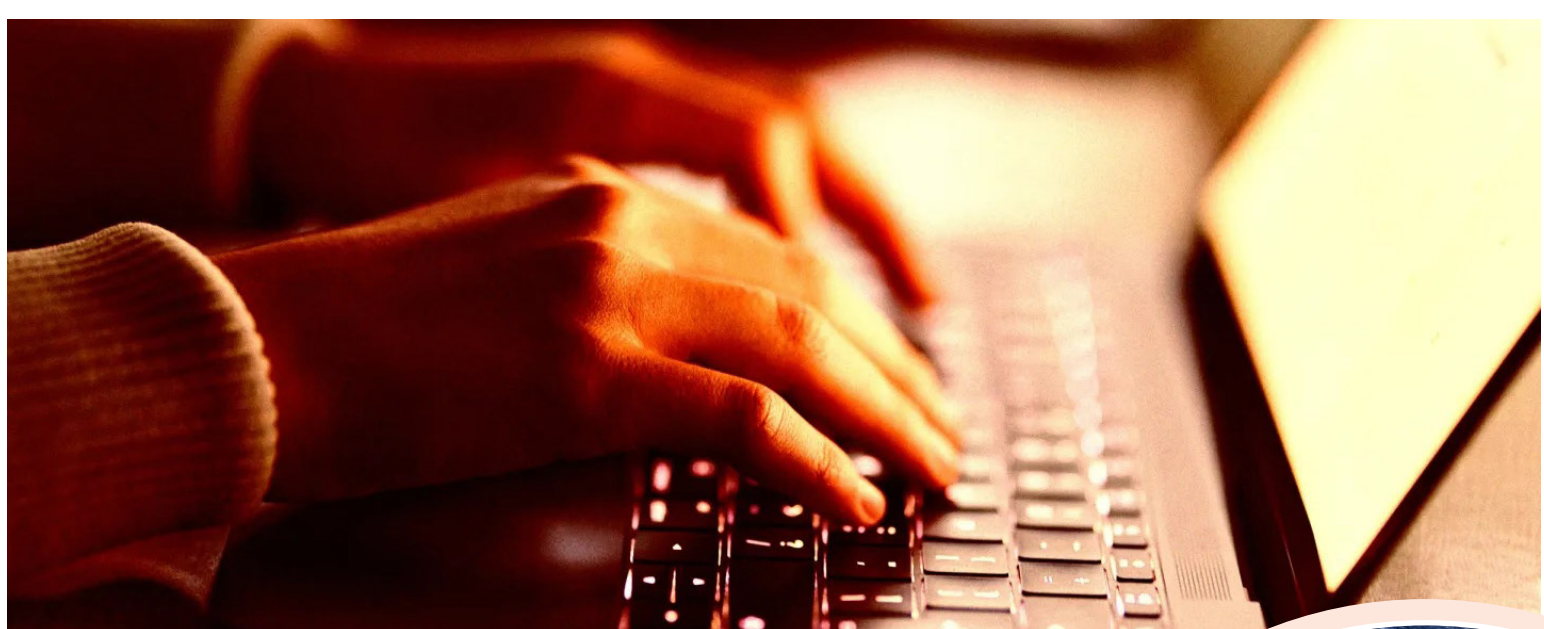
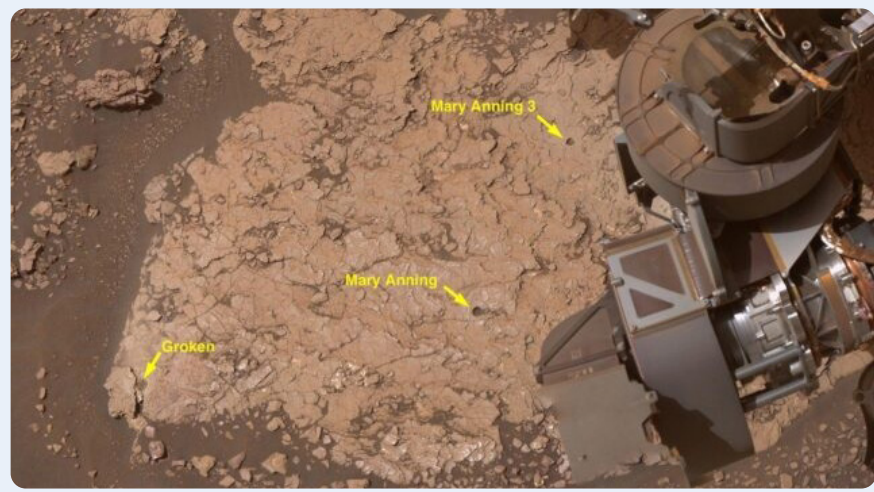
# Curiosity Finds New Building Blocks of Life on Mars

