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KKR CLINCH SUPER OVER WIN

STADIUM 11

SHRUTI BEGINS SHOOTING FOR PEDDI



BOX -OFFICE 12

Ma' Crying, 'Maati' With Infiltrators, 'Maanush' Scared: PM



KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, speaking in Bengal ahead of the second phase of election, hit out at the key constituency of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today, listing sexual assaults on women since the party "came to power 15 years ago". He ripped into the state's ruling party, saying it betrayed its own slogan "Ma Mati Manush". "Ma' is crying, 'maati' is with infiltrators, 'maanush' is scared," he added.

murder of a 20-year-old in Kamduni, just 20 km from the state capital.

Women have been the staunchest supporters of the Bengal Chief Minister, who has introduced a number of schemes for them over the years, including Lakshmi Bhandar (monthly cash transfers), Kanyashree (financial assistance for education), Rupashree (assistance for wedding) and vocational training under "Mukti Alo Yojana".

This has enabled the state's women to continue education and achieve independence. With her support, the state's women have emerged as not just as voters and her ardent supporters but as social and economic forces who are shaping policy direction.

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Revanth directs officials to take 'Prajavani' to grassroots level

HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has instructed officials to prioritise the implementation of Prajavani services at the grassroots level throughout Telangana, focusing on addressing the public's petitions and grievances.

On the same day of assuming office on December 8, 2023, the Chief Minister launched Prajavani with an objective of addressing the people's grievances expeditiously.

Since then, the Prajavani has been successfully conducted every Tuesday and Friday at the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan in Hyderabad. Officials from all government departments were receiving applications and petitions from people directly and taking immediate action. The Prajavani programme was also organised every week under the supervision of district collector at the district level.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >



Revanth participates in Census 2027 self-enumeration

Hyderabad, April 26: As part of Census 2027, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy participated in the self-enumeration programme and completed the process by registering his details through the official web portal. The Census officials visited the Chief Minister's residence in Jubilee Hills on Sunday and briefed him on the procedures and significance of self-enumeration, highlighting its role in ensuring accurate and efficient data collection. The Chief Minister urged all cit-

izens of the state to actively take part in the census exercise and make use of the self-enumeration facility, emphasising that public participation is crucial for effective planning and development.

Director of Census Operations Bharati Holikeri, GHMC Commissioner R.V. Karnan, Joint Principal Census Officer Priyanka Ala, I&PR Commissioner C.H. Priyanka, and other senior officials were present during the programme.

Senior IAS officers take charge at Secretariat, district levels



Newly appointed @Collector HYD Priyanka Ala assumed charge at her chambers in Collectorate, Hyderabad

Hyderabad, April 26: A number of IAS officers who were assigned to new positions began fulfilling their duties on Sunday. The newly appointed Special Secretary of Information and Public Relations, G. Mukunda Reddy, assumed charge at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat.

Similarly, M. Dana Kishore assumed charge as Special Chief Secretary to Panchayat Raj, Rural Development and Rural Water Supply (RWS) departments. He will also continue to hold additional charge as Special Chief Secretary to the Governor. Meanwhile, Harichandana Dasari assumed charge as Secretary to Government, LET & F department at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat. Dr. Priyanka Ala assumed charge as the new collector of Hyderabad district.

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Trump Evacuated After Gunfire at White House Dinner

President Donald Trump was evacuated from the White House Corridors' Dinner after gunfire caused panic at the event. Witnesses reported hearing several shots, prompting guests to take cover.

Security forces quickly intervened, and Trump was confirmed safe. No immediate casualties were reported, and a suspect was arrested. Investigations are ongoing.

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RTC JAC leaders thank Vivek for groundbreaking welfare decisions

HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

After the government's groundbreaking decision to address the concerns of RTC workers, leaders from the RTC Joint Action Committee (JAC) gathered with Labour, Employment, and Mines Minister Dr. G Vivek Venkatswamy at his home in Hyderabad on Sunday to convey their appreciation.

The JAC leaders stated that the Congress government has fulfilled the long-pending aspiration of RTC workers by merging RTC with the government. They also expressed happiness



over key decisions such as conducting recognition union elections and announcing an 11% PRC for RTC employees.

On this occasion, RTC union leaders Venkanna, Thomas Reddy, Ashwaddhama Reddy, Hanumanthu Mudiraj and others

conveyed their thanks to the government.

The RTC leaders said that these decisions would further strengthen the public transport system and urged workers to serve with renewed commitment and enthusiasm.

Naidu directs officials to immediately resolve petrol shortages issue

Amaravati, April 26: Responding to reports of closure of petrol bunks across the state caused by shortages in petrol and diesel supply due to panic buying, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu directed district collectors to immediately implement an action plan to address the issue. He instructed the officials to submit a report by this evening on the measures

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THE GREAT SWITCH: RAGHAV CHADHA'S POWER GAMBLE SHAKES DELHI & PUNJAB



POLITICS TODAY ISN'T ABOUT IDEOLOGY. IT'S ABOUT TIMING, CALCULATION, AND THE NEXT BIG JUMP.

A high velocity political shift sees Raghav Chadha walk out of the Aam Aadmi Party and move towards the Bharatiya Janata Party, setting off a storm of questions on loyalty, leverage, and leadership. Claims of mass support, whispers of enforcement pressure, and a visible crack in Arvind Kejriwal's political structure converge into a moment that could redraw the balance of power, especially in Punjab.

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

A TRUST TEST THAT CUTS BOTH WAYS

Politics has seen defections. But this one lands with a thud that echoes far beyond party lines. Raghav Chadha was not merely a participant in the rise of the Aam Aadmi Party. He was one of its most visible faces, a strategist who moved with confidence through Delhi and Punjab, carrying the implicit authority of Arvind Kejriwal's inner circle. Now he turns, and turns sharply. The immediate question for the Bharatiya Janata

Party is simple and severe. Can a man who exits with such speed be relied upon for long term political alignment? This is not about ideology shifting in slow motion. This is about a decisive leap that leaves a trail of unanswered questions.

THE BIG CLAIM

Talk of 48 legislators in contact. A target of 63 to engineer a split. The claim is loud. The feasibility remains under scrutiny.

PUNJAB IN PLAY: NUMBERS OR NARRATIVE

The promise being circulated is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

THE MITTAL TIMELINE

APRIL 2

Ashok Mittal becomes Deputy Leader of AAP in Rajya Sabha. Praises Kejriwal.

APRIL 13

Enforcement Directorate raids his premises.

APRIL 24

Joins BJP. Switches sides. Attacks Kejriwal.



RAID, RESIGN, REALIGN?

Coincidence or coercion? The questions the BJP must answer.

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Census 2027: Governor kicks off self-enumeration in TG

HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

The self-enumeration phase for Census 2027 commenced in Telangana on Sunday.

Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla formally inaugurated the Census of India-2027 in the State by registering his details through the online self-enumeration facility. Addressing the people of Telangana on the occasion, the Governor said the Census is a vital national exercise that provides a comprehensive picture of the population and their socio-economic conditions. It forms the foundation for planning, good governance and equitable distribution of resources, ensuring that the benefits of development reach every section of society.