A NASA rover has discovered more building blocks of life on Mars after carrying out a chemistry experiment never before conducted on another planet, scientists said. The organic molecules are not definitive evidence of past life, the NASA-led team emphasized, because they could also have formed on the red planet or crash-landed on meteorites. But it proves that these important clues to Martian history have been preserved on the surface for more than three billion years, they added. Back then, the surface of Mars was thought to have been dotted with huge lakes and rivers full of liquid water, a key ingredient for life as we know it. NASA's Curiosity rover landed in a former lake bed called the Gale crater in 2012, and has been searching for signs of possible past life since. "This experiment's never been run before on another world," Amy Williams, an astrobiologist working on the Curiosity mission, told AFP. The team was under pressure because they only had "two shots to get it right", added Williams, the lead author of a new study describing the results. The experiment, conducted in 2020, detected more than 20 organic molecules, including several that had never before been confirmed on Mars. These included a molecule called benzothiothiophene, which has also been found in meteorites and asteroid. "The same stuff that rained down on Mars from meteorites is what rained down on Earth, and it probably provided the building blocks for life as

we know it on our planet," Williams said. Another molecule containing nitrogen "is a precursor to how DNA is eventually built," she added. "We're seeing the building blocks for life — prebiotic chemistry on Mars — preserved in these rocks for billions of years."

### Future missions

But none of this can prove that life — even tiny, microbial organisms — once flourished on Mars. One way to potentially make such an "extraordinary claim" would be to bring some Martian rocks back to Earth so scientists can study them more closely, Williams said. NASA's Perseverance rover has already collected a bunch of rocks for such a mission, called Mars Sample Return. However, the mission has effectively been canceled following a US Congress vote in January. Future missions could still benefit from Curiosity's demonstration that experiments using the TMAH chemical work on other worlds, the new study in Nature Communications said. The European Space Agency's Rosalind Franklin rover, which has a much longer drill than Curiosity, will take the chemical to Mars. After years of delays, NASA announced last week that the ESA's rover is now scheduled to blast off towards the red planet in late 2028. The chemical will also be on board the Dragon rotorcraft, which is planned to launch in 2028 on a mission to explore Saturn's moon Titan.



# Meta Installing Software on Employee Computers to Track Everything They Do, Feed the Data to AI

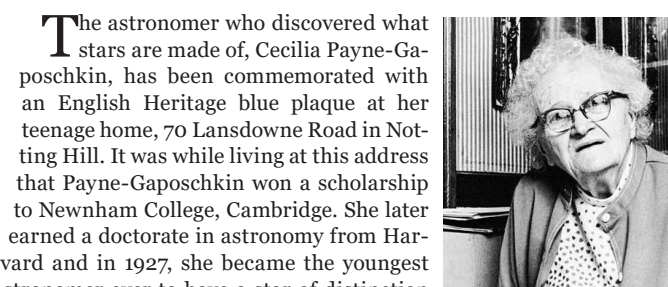
As if activity-monitoring software installed on your work computer that snitches on you if you're away from the keyboard for too long wasn't enough, Meta is taking the trend to its logical — and dystopian surveillance state-level — conclusion. The Mark Zuckerberg-led company is installing new tracking software on all of its US-based employees' computers that tracks all of their mouse movements and keystrokes, data that will be used for training the company's AI models. The company is reportedly looking to develop AI agents that can complete work tasks autonomously, in perhaps one of the more conspicuous efforts to automate human workers' jobs we've come across as of late. Besides the ethical concerns of forcing employees to train their AI replacements, the news also raises thorny questions regarding data privacy. Meta, in particular, has garnered an incredibly poor reputation when it comes to protecting personal data. According to an internal memo, the software is called "Model Capability Initiative" and will run on work-related apps and websites. It will even take occasional screenshots. The goal is to guide Meta's AI models to essentially replicate the way humans interact with computers, like using dropdown menus or making use of keyboard short-

cuts. "This is where all Meta employees can help our models get better simply by doing their daily work," the memo reads. Meta spokesperson Andy Stone told that the company is looking to implement safeguards to protect "sensitive content," but didn't elaborate any further. While tracking employees' keystrokes and mouse movement would likely be against European law, Yale University law professor Ifeoma Ajunwa told that "there is no limit on worker surveillance" in the US on a federal level. Beyond tracking their employees' every move, Meta is also planning to slash ten percent of its workforce across the globe starting next month — only the first of several planned cuts later this year.



# Woman who unlocked the secrets of the stars honoured

The astronomer who discovered what stars are made of, Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin, has been commemorated with an English Heritage blue plaque at her teenage home, 70 Lansdowne Road in Notting Hill. It was while living at this address that Payne-Gaposchkin won a scholarship to Newnham College, Cambridge. She later earned a doctorate in astronomy from Harvard and in 1927, she became the youngest astronomer ever to have a star of distinction next to her name in the publication American Men of Science. Senior historian at English Heritage, Howard Spencer, described her as "a scientist of exceptional brilliance and determination". Her groundbreaking 1925 thesis proposed that stars are composed primarily of hydrogen and helium, a discovery that fundamentally changed scientific understanding of the universe, even though it was initially met with scepticism. Over the course of her career, she published hundreds of scientific papers and became the first woman to be appointed a full professor at Harvard University. Her research on stellar atmospheres and variable stars established her as one of the most significant astronomers of the 20th Century.