He noted that the Census plays a crucial role in formulating policies related to education, healthcare, employment, housing and infrastructure. Accurate data enables the government to design targeted welfare programmes and effec-



tively assess national progress. As this is the first Census after the formation of Telangana, he said, it assumes special significance for the State's future development and progress, making accurate data collection

essential.

The Governor stated that the self-enumeration phase in Telangana will be conducted from April 26, 2026 to May 10. This will be followed by the house-listing operations from

May 11 to June 9, 2026.

He stated that this would be India's first fully digital Census. The self-enumeration facility allows households to digitally register their details through a simple, convenient and user-friendly process. House-listing will also be carried out digitally to ensure accuracy, transparency and efficiency.

"I have personally completed the self-enumeration process today. It is simple and efficient. I urge all citizens of Telangana to actively participate in this important exercise and extend full cooperation to Census officials by providing accurate and clear information," the Governor said. He emphasised that public participation would significantly contribute to building a strong, inclusive and well-planned Telangana and India. Census Director Bharathi Holikeri, GHMC Commissioner R.V. Karnan, Joint Secretary to the Governor K. Shashi Kiran Chary, and others were present on the occasion.

The Impact of High Temperatures on Vegetation: Understanding Plant Heat Stress

In nature, while sunlight is essential for the survival of living beings, excessive temperature is equally hazardous. Just as humans suffer from 'heatstroke' when exposed to extreme heat, plants also fall victim to intense temperatures. Scientifically, this phenomenon is termed "Plant Heat Stress." Due to global warming, annually rising temperatures are now severely impacting the agricultural sector and ecological balance. Generally, every plant has a specific "Optimum Temperature." When temperatures exceed this threshold, the plant's metabolic processes are disrupted. Plants perform a process called Transpiration to cool themselves, releasing water vapor through tiny pores on leaves known as Stomata. However, during extreme external heat, the rate of evaporation exceeds the water absorbed by the roots. This leads to a water deficit within the cells, damaging cell membranes.

Temperature plays a critical role in Photosynthesis, the food-making process of plants. Typically, this process occurs rapidly between 25°C and 35°C. But when temperatures cross 40°C, the enzymes necessary for this process lose their efficiency, causing the plant to stop food production. Conversely, an increased rate of Respiration causes the plant to rapidly consume its stored energy without producing new energy. This imbalance stunts growth and leads to gradual decay. This impact directly affects crop yields, a phenomenon known as "Blossom Drop." High temperatures dry out Pollen, preventing fertilization; consequently, flowers and young fruits shed prematurely. This issue is particularly prevalent in crops like tomato, chili, and beans. Fruits often drop before ripening or suffer from reduced size. Beyond individual plants, heat stress threatens global Food Security.

Adverse Impacts on Agriculture:

Rising temperatures are hitting the agricultural sector hard. Staple crops like rice, wheat, and maize—the primary food sources for the global population—are highly sensitive to climate change. For instance, an increase in night-time temperatures hinders Grain Filling in rice, reducing both the weight and quality of the grain. Similarly, if temperatures exceed 30°C during the flowering stage of wheat, yields can drop by 10% to 20%.

This results not only in lower production but also in the depletion of nutritional values. Furthermore, rising heat is turning cultivable lands into wastelands. Simultaneously, warm weather accelerates the spread of insects and pests, forcing farmers to use excessive pesticides. These developments lead to food shortages and skyrocketing market prices. This makes nutrition unaffordable for the poor and middle class, impacting the national economy and public health.

Untimely Changes and Economic Toll:

Estimates suggest that for every 1°C rise in temperature in our country, wheat yields decrease by 4% to 5%. For example, the 2022 heatwave resulted in a loss of 3 million tonnes of wheat production. Likewise, when temperatures crossed 40°C, tomato crops were hit by viruses, driving prices up to ₹200 per kg. In livestock, heat stress causes milk production to plummet by 15% to 30%. According to a 'Lancet' report, extreme heat results in the loss of over 100 billion work hours annually in the country's agricultural sector, negatively impacting the GDP by 2% to 4%. The 'Thermal Safety Margin' of crops is being breached rapidly due to untimely heatwaves, a phenomenon scientists describe as "Thermal Shock." Reports from the FAO and WMO warn that yields for most crops begin to decline once temperatures exceed 30°C. Specifically, the Indo-Gangetic plain is becoming one of the world's most dangerous heat stress zones. Reduced soil moisture due to high temperatures is leading to "Flash Droughts," causing crops to wither prematurely.

Food Security & Heatflation:

Reports indicate that if high emission levels persist, both yields and nutritional values will decline by the end of this century. Rising CO2 levels and temperatures are reducing the concentration of proteins, zinc, and iron in grains, potentially leading to severe malnutrition. The correlation between extreme temperatures caused by climate change and rising food prices is termed "Heatflation." A study in Communications Earth & Environment suggests that by 2035, food inflation could rise by 0.9% to 3.2% annually. Already, heat has driven olive oil prices up by 115% in Europe. Notably, cocoa

production in West Africa has dropped, pushing prices above \$10,000 per tonne.

The Way Forward: Climate-Smart Agriculture

To overcome these challenges, the adoption of 'Climate-Smart' agricultural practices is an urgent necessity. Key components include sustainably increasing productivity, building Resilience to climate change, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Practices like 'Zero Tillage' and using crop residue as mulch help retain soil moisture. Micro-irrigation techniques like Drip Irrigation and Sprinklers ensure every drop of water reaches the roots directly. The FAO emphasizes the cultivation of 'Heat Tolerant' varieties. In India, models like the 'PoCRA' project in Maharashtra and 'Climate-Smart Villages' (CSV) in Haryana and Punjab are being successfully implemented. Andhra Pradesh Community-Managed Natural Farming (APCNF) is an excellent example in South India; crops grown this way have proven resilient to high heat and cyclones. Utilizing digital technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and satellite data for early weather warnings can make agriculture more profitable and stable.

Future Food Security is in Our Hands:

Ultimately, 'Plant Heat Stress' is not a problem confined to farmers or scientists; it is a matter of survival for all of us. Rising temperatures are not just reducing yields but are also stripping the nutrients from the food we eat. This means that in the future, food may not only be scarce but also insufficient to provide the energy required for health. We can only tackle this catastrophe by preventing resource waste and promoting climate-smart agriculture. While government policy support and the transfer of technology from scientists to the field are vital, every citizen must act responsibly toward environmental conservation. Only by maintaining ecological balance can we feed the next generation. If we protect Mother Earth, she will protect us. The time to save our plants—and our food future—from extreme heat is now.

J M R DUNGA

M.sc (Maths), M.sc (Physics)
Senior Teaching Faculty in Maths

TG welfare model a benchmark for other states: Adluri

HYDERABAD, APRIL 26

Telangana's comprehensive and forward-looking welfare model has set a benchmark for other States, said Minister for Welfare Adluri Laxman Kumar.