# Jadeja's late-hitting, Archer's 3-20 help RR defend 159, beat listless LSG by 40 runs

## ISSF Junior World Cup

### India wins three silvers and a bronze on Day Two



**NEW DELHI:** Indian juniors picked up four more medals, three silver and a bronze, to add to their one of each colour won on the first day, slotting in at third in the medal tally as athletes from Kazakhstan and Individual Neutral Athletes (AIN) picked up four of the five gold medals on offer on competition Day Two of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun in Cairo's Olympic International City Shooting Range in Cairo on Wednesday. Rohit Kanyan gave India their first silver of the day in the 50m rifle prone men junior event with an effort of 615.8, just 0.5 behind Kazakhstan's gold-winning Oleg Noskov. Sejal Kamble then topped the junior women's 25m pistol qualifiers with a score of 580 and then went on to finish second in the final with 27 hits.

## CRICKET

### Sachin visits Dantewada to support grassroots sports



**NEW DELHI:** Indian cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar visited Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district on Wednesday to support a grassroots sports programme aimed at turning the area, once affected by Maoist violence, into a lively sports hub. He expressed happiness about the development of playgrounds under the Maidan Cup programme. After landing at Jagdalpur airport, Tendulkar travelled to Chhindwar village. There, he participated in an event linked to the Maidan Cup initiative, which promotes sports among local children. "I am very happy that we have created around 50 school playgrounds through the Maidan Cup initiative," Tendulkar told reporters at Jagdalpur airport.

## LUCKNOW

Ravindra Jadeja's unbeaten 43 off 29 balls, along with a terrific haul of 3-20 by Jofra Archer, helped Rajasthan Royals successfully defend a modest total to defeat Lucknow Super Giants by 40 runs in their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 encounter at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow on Wednesday. In a low-scoring encounter, Jadeja top-scored to take RR to a respectable 159/6 in their 20 overs. His unbeaten 49-run stand with impact player Shubham Dubey, who made 19 not out off 11 balls, gave RR bowlers a fighting chance in the match, after LSG's pace trio Mohammed Shami, Mohsin Khan, and Prince Yadav took two scalps each.

Defending 159, the lowest score defended in this season, RR's bowlers were right on the money from the word go, and backed by some superb fielding, they consigned LSG to their fourth consecutive loss of the competition.

Archer found support in Nandre Burger and Brijesh Sharma,

who picked two scalps each, while Ravindra Jadeja and Ravi Bishnoi had one wicket each as LSG were bowled out for just 119 in 18 overs, as RR have now moved to second place in the points table.

Opting to bowl first, LSG didn't have the best of starts as Yashasvi Jaiswal and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi hit six boundaries between themselves in the first three overs. But RR's explosive start was derailed in the third over when Shami struck twice in two balls. He bowled a sharp bouncer to remove Jaiswal, who tried to hook, and an airborne Rishabh Pant leapt to grab the catch with an outstretched right hand. One brought two for Shami as he got one to nip away and take Dhruv Jurel's outside edge, as Pant dived to his right to dismiss him for a duck.

The pressure intensified as Mohsin nailed his lengths and became the first bowler in IPL history to bowl a maiden over to teenage sensation Sooryavanshi, as he eventually forced him into mistiming a loft to cover, while having Shimron Hetmyer to give a leading edge to mid-off. Prince then ensured there was no middle-order recovery as he



dismissed Riyan Parag, who holed out to long-on, and later removed Donovan Ferreira by having him caught at third man to leave RR reeling at 110/6.

RR were starting at a sub-par total before Jadeja took charge. Biding his time initially, Jadeja exploded in the final over by picking 20 runs off Mayank Yadav (0-56), bowling in his first game of the season. Supported by Dubey, Jadeja

ensured RR had a great finish to their innings, something which felt improbable at the 15-over mark.

LSG's chase of 160 began chaotically - on the final ball of the opening over, Ayush Badoni was run out for a duck following a massive mix-up. Captain Rishabh Pant's inconsistent run continued when he fell for a three-ball duck in the second over, top-edging off Burger to the keeper Dhruv Jurel.

With head coach Justin Langer going to the dressing room from the dugout, the nightmare deepened for LSG when Archer returned to remove Aiden Markram for a duck with a steep bouncer, leaving them reeling at 16/3. By the end of the Powerplay, despite a six from Marsh, LSG were gasping at 31/3.

Mitchell Marsh fought a lonely battle, reaching a 39-ball fifty, but found no support. Nicholas Pooran

(22) holed out to long-on off Ravindra Jadeja, as the middle-order crumbled under the pressure of a rising required run rate.

Ravi Bishnoi entered the fray to clean up Himmat Singh (15) with a quicker delivery, before Burger returned in the 16th over to claim the big scalp of Marsh, who made 55 off 42 balls laced with six fours and two sixes. Brijesh effectively ended the contest in the 17th over by removing Mukul Choudhary and Mohammed Shami in quick succession.

Archer then returned to apply the finishing touches - a spectacular catch from Jurel led to the dismissal of Mayank Yadav before he flattened Mohsin Khan's middle stump with a pacy delivery to end LSG's misery and give RR their first away win of the ongoing season.

## Brief scores:

Rajasthan Royals 159/6 in 20 overs (Ravindra Jadeja 43 not out, Yashasvi Jaiswal 22; Mohsin Khan 2-17, Prince Yadav 2-29) beat Lucknow Super Giants 119 in 18 overs (Mitchell Marsh 55, Nicholas Pooran 22; Jofra Archer 3-20, Brijesh Sharma 2-18) by 40 runs.



## China's Zhang Shuai into second round of Madrid Open

### MADRID

China's Zhang Shuai progressed to the second round of the Madrid Open on Wednesday with a 6-4, 6-3 win over Germany's Eva Lys. The veteran, who was ranked as high as world No. 22 three years ago, made effective use of her first serve on a breezy morning in Madrid and will face 16th seed Madison Keys of the United States in the second round.

In the men's competition, China's Zhang Zhizhen failed to reach the second round after suffering a 6-2, 6-0 defeat to the Czech Republic's Vit Koprivka, who won more than 80 percent of his service points, while Zhang won only 43 percent of the points on his first serve.

In other matches in the WTA part of the Madrid Open, Zeynep Sonmez of Turkey defeated Carola Martinez Cirez of Spain 7-6, 6-2, while Alexandra Eala of the Philippines stunned Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-3, 6-3.

Meanwhile, Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan will continue her attempts to overtake Aryna Sabalenka as the reigning World No.1 in the WTA Rankings, if not in Madrid, in the events following soon after.

By winning the title in Stuttgart last week, World No. 2 Elena Rybakina has cut the gap between herself and Sabalenka from 2,917 points (1,025 to 8,108) to 2,395 points (10,895 to 8,500), not just because she added points by winning the title, but because Sabalenka lost points for missing the event, having reached the final last year.

That 2,395-point gap is the closest anyone's gotten to Sabalenka since the very first week of the 2026 season, when she led then-No. 2 Iga Swiatek by 2,312 points (10,490 to 8,178).

Though the Kazakh can't take the top spot in Madrid, depending on how the tournament plays out, she can close in by a lot.

That's because Sabalenka's defending 1,000 points in Madrid for winning the WTA 1000 event last year, while Rybakina's only defending 65 points, having fallen in the third round a year ago.

In the most extreme scenario in Madrid—Sabalenka losing her opening match and Rybakina going on to win the title—that would shred the gap to just 470 points, with Sabalenka going from 10,895 to 9,905 and Rybakina going from 8,500 to 9,435.

## MCA names Shardul Thakur, Siddhesh Lad as Cricketers of the Year; Ayush Mhatre, SKY, Dube feted

### MUMBAI

Siddhesh Lad and Shardul Thakur were conferred the Justice Tendolkar Trophy for the Best Senior Cricketer for the 2025/26 and 2024/25 seasons, respectively, as the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) hosted a grand awards evening in Mumbai on Wednesday.

The evening celebrated excellence across the 2024/25 and 2025/26 seasons, with the MCA honouring the outstanding performers who continue to shape Mumbai's rich cricketing legacy while inspiring the next generation of champions.

The evening was attended by former India cricketers Sunil Gavaskar, Dilip Vengsarkar, Rajeev Kulkarni, and Diana Edulji, Hon'ble Cabinet Ministers Ashish Shelar and Aditi Tatkare, along with MCA President Ajinkya Naik. The presence of MCA Apex Council Members, office-bearers, and players further underscored the collective strength and legacy of the Mumbai cricket ecosystem.

The evening spotlighted outstanding performances at the senior level, with Siddhesh Lad and Shardul Thakur being conferred the Justice Tendolkar Trophy for the 2025/26 and 2024/25 seasons, respectively, recognising their impactful contributions.



In a proud recognition of Mumbai's contribution to Indian cricket, the MCA felicitated Ayush Mhatre, who led the Under-19 Men's World Cup-winning team, along with other city-based players and coaches who were part of India's recent World Cup triumphs.

This included captain Suryakumar Yadav alongside Shivam Dube from the Men's T20 World Cup-winning side; Sanika Chalke from the Under-19 Women's World Cup-winning squad; Abhigyan Kundu from the Under-19 Men's World Cup-winning team; and Jemimah Rodrigues, Amol Muzumdar, and Aavishkar Salvi from the Women's World Cup-winning contingent, reflecting Mumbai's continued contribution to national success.