He delivered a speech during the Chintan Shivir-2026, which was organised by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in Chandigarh on Sunday.

The conclave brought together Ministers and senior officials from across the country to deliberate on key issues, including social justice, effective delivery of

welfare schemes, and the holistic development of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Backward Classes (BCs), persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and transgender persons.

Addressing the gathering, Adluri Laxman Kumar said that under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, the Telangana is pursuing a governance model anchored in "equity, empowerment, and dignity."

He noted that the renaming of the social welfare department as the SC development department reflects the State's sharpened focus on Dalit advancement.

Highlighting education as a key driver of social transformation, Laxman Kumar said the Telangana state has spent ₹574.74 crore on post-matric scholarships, benefiting 3.39 lakh students, and ₹66.31 crore on pre-matric scholarships, covering 73,666 students.

Under the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Overseas Education Fund, ₹103.49 crore has been spent to support 564 students pursuing higher education abroad. Additionally, ₹24.53 crore has been invested in TG SC Study Circles, enabling 2,426 aspirants to receive coaching for competitive examinations, including Civil

Services, he said.

He further stated that the government has allocated ₹628.42 crore towards SC hostels, benefiting 2.26 lakh students with free accommodation, food, and allied facilities.

Under the Kalyana Lakshmi scheme, financial assistance worth ₹476.15 crore has been extended to 47,539 beneficiaries, easing the burden of marriage expenses among economically weaker sections. Further, incentives amounting to ₹43.06 crore have been provided to 1,723 inter-caste couples, promoting social integration, Adluri Laxman Kumar said.

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.. SHAKES DELHI & PUNJAB

FROM PAGE 1

bold. Deliver Punjab. Tilt the balance. Break the structure. But Punjab does not move on claims alone. Raghav Chadha may possess access, networks, and inside knowledge of the Aam Aadmi Party machinery. Yet translating that into a mass legislative shift demands more than proximity. It demands political gravity. Convincing over half the legislators to cross over is not a routine exercise. It requires alignment of ambition, protection, and timing. Whether that alignment exists remains uncertain. For the BJP, the immediate gain may lie in insight and disruption. The larger prize of control will depend on whether these claims survive contact with political reality.

THE MONEY QUESTION: SILENT BUT SHARP

Behind the visible drama lies a quieter but sharper concern. Some of the individuals linked to this shift are not just political figures. They are key financial contributors. If they move decisively, the Aam Aadmi Party faces a double impact, political and financial. The sequence involving Ashok Mittal, associated with Lovely Professional University, adds another layer. Elevation within the party. Public affirmation of loyalty. A raid by the Enforcement Directorate. A swift political shift. The official line will separate investigation from politics. The political reading will link the two. The

perception battle is already underway.

THE ENFORCEMENT MOMENT

The role of the Enforcement Directorate has steadily moved into the centre of political discourse. In this instance, the close timing between enforcement action and political realignment has raised pointed questions. There is no formal conclusion, no declared linkage, but the sequence itself has become a subject of intense debate across political circles, adding a layer of tension to an already charged situation.

THE KEJRIWAL STRUCTURE: EXPANSION WITH FRACTURES

This episode throws a hard light on the internal design of the Aam Aadmi Party. The party has attracted ambitious entrants, individuals seeking rapid political elevation. It has delivered that entry. But retention has been uneven. A pattern has emerged over time. High expectations at the point of entry. Limited space for sustained growth beyond a central leadership core. Arvind Kejriwal remains the pivot. Around him, the circle appears tight. Beyond it, the exits have been frequent. A national party requires depth, delegation, and durable second line leadership. Without that, expansion risks becoming fragile.

THE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

The shift also brings back unresolved is-

sues. During the period of scrutiny over the liquor policy, what was the precise role of Raghav Chadha? Was he a participant in key decisions, or positioned outside operational responsibility? The absence of clear answers leaves space for speculation. These questions will not fade simply because the political alignment has changed.

DIGITAL BACKLASH: THE SPEED OF PERCEPTION

The reaction in the digital space has been immediate. A sharp drop in follower count following the announcement signals a shift in public sentiment. It reflects not just disagreement, but a sense of disruption among supporters. In contemporary politics, digital perception is not incidental. It shapes narrative, momentum, and credibility.

A GAME WITH NO GUARANTEES

This is a moment of calculated risk on all sides. For the BJP, the opportunity lies in disruption and possible expansion, balanced against the question of long term reliability. For the Aam Aadmi Party, the challenge is structural, to build a system that retains as strongly as it recruits. For Raghav Chadha, this is a decisive wager, immediate repositioning against the test of enduring credibility. The board is set. The pieces are in motion. The outcome remains unsettled.

Revanth directs officials to take 'Prajavani' to grassroots level

FROM PAGE 1

During a meeting held at the MCHRD institute in Hyderabad on Sunday morning, Revanth Reddy ordered Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao and CMO officials to bring Prajavani services closer to the people and provide relief to them from travelling to distant Hyderabad and district headquarters to get their grievances resolved.

The Chief Minister instructed the officials to launch Prajavani services at the revenue division level and also extend the services at mandal level in the next phase. The top authorities were ordered to develop an administrative mechanism where the officials at all levels are available to resolve the grievances and complaints received through Prajavani.

Specific instructions were also issued mandating that every complaint submitted by the citizens be duly registered, forwarded to the relevant departments, and that the applicant be kept informed regarding the status of the application.

The Chief Minister emphasised that all the departments should set deadlines to resolve the people's grievances without any delay. For this, a unified digital platform should be developed for registration, tracking, and resolution of grievances. A real-time monitoring mechanism will also be established at both the

district and state levels, he said.

Further, the Chief Minister directed that dedicated Nodal Officers be appointed for Prajavani services at every administrative level. Specialised Prajavani wings will also be established in every district and every government department. It is mandated by the implementation of an auto-escalation system to ensure that if a grievance remains unresolved at one level, the petition is automatically forwarded to a higher-ranking official. If, necessary, an appeal mechanism will be introduced, he said.

Revanth Reddy warned that there must be absolutely no compromise in the grievance redressal process and conduct regular review meetings at both the district and state levels. The officials were instructed to pay special attention to pending grievances and monitor the progress of grievance resolution through the dashboard. The officials concerned are accountable for any delays in addressing the grievances.

The Chief Minister highlighted that decentralising Prajavani services would help to reduce burden on state and district level Prajavani centres. Revanth Reddy emphasised that the Prajavani services should be implemented meticulously to instill confidence and trust among the people.

Congress party is obstructing women empowerment: Union Minister Kishan Reddy

Hyderabad, April 26: Union Minister Kishan Reddy on Sunday participated as the Chief Guest in the concluding celebrations of Ambedkar Jayanti held at Jaya Garden in Somajiguda of the city.