Mumbai's dominance across domestic cricket in the

2024-25 season was further reinforced as MCA felicitated its champion teams that clinched major titles, including the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, Senior Women's T20 Trophy, Under-14 West Zone Championship, Under-23 Women's One-Day Trophy, Vijay Merchant Trophy (Under-16), and the Women's Under-15 One-Day Trophy, underlining the association's sustained excellence across age groups and formats.

The MCA continued its commitment to nurturing future talent through the Sharad Pawar Scholarships. The 2024/25 recipients included Naman Pushpak, Neeraj Dhumal, Shaurya Rai, Sanmaya Upadhyay, Ira Jadhav, and Yayati Gawad, while the 2025/26 scholarships were awarded to Shreyas Khilare, Rajveer Lad, Vedant Gore, Vansh Chumble, Siddhi Kam-

te, Ritika Yadav, Unnati Patil, and Mudra Khedekar.

The ceremony also honoured stalwarts of the game with Lifetime Achievement Awards. Shobha Pandit (Cricketer) and Shrikant Tigdi (Administrator) were recognised for 2025/26, while Chandrakant Patankar (Cricketer) and Ravindra Savant (Administrator) were honoured for 2024/25, celebrating decades of contribution to Mumbai cricket.

Reflecting on the significance of the evening, MCA President Ajinkya Naik said, "This evening stands as a powerful testament to the standards Mumbai cricket sets for itself, uncompromising excellence, built on legacy and driven by relentless ambition. These achievements are not just milestones, but benchmarks for the future. Our focus remains clear.

## Spencer Johnson will be in our starting XI tomorrow, says CSK bowling coach

### MUMBAI

Spencer Johnson is poised to take centre stage for Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in their critical bottom-of-the-table match against Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Thursday. Bowling coach Eric Simmons hinted at Johnson's potential inclusion due to Khaleel Ahmed's injury.



Royals, Punjab Kings, and Royal Challengers Bengaluru. They briefly revived their season with wins over Delhi Capitals and KKR, but then experienced another setback with a 10-run loss to Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Mumbai's performance has also been shaky. After starting their season with a win against KKR, they lost to DC, RR, RCB, and PBKS before getting back on track with a second win against the Gujarat Titans. Apart from Johnson, former skipper Dhoni, 44, has already started light training, including his first wicketkeeping session of IPL

## Kerala Blasters face Odisha FC in a bottom-half scrap

### KOCHI

A resurgent Kerala Blasters FC will aim to build momentum and extend their unbeaten run when they host Odisha FC in a bottom-half scrap in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2025-26 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Kochi, on Thursday.

Kerala Blasters FC will hope to continue their winning run after their 2-0 victory against Jamshedpur FC in their previous outing. Placed 11th with eight points from ten matches, a win on Thursday would take the Kochi outfit further away from the relegation zone and provide a platform for a steady climb up the standings.

Assistant coach Peter Hartley, who will be leading the Kerala Blasters from the touchline in place of the suspended head coach Ashley Westwood, emphasised adaptability in approach. "They are a strong side with multiple dimensions and look to play progressive football. While our core principles remain intact, we adjusted based on the opposition," he noted.

The coaching setup headed by Westwood has revived the Kerala Blasters season, which is evident in their performances. "We're still in the process, but the improvement has been clear. In just 12 days, we've kept a clean sheet and earned seven points from the possible 12. For us, it's not just about re-



sults, it's about performance. If performances improve, results will follow," Hartley added.

Kerala Blasters goalkeeper Alsabith ST highlighted the squad's growing cohesion. "The group is highly motivated, and there is clear progress in both performance and playing style. If we maintain this work ethic, results will follow," he stated.

Odisha FC, meanwhile, make the trip south aiming to improve on their 1-1 draw against Mohammedan Sporting Club, who are bottom of the standings. Currently 13th with six points

from seven matches, an away victory would help them widen the gap between themselves and Mohammedan in the relegation spot.

The game marks a reunion for Odisha FC head coach TG Purushothaman, who previously served as the assistant coach of Kerala Blasters. Reflecting on the occasion, he said, "It is true that I have a history with Kerala Blasters. It is like a mother club to me, and I have full respect for them. My journey started there. But now Odisha FC have trusted me and given me this responsibility. That trust is very important to

me, and I must give back to the club."

Historically, the contest between Kerala Blasters FC and Odisha FC has been evenly poised. Across 26 previous ISL meetings, both teams have registered nine wins apiece, with eight encounters ending in a draw. While the head-to-head record remains balanced, Odisha FC hold a marginal edge in goals scored, having netted 37 to Kerala's 35. Their most recent meeting in January 2025 saw Kerala Blasters edge a closely-fought contest 3-2 in Kochi.

Purushothaman underlined the importance of defensive discipline following their recent draw. "The team showed resilience, but matches are becoming increasingly compact. We need to address lapses in concentration and improve defensively, with an emphasis on keeping clean sheets," he explained.

Forward Suhair VP also reflected on his recent return to form. "Getting on the scoresheet has boosted my confidence and helped me regain rhythm. I aim to build on this and contribute consistently towards the team's results," he added.

Kerala Blasters will look to capitalise on home advantage to build momentum and push up the table, while Odisha FC will target a crucial away result and widen the gap from the relegation phase.

## India among 12 countries selected for FIFA Development Programme

**NEW DELHI:** India, on Wednesday, became one of the 12 countries selected by FIFA for the FIFA Women's Development Programme (Commercial Strategy 2026). The other countries include Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Scotland, Canada, Mexico, Finland, Ghana, Jordan, Lithuania, and Paraguay. India's inclusion in the programme was confirmed by FIFA after an initial application by AIFF, which was followed by a detailed presentation of the commercial strategy and future plans. The programme will be held online from May to October, 2026. The course itself will be tailored by FIFA for the various stakeholders in women's football across the country.

With AIFF now backed by a commercial partner, this programme will equip clubs with the tools and knowledge needed to build sustainable models, while also preparing them for the upcoming women's club licensing system that AFC (Asian Football Confederation) plans to introduce.

# Summer 2027: Can These Films Stay By Their Promise?

Tollywood's Summer 2027 looks packed, but reality says don't trust the calendar yet. Production houses announce early to block release dates, build hype, and control competition. But the actual filmmaking timeline tells a different story. Let's have a look at the discussion that started after #NTRNeel locked June 11th as their release date.

March 5 for Spirit. April 7 for Varanasi. June 11 for #NTRNeel. Definitely, it's a dream lineup for fans of Telugu cinema to enjoy their summer as combos like Prabhas with Sandeep Reddy Vanga, Mahesh Babu with S. S. Rajamouli, and Jr NTR with Prashanth Neel are hitting the cinemas. However, how

believable this lineup is, while the Summer 2027 is almost a year later, the ongoing 2026 summer itself didn't see some promises honoured. Back in 2025, Summer-2026 looked locked at one point with the likes of Yash's Toxic, Ram Charan's Peddi, Nani's The Paradise, and Chiranjeevi's Vishwambhara locked the Summer. Dhurandhar: The Revenged joined this gang later. Almost none of them came on the announced dates, except for Dhurandhar.

Already, cracks are visible in the 2027 Summer calendar. Spirit is unlikely to be released in the summer for a reason. Body transformation, Prabhas' dates, and Sandeep Reddy's working style indicate that the combination needs time. Rushing it is

not even an option. Raaka with Allu Arjun and Atlee Kumar is another big question. Heavy VFX, large-scale production make it impossible to reach the Summer 2027 deadline.

So what's left? Varanasi and #NTRNeel's film. Even here, it's not simple. Rajamouli has a history of announcing early, but never sticking to that date. It works for him because the scale justifies the wait. But dates keep shifting. Prashanth Neel is not very different as he builds big worlds, takes long schedules, and changes release dates multiple times.

So who would remain on the Summer 2027 promise anyway? In reality, the release calendar might end up being reshuffled completely.



## Allu Arjun's Sharing Model Is A Blockbuster

Blockbuster Pushpa didn't just change Allu Arjun's market, but it changed how he gets paid, if the reports are anything to go by. And it looks like that model will be followed by most stars. Allu Arjun didn't go with the usual fixed salary model for the Pushpa franchise. He played the long game of Profit share and Per-rupee earnings. That's actually a big risk on paper, but a big upside in reality. And it paid off in the end. The Pushpa franchise has collected over ₹2000 crore from the worldwide box office. What started as a strong performer with Part 1 became a full-blown box office force with Pushpa 2. But here's the real number doing the rounds regarding Allu Arjun's remuneration. He's said to have taken home around ₹600+ crore earnings from the franchisee.

This worked out because of the strategy he locked. Most stars lock their fees early banking on Safe and guaranteed income without any risk. Allu Arjun flipped that. He bet on the film. Took a share. Which also means, if the film didn't work, even he would lose a chunk of payment. This model works only when the content connects at a massive level. On that note, we have to say not every film can pull ₹2000 crore and not every star can take that risk.

After Pushpa, many stars have tried and will try similar deals. But without that kind of box office pull, it can easily backfire. Producers may agree initially, but the system doesn't sustain unless the film delivers big. That means the hero should also focus on content, rather than just making 'big' demands from the producers for particular heroines and sets. But for now, Allu Arjun's sharing model is a blockbuster of epic proportions.

## 'Michael': What Critics Are Saying About the King of Pop's Biopic

The upcoming biographical film Michael, directed by Antoine Fuqua, is set to hit theaters this Friday, but early critical reactions following its world premiere suggest a divided reception.

The film chronicles the life of pop icon Michael Jackson, tracing his journey from a child performer in the Jackson 5 during the 1960s to his emergence as one of the most influential entertainers in global music history before his death in 2009.