Earlier, he watched the Prime Minister's 'Mann Ki Baat' program. Addressing a gathering on this occasion, he alleged that the Congress party was trampling upon the empowerment of women, who constitute half of the country's population, as well as the ideals of Ambedkar and added that by obstructing the Women's Reservation amendment Bill, the Congress party had inflicted a grave injustice upon 70 crore women and Dalits. "For decades, the Congress party has stood as a barrier, preventing women, Dalits and tribal communities from entering legislative bodies. In the matter of the Reservation Bill, the BRS party also neglected its responsibilities and misled the public. The Congress party is acting in direct contradiction to Ambedkar's ideology and had the constitutional amendments proceeded smoothly, the current allocation of 84 SC seats could have potentially increased to over 140. Leaders such as Rahul Gandhi, Revanth Reddy, and Stalin are engaging in misguided propaganda, falsely claiming that South India is being subjected to injustice regarding the delimitation of constituencies," he alleged.

Reddy said that Prime Minister Modi's resolve was to increase the number of the seats uniformly across all states without any discrimination against any specific region and added that During 50 years of Congress party's rule, the Backward Classes (BCs) were completely forgotten and claimed that the credit for conducting a census of the Backward Classes—a first since independence—goes solely to Prime Minister Modi.

Senior IAS officers take charge at Secretariat, district levels

FROM PAGE 1

Harichandana Dasari, who had been serving as the Hyderabad Collector here until now, was transferred, and Priyanka Ala was posted to fill the resulting vacancy. Similarly, Bhorkade Hemant Sahadeva Rao formally assumed charge as the new district collector of Mulugu at the collectorate.

Ma' Crying, 'Maati' With Infiltrators, 'Maanush' Scared: PM

FROM PAGE 1

This is the base that the BJP has been targeting since before the 2024 Lok Sabha election when the sexual exploitation of women in Sandeshkhali hit the headlines.

Today, PM Modi said that "every sister and daughter of Bengal has now risen against the merciless Trinamool government and we saw a glimpse of this in the first phase of voting."

"The Trinamool has brought Bengal, which has been a leader in women's empowerment, to a low point. Every day, there

are reports of rape, gang rape and murder. In their 15-year reign of lawlessness, many major incidents of rape and murder have occurred - the RG Kar Medical College rape and murder, Kasba Law College rape, Park Street gang rape, Hanskhali rape and murder, Kamduni gang rape, Durgapur Medical College rape case," he said.

"There are many such incidents where the crimes took place in schools or colleges, or daughters were harassed while on duty. And in most cases, Trinamool leaders are involved...

This merciless government protects the goons and, instead, blames the daughters... After May 4, there will be an account of every goon, every oppressor, and every corrupt person of Trinamool Congress," he added.

Bengal has voted overwhelmingly in the first phase, with the turnout figure crossing 91 per cent. Both BJP and the Trinamool have claimed it indicated support for them. The next phase of polling will be held on April 29 and the counting of votes will be held on May 4.

Naidu directs officials to immediately resolve petrol shortages issue

FROM PAGE 1

taken by various departments and the progress in resolving the problem.

The Chief Minister held a teleconference with Chief Secretary G. Sai Prasad and senior officials to assess the situation. Officials informed the Chief Minister that out of the total 4,510 fuel outlets in the state, nearly 421 petrol bunks had been shut due to lack of supply. Although fuel supply has increased by 10 per cent compared to earlier levels, panic buying has led to heavy rush at many outlets.

The officials said under normal circumstances, daily sales in the state stands at an average 6,330 kilolitres of petrol and 9,048 kilolitres of diesel. However, due to public concern over

fuel shortages, fuel purchases have risen sharply. On Saturday alone, sales touched 10,345 kilolitres of petrol and 14,156 kilolitres of diesel.

Officials explained that the sudden increase of over 50 percent in sales has caused stocks to deplete rapidly at several outlets. Despite enhanced supply, consumers are facing long queues and inconvenience because of panic-driven purchases. They also informed the Chief Minister that bulk purchases in drums by the aqua sector were creating additional pressure on supplies.

Reacting on the present situation at petrol bunks, the Chief Minister directed officials to monitor the situation continuously to resolve the problem.



Countdown to Civil Services Prelims – A Dual Strategy!



HYDERABAD

As part of the Telangana Government's prestigious "99 Days Praja Prabhatvram - Pragati Pranalika" program, and under the ongoing "Welfare Week" celebrations, an awareness seminar was conducted at the BC Study Circle.

The seminar focused on strategies that youth should follow to succeed in various competitive examinations and secure government jobs. It was organized by BC Study Circle State Director Dr. Mamidi Harikrishna.

At the beginning of the program, a video message from BC Welfare and Transport Minister Ponnampati Prabhakar was shown to the candidates, and its key

points were explained. In his message, the minister encouraged Telangana youth to strive for success in central government jobs and All India Services. He emphasized the importance of self-confidence, determination, and intellectual growth to succeed in these competitive exams. He stated that the Telangana government is conducting special training programs to enhance the intellectual abilities and competitive exam skills of youth, helping them achieve their dream of securing government jobs. He also expressed hope that all candidates would succeed in the UPSC Civil Services Preliminary Examination scheduled on May 24, add-

ing that success in employment leads to overall welfare.

Dual Strategy for Prelims Preparation

Dr. Mamidi Harikrishna pointed out that only 29 days remain for the preliminary examination and advised candidates to adopt a "dual strategy" during this period:

Revision Practice

He emphasized that candidates should thoroughly revise all subjects studied so far, recall key concepts, and focus on remembering important topics.

He also advised candidates to take as many model tests as possible to improve their ability to identify correct answers in the

examination hall and to practice question papers regularly. He suggested following this dual approach consistently over the remaining 29 days.

Special Arrangements at BC Study Circle

He further stated that: The BC Study Circle has prepared structured study schedules to facilitate daily revision. The center will remain open from 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM for the convenience of candidates. Daily model tests for CSAT and General Studies are being conducted until May 15. Through these initiatives, candidates can enhance their chances of success in the examination.



"The role of veterinarians in food safety is invaluable"

Speakers at World Veterinary Day

HYDERABAD

Eminent speakers praised the invaluable services of veterinarians in safeguarding public health and food safety. The World Veterinary Day 2026 celebrations were held grandly on Sunday at the College of Veterinary Science (CVSc), Rajendranagar, under the joint auspices of the Department of Poultry Science and the Indian Poultry Equipment Manufacturers Association (IPEMA)-Poultry India.

The conference was organized under the theme "Veterinarians: Guardians of Food and Health." Vice-Chancellor

Dr. M. Gnyana Prakash attended as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, he emphasized the crucial role of veterinarians in protecting community health. Guest of honor Dr. M. Uday Kumar stated that the veterinary sector is at the forefront of ensuring nutritional security for the growing population.

Need for Industry-Academia Collaboration

IPEMA-Poultry India President Uday Singh Bayas, who attended as a special guest, stressed the need to strengthen ties between educational institutions and the poultry industry. He noted that veterinary students have a responsibility to scientifically dispel misconceptions about poultry products

Inspiring Students

On this occasion, elocution competitions were conducted for students on the topic "Poultry Products and Lifestyle Diseases: Myths vs Facts," and prizes were awarded to the winners.

In the subsequent technical session, experts like Dr. Mujib Athar and Dr. Srinivas Ramaraju explained the vast employment and entrepreneurial opportunities available in the poultry sector. The program, presided over by Dr. R.M.V. Prasad, saw participation from faculty members, industry experts, and a large number of students. The event served as a guiding platform for young professionals aspiring to build careers in the poultry sector.

'Surveillance on cyber criminals under 'Operation Crackdown 2.0'

HYDERABAD

The Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB) is moving forward with a new strategy to curb cyber crimes in the state. Director of Telangana Cyber Security Bureau, Shikha Goyal, stated that a large-scale surveillance operation named 'Operation Crackdown 2.0' has been launched to ensure that criminals arrested in the past two years do not return to criminal activities.

She said that special inspections

began across the state from 8 AM on April 25, and the operation is being conducted in coordination with the law and order police wing.

Explaining the operation, Shikha Goyal clarified that the department follows a "zero tolerance" policy towards cyber crimes. She stated that a total of 3,567 cyber criminals were arrested across Telangana during 2024-25, and special surveillance is currently being maintained on 614 major accused from the state.



She said that 300 teams have been deployed in the field for these inspections, closely monitoring

the current residence, occupation, and financial transactions of the accused. She added that the residences of each accused are being geo-tagged to continuously track their movements and ensure they do not violate bail conditions.

The Director revealed that among those arrested are various types of offenders, including mule account holders (269), agents (155), child sexual abuse material (CSAM) accused (36), and cyber slavery offenders (8).

So far, 335 individuals have been physically verified. It has been found that they are linked to 480 cases in Telangana and 1,233 cases across the country. Among them, 218 individuals have been traced, 115 are absconding, and three have died.

She further stated that one CSAM accused named Prasad Kumar has been identified as currently residing in Nepal. Earlier, he had worked at a restaurant in Secunderabad.

Shikha Goyal reiterated that even after arrest, accused persons remain under police surveillance, which is being reinforced through 'Operation Crackdown 2.0'. She warned that if anyone is found re-engaging in criminal activities or behaving suspiciously, "suspicious sheets" will be immediately opened against them and strict surveillance will be maintained. She assured that Telangana Police are fully alert at all stages to protect citizens from cyber frauds.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

Construction Organization, Ernakulam Jn

1.Tender Notice No. 5-CE-CN-ERS-2026-OT Dated 24.04.2026

Name of work: Doubling of track between Thiruvananthapuram & Kanniyakumari - Proposed reconstruction of Br.No. 108 (ROB) @ CH 245719.71m (CN CH: 245702.34m) with 1 x 24 m effective span Composite Girder between Neyyattinkara & Parassala stations. Tender Value: Rs. 24,52,000/- Completion Period: 12 Months

Date and time of tender closing: 18/05/2026, 15.00 Hrs

Complete details and tender document will be available at <https://www.ireps.gov.in>

Chief Engineer/Construction Ernakulam Jn

Mukunda Reddy has today assumed charge as Spl. Commissioner of the IPR



HYDERABAD

G. Mukunda Reddy has today assumed charge as the Special Commissioner of the Information and Public Relations Department. Following the transfer of the current Special Commissioner C.H. Priyanka, orders were issued appointing

Mukunda Reddy, who was serving as the GHMC Zonal Commissioner, as the Special Commissioner of the Information Department. Today, Mukunda Reddy also took charge as the Special Commissioner of the Information and Public Relations Department as well as the Special Secretary to the Government.

"Participate in Census 2027 and make it a success - C.S. Ramakrishna Rao"

HYDERABAD

As part of the Census 2027, the Self-Enumeration process began today. State Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao participated on Sunday and registered his details.

This morning, at his residence, he completed his self-enumeration through the online portal and took part in the Census of India-2027 program in Telangana.

Director of Census Operations Bharati Holikeri and GHMC Commissioner R.V. Karnan also participated in this program.

The Chief Secretary called upon every household to come forward and take part in self-enumeration so that all families are included in the Census 2027.

The Celebrations of Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya Jayanti have been taking place for the past nine days



HYDERABAD

The celebrations of Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya Jayanti have been taking place for the past nine days at the Suvarna Bharathi Cow Shelter in LB Nagar.

On this day, under the leadership of Yajna organizer Brahma Sri Siddhartha Sharma, Ganapathi Homam and Shata Chandi Homam were performed.

The festivities were conducted today under the leadership of Tattvam Charitable Trust Founder President Brahma Sri Srinivasa Bangaraya Sharma. After the Purna Ahuti, he delivered a discourse stating that through the principle of Shiva (Shiva Tattva), the human body attains complete happiness and well-being. Telangana Prisons Department IG Erra Shetty Rajesh attended

as the chief guest and participated in the homam. Famous music director Swaraveena Pani composed and directed devotional songs on Lord Shiva, entertaining the devotees with his musical presentation. Prominent spiritual orator Dr. Anantha Lakshmi, along with trust members Satish, Srikanth, Puttaparthi Vani, and others, participated in the celebrations.

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3 TIMES BETTER

BRS shaken by the formation of Telangana Rashtra Sena

- "Those who abandoned Telangana identity are now talking about originality"
- "That party is nothing but a social media party"
- "Kavitha is the true claimant of TRS... without her, KCR would not have won as MP in 2009 and Telangana would not have come"
- Counter by TRS leaders to BRS leaders



HYDERABAD

TRS leaders stated that the formation of the Telangana Rashtra Sena (TRS) has shaken the BRS leadership. They alleged that with Kavitha's "master-stroke," BRS leaders are making irrational statements.

On Sunday, TRS state leaders L. Roop Singh, Rangu Naveen Achari, Syed Ismail, Gongalla Ranjith Kumar, Manchala Varalakshmi, and Naresh Prajapati addressed the media at the Telangana Jagruthi office in Banjara Hills. They strongly reacted to BRS social media posts referring to TRS as "original" and "duplicate" after Kavitha announced the party name.

"Kavitha is the true claimant of TRS": Naveen Achari

Rangu Naveen Achari said that Kavitha is the real claimant of TRS. He stated that she has taken forward the Telangana ideology that BRS had abandoned.

He questioned whether it was not their history that, after coming to power, they abandoned Telangana ideology and Telangana activists. He accused them of bringing into the party Kadiyam Srihari, who was earlier associated with attacks on Telangana movement supporters, and making him Deputy Chief Minister.

He further alleged that those who had lathi-charged Telangana supporters were given ministerial posts. He asked how those who suppressed Telangana activists can now speak about Telangana ideology.

He questioned why Telangana Talli statues and Prof. Jayashankar statues were not installed after state formation. He criticized BRS leaders for betraying Telangana identity for party interests.

He also questioned the induction of Jeevan Reddy into the party despite his earlier remarks that there was no Telangana ideology. He referred to alleged incidents involving the killing of youth Shrutu and Sagar, questioning their claims of ideology.

He said that even after 10 years in power, they could not install Prof. Jayashankar's statue at Tank Bund and ignored proposals made by Jagruthi.

He stated that Kavitha will present a strong governance model that protects Telangana identity and martyrs' aspirations.