Jaafar Jackson, the singer's nephew and son of Jermaine Jackson, portrays the adult Michael, while Juliano Valdi appears as the young star. The cast also includes Miles Teller, Colman Domingo, Kat Graham, Nia Long, Laura Harrier, Kendrick Sampson, and Amaya Mendoza. Notably absent from the cast is Michael's sister, Janet Jackson.

The premiere, held at the Dolby Theatre, saw strong support from members of the Jackson family. However, Paris Jackson, Michael's daughter, did not attend. She has previously expressed concerns about the film, stating she was not involved in the final production despite offering feedback on an early draft.

La Toya Jackson praised the film and Jaafar Jackson's performance, describing it as so convincing that audiences may distinguish between actor and subject. She also emphasized the importance of family involvement in telling Michael's story, while acknowledging differing opinions within the family.

Despite praise for its perfor-

mances and musical sequences, the film currently holds a 31 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes, reflecting a mixed to negative critical consensus.

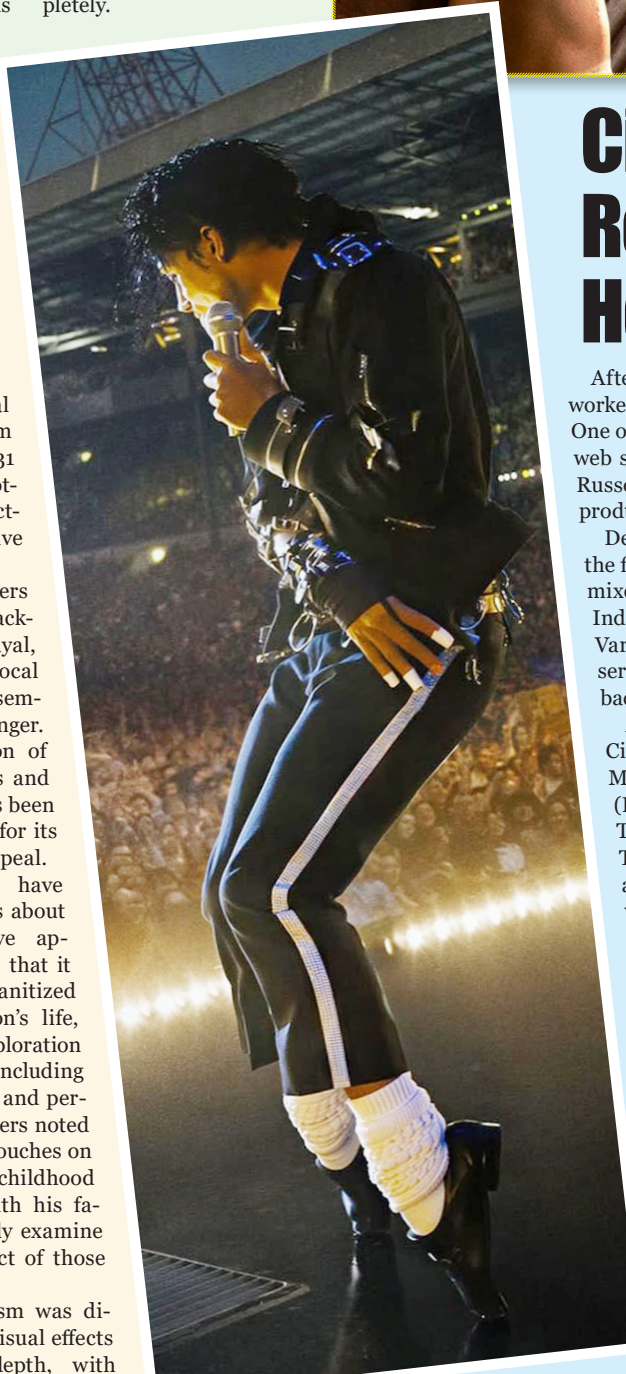
Several reviewers highlighted Jaafar Jackson's strong portrayal, particularly his vocal and physical resemblance to the late singer. The film's recreation of iconic performances and music sequences has been widely commended for its energy and visual appeal.

However, critics have also raised concerns about the film's narrative approach. Some argue that it presents an overly sanitized portrayal of Jackson's life, avoiding deeper exploration of controversies, including allegations of abuse and personal struggles. Others noted that while the film touches on Jackson's difficult childhood and relationship with his father, it does not fully examine the long-term impact of those experiences.

Additional criticism was directed at the film's visual effects and storytelling depth, with some reviewers describing parts of the film as emotionally shallow or overly reverential.

While Michael may resonate with longtime fans as a celebration of Jackson's musical legacy, critics suggest it falls short as a comprehensive and balanced biographical account.

The film opens in theaters nationwide on Friday.



## Citadel 2: Can It Revive Priyanka's Hollywood Career?

After moving to Hollywood, Priyanka Chopra Jonas worked on a few notable projects with major studios. One of them is Citadel, a high-budget action drama web series backed by Amazon Prime Video. The Russo Brothers of Avengers fame are the executive producers of this series.