"We will teach BRS leaders a lesson": Roop Singh

Roop Singh said Telangana society had already rejected them when TRS was changed to BRS. He warned that attempts to spread false propaganda through paid social media batches would be met with a strong response.

"You lost your right over Telangana identity long ago": Ranjith Kumar

Gongalla Ranjith Kumar said BRS leaders abandoned Telangana identity and built a "BT batch" (their own group). He said they have long lost any right to speak about Telangana originality. He criticized social media supporters who were unaware of the movement history.

He claimed Kavitha played a key role in securing KCR's 2009 MP victory and said people should ask the leadership about it. He recalled that during the "Telangana statehood hunger strike," Kavitha helped arrange meetings in Delhi through Oscar Fernandes, which led to Sonia Gandhi's appointment.

He warned that BRS is essentially a social media party and said future consequences would be worse for them.

"From now on, it's a different phase": Syed Ismail

Syed Ismail said those unable to digest Kavitha entering politics under TRS name are spreading hatred online. He said a new attempt for Telangana reconstruction has begun.

He warned that social media-built structures will collapse and cautioned against trolling Kavitha or Telangana ideology. He said, "From now on, things will be different."

"Talking about Kavitha, a Telangana supporter?": Manchala Varalakshmi

Manchala Varalakshmi said it is laughable that Jeevan Reddy is criticizing TRS formation. She questioned the credibility of those who once criticized KCR and are now talking about "original and duplicate."

She said those who abandoned Telangana and changed party names have no moral right to speak about Kavitha, who is trying to revive Telangana spirit.

She added that those who left Telangana activists unsupported have no right to talk about originality.

She also pointed out that critics do not question changes within BRS itself. She stated that Kavitha will protect Telangana ideology going forward.

"Are you TRS or BRS?": Naresh Prajapati

Naresh Prajapati questioned whether they are TRS or BRS, pointing out confusion in party naming on social media accounts of KTR.

He mocked them for lacking clarity about their own party identity.

He asked whether they did not themselves announce rebranding earlier. He accused them of betraying martyrs' families and Telangana people.

He concluded that Kavitha will now protect Telangana ideology and identity.



"Revanth Reddy is criticizing KCR only for his own identity," says KTR

■ From actors to anchors, no one is even recognizing Revanth Reddy's name.

■ People of Telangana are not willing to even mention his name.

■ Due to an identity crisis, he is criticizing KCR.

■ KTR said that conspiracies against Telangana have started again and that all anti-Telangana forces are slowly coming together.

HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KTR stated that some people in the state, including the Chief Minister, are spending their time criticizing KCR because they feel they are not getting proper recognition. He said that even after becoming Chief Minister, Revanth Reddy is frustrated that neither actors nor anchors recognize him, and out of that frustration, he is making reckless comments daily against former CM KCR.

He added that Revanth Reddy is making such statements just to get media attention by speaking a few words against KCR and deriving sadistic pleasure from it.

At Telangana Bhavan, in the presence of KTR, All India Forward Bloc leader Pillutla Raghu, along with key leaders from the Huzurnagar constituency, joined the BRS party. They were welcomed warmly with party scarves.

KTR recalled a recent incident where an anchor failed to recognize the Chief Minister's name and instead mentioned Sridhar Babu. He said not only actors and anchors, but even the public are unwilling to mention Revanth Reddy's name.

KTR criticized the Congress party for failing to implement even a single promise made before coming to power, thereby deceiving all sections of people. He said that although they promised to implement schemes within 100 days of coming to power, even after two and a half years, they are not even mentioning them.

He accused them of misleading people with "guarantee cards" and making false promises on bond papers like "James Bond-style documents," even claiming they used ₹100 stamp

papers.

He remarked that even a strong man cannot deliver children in three months, referring to Revanth Reddy trying to escape his promises. KTR said if even after 30 months no scheme is implemented, people should question what to call such leadership.

He said that for 60 years, Congress and TDP governments ignored the fluorosis problem in Nalgonda district, ruining generations of lives. He credited KCR for eradicating this issue through Mission Bhagiratha.

KTR stated that KCR transformed Nalgonda farmers' lives—from struggling with hundreds of borewells for water to having irrigation water for their fields.

He also said that KCR developed the Yadagirigutta Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple into a magnificent pilgrimage site with ₹1800 crore investment, making it a landmark in the country.

He noted that districts like Nalgonda, which once suffered from drought, are now producing high quantities of paddy due to KCR's governance.

KTR criticized Congress leaders who accuse KCR of borrowing money, saying every rupee was used for Telangana's development. In contrast, he alleged that Revanth Reddy has taken loans worth ₹3.7 lakh crore but has not laid even a single brick, instead spending on commissions and contracts. He added that for the past two and a half years, Revanth Reddy has done nothing except repeatedly visiting Delhi.

KTR reiterated that conspiracies against Telangana are resurfacing, with anti-Telangana forces uniting. However, he expressed confidence that people will re-elect KCR as Chief Minister in the upcoming Assembly elections.

He said leaders who switch parties lose their relevance, citing that an MLA who changed parties in Huzurnagar could not even ensure the victory of a sarpanch in his own village.

He also questioned what development Utam Kumar Reddy has brought to the Huzurnagar region. Finally, KTR congratulated Pillutla Raghu for joining the BRS party and supporting the party in Huzurnagar. He noted that after panchayat elections, BRS secured an additional majority of around 14,000 votes compared to Assembly elections, proving that people continue to support the party despite the local MLA leaving it.

"BRS nearing another milestone" – Koleti Damodar

HYDERABAD

Koleti Damodar, State Secretary of BRS, stated that the pink party, which began its journey as Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) and later transformed into Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), has gone through many turns and struggles and is now about to reach another historic milestone. The TRS party, founded by Kalvakuntla Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) on April 27, 2001, entered public life with the primary goal of achieving a separate Telangana state.

He said that the struggle led by TRS for a separate Telangana became like a fresh breeze in Andhra Pradesh politics. What began with a small group of people gradually turned into a massive movement with the support of lakhs of people, which people still remember. He mentioned in a statement that KCR deserves credit for strengthening the voice of TRS among the people by overcoming insults, criticism, and political conspiracies during the movement. As a result of KCR's unwavering determination and continuous struggle, Telangana state was formed on June 2, 2014, and since then, the TRS party has earned a special place in the hearts of the people of Telangana.

Damodar stated that party cadres are eagerly waiting for the direction that KCR will provide at the party's upcoming plenary meeting in Hyderabad to save Telangana, which he claimed is moving in a regressive direction due to the inefficient governance of the Congress government. He added that people believe KCR's leadership is the only way to protect Telangana, which has been weakened under Congress rule. According to him, people from all sections, who are frustrated with the Congress government, are waiting for KCR's message.

He further said that as the party completes 26 years and steps into its 27th year, there is great enthusiasm among party workers about the future of BRS.

Seethakka orders education profiles for all SHG members

HYDERABAD

Minister for Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, Women and Child Welfare, Dr. Dansari Anasuya Seethakka, announced that the government is taking steps to ensure that no woman member of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) remains illiterate.

Along with promoting basic literacy, the government will identify their educational qualifications and provide opportunities for higher education, she said. The Minister directed officials to prepare education profiles of all women members.

A review meeting was held at the SERP office in BRK Bhavan on Sunday, where the Minister, along with SERP CEO Divya Devarajan, interacted with SERP directors and district Mahila Samakhya presidents.

The meeting reviewed progress on construction of women's federation buildings, new member enrollments, the "Ammaku Aksharamala" program, and implementation of SERP schemes.

Discussions included details of district-level federation meetings con-



ducted last month, implementation of SERP initiatives under the Praja Palana Pragati Plan, and progress of village-level women SHG building construction. Nirmal district achieved 100% loan repayment, and District Federation President Gangava was felicitated by the Minister, who urged all districts to follow her example.

The Minister stated that construction of village SHG buildings is progressing like a mission. Across the state, approvals have been granted for

8,227 buildings, with land identified and construction started for 5,239 buildings. Some buildings have already been completed and inaugurated, she said.

District federation leaders were advised to visit villages and share success stories to inspire women members. Currently, over 5,000 VO buildings are under construction, and another 5,000 will be taken up next year. Priority will be given to villages with 100% loan repayment, along with appropriate incentives, Seethakka said. Calling for the success of the "Ammaku Aksharamala" initiative, the Minister said the programme is providing literacy to women who previously lacked access to education. So far, over 6 lakh women have been made literate, and another 6 lakh will soon receive education at the village level, she said. The Minister emphasised the role of SHGs in preventing social issues like child marriages and encouraged women to build strong influence in their communities. With women's reservations expected soon, she urged women to step forward as political leaders.

"The injured body of Satyanarayana resembles a devastated forest"

HYDERABAD

Forest, Environment, and Endowments Minister Mrs. Konda Surekha stated that the attack on environmentalist and water rights activist Dusharla Satyanarayana is reprehensible. She visited him at NIMS Hospital, where he is undergoing treatment for serious injuries, and inquired about his condition and the circumstances of the attack. She also discussed his medical treatment with the doctors.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Surekha expressed anguish, saying that the bloodied and injured body of Satyanarayana resembles a forest that has been destroyed. She said that attacking a great individual who has made immense sacrifices and struggles for greenery and water rights is equivalent to attacking human existence itself.

She praised Satyanarayana's efforts in combating fluorosis as the founder of Jala Sadhana



Samiti. Through padyatras (foot marches) and protests from Nalgonda to Delhi, he created awareness about the fluorosis problem faced by the people of the dis-

trict. She recalled how he demonstrated the severity of the issue to the nation by presenting severely affected fluorosis victims before then Prime Minister Atal Bihari

Vajpayee.

The minister instructed Nalgonda SP Narasimha to take strict legal action against those responsible for the attack.

She described Satyanarayana as a nature lover who created a 70-acre man-made forest—the largest of its kind in Telangana—serving as a hub for diverse flora and fauna. She assured that the government would fully support him and provide all necessary assistance.

Minister Surekha stated that it was due to the protection of natural forces that Satyanarayana survived the attack. She prayed for his speedy recovery so he can return to his beloved work of environmental conservation.

She also assured that the 70-acre forest developed by him would be protected using funds from the Van Mahotsav program. Satyanarayana expressed gratitude to the minister for this assurance.

Finally, inspired by Satyanarayana, the minister urged all citizens of the state to plant saplings on special occasions and help maintain environmental balance.

Govt aims for prosperity of every family: Komatireddy

HYDERABAD

Minister for Roads & Buildings and Cinematography Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Sunday said the government is committed to ensuring prosperity and well-being for every family with the blessings of Vasavi Matha. Participating as chief guest in the Vasavi Matha Jayanti celebrations held at Ramakoti Stupa Temple in Beat Market and Gandhi Park in Nalgonda town on Sunday, the Minister said the first official observance of the Jayanti after the formation of the people's government holds special significance.

Announcing key development initiatives, he stated that ₹500 crore has been allocated for the development of Basara and Kaleshwaram temples as well as Godavari Pushkarams.

Recalling long-pending assurances, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said 120 square yards of land for the Ramakoti Temple and another 120 square yards for expansion, along with the Dhwa-jasthambam, have been provided. He said the promise of establishing a fruit market in front of the temple has been fulfilled. The Minister said ongoing works at the Ramalayam in the town are progressing and will be completed up to Uttar Dwara Darshan by next year. He participated in Kumkumarchana and Abhishekam rituals conducted by the Arya Vysya community at Gandhi Park and offered special prayers.



TDP MLA appoints a transgender person as PA

Galla Madhavi's decision receives widespread praise on social media

Guntur, April 26: Guntur-II MLA Madhavi has taken a decision that sets an example for society. By appointing a transgender person as her personal assistant, she has expressed strong support for equality. Through this step, she conveyed that transgender individuals have the same rights as men and women and should not be looked down upon. At a time when awareness about gender discrimination is increasing in society, this decision has gained greater significance. The MLA stated that in this modern technological era, everyone should have equal opportunities and there should be no place for discrimination based on gender.



Defence capabilities will determine future of countries: Gadkari

NAGPUR: (APR 26)

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday said defence capability will determine the future of any country in the world. Citing the global scenario, Gadkari said that the defence capabilities will define a country's power, and not wealth. "Wealth will not decide a country's power in future; instead, power will be determined by the strongest defence capabilities of a country in the world," he said while addressing a Nag Bhusan award distribution function.

EC announces tight security in 142 seats ahead of second phase of Bengal polls

KOLKATA: (APR 26)

The Election Commission on Sunday announced a stringent security plan for the second phase of the West Bengal assembly polls, making it clear that any attempt to disrupt voting or obstruct electors would be dealt with firmly, an official said. The EC directed security personnel to carry out constituency-wise deployment and step up area domination exercises in interior lanes and sensitive neighbourhoods to ensure that voters can exercise their franchise without fear. During a high-level coordination meeting, attended by poll officials, senior police officers and commanders of central forces from three election districts under Kolkata, the EC reviewed the preparedness in 142 constituencies that would go to polls on April 29.

Magician has no tricks: Rahul Gandhi takes swipe at PM Modi over women's bill

Rahul Gandhi told Delhi University students that the women's reservation bill is really about delimitation. He said Gen Z women will lead India's future and accused the government of delaying real empowerment.



A fresh political flashpoint has emerged over the women's reservation bill, with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi saying the "magician has run out of tricks" and warning that young India can now "see right through him".

The Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha made the remarks during an interaction with students from Delhi University, where he mixed sharp criticism of the Narendra Modi-led government with a broader pitch for women's empowerment. "Two things are clear: 1. The magician has run out of tricks. Young India can see right through him. 2. Gen Z is our future — and Gen Z women will lead the way. It is our duty to open every door for them," Gandhi said in a

post on X after the interaction. He added, "The future of our country is in safe hands."