Despite being released with huge anticipation, the first season ended up as an average venture with mixed reviews. Later, the series had a spinoff in India, titled "Citadel India: Honey Bunny", featuring Varun Dhawan and Samantha in lead roles. Even that series ended up as a failure. Now, Prime Video is back with Citadel Season 2.

Ahead of its premiere on May 6, the trailer of Citadel 2 was unveiled recently. Lead spy characters Mason Kane (Richard Madden), Nadia Sinh (Priyanka Chopra), and Bernard Orlick (Stanley Tucci) reunite in this new season for a new mission. The trailer showcases them joining hands once again for a deadly mission that spans across the world. The series looks rich in action and twists. But the main question is whether it will gain a good response and revive PC's Hollywood career.

Netizens felt the trailer was impressive and looked better than its predecessor. So, it remains to be seen if Citadel 2 manages to gain a positive response once it premieres on Prime Video. Otherwise, there are high chances of it not being renewed for another season. If Citadel 2 garners a good response, it would also help in generating good buzz for Priyanka's next global project, Varanasi, on an international level. As most of her recent Hollywood projects have been box office flops, Priyanka definitely needs a success with Citadel 2.



## KVN Productions & Megastar Chiru: What's Update?

KVN Productions rose quickly to prominence with ambitious announcements like Jana Nayagan starring Vijay and Toxic featuring Yash. Now, the banner is pushing ahead with Chiranjeevi's next film, directed by K. S. Ravindra of Waltair Veerayya fame, despite mounting challenges.

Producer K. Venkata Narayana entered the industry with bold, high-budget bets, offering large advances to top stars. While he helped revive Jana Nayagan, the project now faces release hurdles after reportedly nearing ₹500 crore in costs. Meanwhile, Toxic has suffered delays and rising expenses, with over a year of production and accumulating financial pressure.

Amid these setbacks, doubts emerged about funding Chiranjeevi's film. Reports suggest Chiranjeevi advised caution, even proposing a different producer step in temporarily. However, KVN Productions remains determined. Securing a Megastar project is seen as crucial for long-term credibility and industry standing, making withdrawal a risky move they are unwilling to take.

## Balakrishna's Next: Why Not Athreya? Why Koratala?

Senior hero Nandamuri Balakrishna has recently surprised everyone by sending feelers that he's teaming up with younger directors like Vivek Athreya and Vijay Kanakamedala. However, right now, it's coming out that Balakrishna is teaming up with Koratala Siva, as he wants to play a safe game with a structured, mass-friendly move. Well, is it the right thing to do at this stage of the career?

Message-driven narratives, elevated hero moments, and mass stories are not working these days anymore. We've already seen this version of Balakrishna in many movies, but even Akhanda 2 was pushed more into this, adding the Hindutva vibe. However, that failed. A film with Vivek Athreya would have been a different zone. More contemporary and more character-driven, with fewer predictable elements and

not following the usual mass template. And more importantly, it could have changed perception.

Because right now, Balakrishna doesn't need validation from his mass fans. That base is locked. At this stage of his career, he should either consolidate or explore newer trends. Koratala helps consolidate. But Vivek could have helped to explore uncharted territories. However, it looks like Balakrishna has chosen Koratala's film because it will give safety, predictable returns, and usual thrill to fans. On the other hand, Athreya's film might also take off after some time.



## Sydney Sweeney Scene Cut From 'Devil Wears Prada 2'

The 'Euphoria' actress had a scene playing herself in the highly anticipated Disney sequel.

Sydney Sweeney is such the talk of the town lately, she's making headlines for movies she's not in.

The Euphoria and Housemaid star shot a scene for The Devil Wears Prada 2 that has been cut from the film, Entertainment Weekly first reported.

Sweeney was previously spotted headed to the set last year, spawning speculation that she would appear in the highly anticipated sequel.

The actress played herself in a reported three-minute scene that was part of the re-introduction of Emily Blunt's character, Emily Charlton, early in the film. In the scene, Charlton was dressing a celebrity client - Sweeney. The scene reportedly did not mesh with the rest of the film's opening and was removed from the Disney film.

Sweeney has been heavily dis-

cussed in recent weeks thanks to her return in HBO's Euphoria season three with a provocative storyline where her character, Cassie, makes fetish content for OnlyFans in order to pay for her dream wedding.

She's also returned as the face of American Eagle jeans, which launched a new shorts campaign with the actress. Sweeney is coming off the success of Paul Feig's December hit The Housemaid, which has grossed nearly \$400 million globally for Lionsgate and quickly triggered a greenlit sequel. The Devil Wears Prada 2 stars Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Blunt and Stanley Tucci and has Streep's Miranda Priestly still at the top of Runway magazine, as Andy Sachs (Hathaway) returns as features editor and they face off against Priestly's former assistant turned rival Emily (Blunt). The Devil Wears Prada 2 hits theaters May 1. Disney and Sweeney's rep had no immediate comment.