WOMEN'S BILL AND DELIMITATION CONCERNS

Gandhi revisited his criticism of the women's reservation bill, arguing that it was less about empowerment and more about altering political equations through delimitation. "They suddenly brought this bill and we wanted them to give one-third of the 543 existing seats to women, but they did not do that. Actually, this is not the women's bill. It is very simple, it is delimitation," he said. He cautioned that any change in seat distri-

bution without careful consideration could trigger regional tensions. "What they want to do is reduce the number of seats in southern states and increase them in the northern Indian states if you change the number of seats in India without very carefully taking into account the consequences, you will risk war between the South and the North," Gandhi said. He also said that although the bill was passed in 2023 with opposition support, the government indicated it may not be implemented for 10 years.

FOCUS ON GEN Z AND WOMEN LEADERSHIP

During the discussion, Gandhi stressed that young women will play a defining role in shaping India's future.

"For me, both males and females should have equal space. And I actually believe from experience that the effectiveness and strength of women is better than that of males. They are more effective," he said. "I feel that the more you empower in India, the better it is. I am more biased towards empowering women than I am towards men." He said political participation, corporate representation and institutional presence of women must be expanded, even if it requires "forcibly putting women inside all these structures".

PRAISE FOR WOMEN LEADERS

Gandhi also spoke about women leaders across parties, acknowledging their political impact. "I am an opponent of hers, but I think Mayawati ji played a very important role in UP politics she fundamentally changed the politics of Uttar Pradesh for many years," he

said. On former Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalitha, he added, "I think Jayalalitha ji was a phenomenal leader."

ATTACK ON RSS

The Congress leader also criticised the RSS during the interaction, drawing parallels with colonial-era structures. "The RSS was actually the bureaucracy of the Maharaja. The RSS was the bureaucracy of the British Colonialism always had partners, and the partners were the Maharajahs and the bureaucracy," he said.

STUDENT INTERACTION AND TAKEAWAYS

Sharing details of the exchange later, Gandhi said the students were clear in their thinking and confident in expressing their views. "Their views on the Women's Reservation Bill were also clear, this is not an issue about women's empowerment, but a means to alter the power dynamics through delimitation," he said. He added that the students "reject the politics of violence, hatred and patriarchy" and view politics as "unity, equality and respect".

Chandrababu Naidu to lay foundation for Google AI Data Centre in Vizag on April 28

VISAKHAPATNAM, APRIL 26

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu will lay the foundation for the Google AI Data Centre in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday (April 28). According to officials, Google is going to invest \$15 billion in the project, making it one of the largest Foreign Direct Investments in India's history. The data centre will be developed across nearly 600 acres in Tharluwada, Adavivaram and Rambilli regions with a total capacity of 1 Gigawatt. The AI Data Centre is expected to mark a historic milestone in India's technology sector and also mark a new era in Andhra Pradesh's technology landscape, said an official release on Sunday. With this advanced facility,



Visakhapatnam is poised to emerge as a key AI gateway for Asia and secure a permanent place on the global technology map. The prestigious project will position Visakhapatnam city along with the world's leading technology hubs, it said. With the upcoming sub-sea cable connectivity system, Visakhapatnam will soon

have direct digital links with several countries. The data centre will provide large-scale data storage capacity along with advanced AI cloud infrastructure. Visakhapatnam's coastal location makes it highly suitable for an international submarine cable landing station. Companies such as AdaniConneX and Airtel

Nxtra are partners in the project. The government's long-term vision is to build a multi-gigawatt digital hub with a total capacity of 6.5 Gigawatts across the state, said the release. Beyond infrastructure, the Google Data Centre is expected to generate significant employment opportunities. Thousands of jobs are likely to be created in areas such as Artificial Intelligence, cloud operations, maintenance, cybersecurity, cloud architecture and data science. Revenue generated through data centres will further strengthen the state economy. The project is also expected to attract investments in allied sectors, including power systems, cooling technologies, server manufacturing and networking, helping create a robust AI

ecosystem in Andhra Pradesh. Google AI cloud services are expected to position Visakhapatnam as a major technology hub in Asia. AI-driven companies are also likely to choose the city as their destination. IT startups, research centres, cloud firms and semiconductor companies are expected to establish operations in the region. The government is making arrangements to ensure a green energy supply for data centres proposed by Google and other technology firms. With global companies focusing on Visakhapatnam, world-class infrastructure such as the upcoming Bhogapuram International Airport will further strengthen the city's global appeal, the release added.

ECI orders crackdown on crude bomb makers in Bengal ahead of 2nd phase polls

KOLKATA, APRIL 26

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Sunday directed the central forces deputed for the second phase of the two-phase West Bengal Assembly elections on April 29 to conduct a special crackdown on crude bomb makers across the state ahead of polling. The Commission at the same time instructed the force personnel to immediately step up their activity in defusing bombs and ensure that

no bomb explosions occur on the polling day. The direction to the central forces by the ECI on this count came on the same day the National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested the prime accused in connection with an explosion at Bijoyganj Bazar area in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. The ECI at the same time also directed the West Bengal Police to undertake a special drive to identify and arrest those involved in manufacturing crude bombs. The police have already



started efforts to recover bombs ahead of the second phase of polls. Acting on a tip-off, a raid was conducted in the Majerhat area under North Kashipur Police Station, during which suspicious objects and gunpowder

were recovered from an abandoned house. The ECI on Sunday warned the Kolkata Police and South 24 Parganas district police authorities of strict disciplinary proceedings in case of proven negligence in handling incidents such as voter intimidation and the use of explosives to scare voters on the polling day in areas going for polls in the second phase on April 29. The warning was issued by an ECI official at a coordination meeting with the Kolkata Police and South 24 Par-

ganas district police authorities in the city, which was attended by police personnel at different levels from both Kolkata and South 24 Parganas district. The Commission has specifically fixed responsibility on the Officers-in-Charge (OCs) and Inspectors-in-Charge (ICs) of different police stations in this regard, making them accountable for any incidents involving the use of explosives to scare voters or any form of voter intimidation on or before the polling day.

"Visakhapatnam earns a place on the global tech map"

AMARAVATI, APRIL 26:

With the establishment of an AI data center by global tech giant Google, a new chapter in technology is set to begin in Andhra Pradesh. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu will lay the foundation stone for the Google AI Data Center in Visakhapatnam on the 28th of this month.

The creation of this massive hyperscale AI data center is expected to mark a new milestone in India's technology sector. Visakhapatnam is set to emerge as a key AI gateway for the Asian continent. With this advanced AI data center, the city will secure a permanent place on the global tech map. This prestigious mega project will place Visakhapatnam alongside major global technology hubs. Google is investing \$15 billion to set up this AI data center with a capacity of 1 gigawatt—making it the largest foreign direct investment in India's history. The project is being realized due to the government's "Speed of Doing Business" policy, aimed at attracting large-scale investments. A submarine cable system, expected to be available soon, will enable direct connectivity between Visakhapatnam and several countries. This data center will provide large-scale data storage along with AI cloud infrastructure.

Foundation stone for Google AI Data Center in Visakhapatnam district Investment of \$15 billion – with a capacity of 1 gigawatt Foundation stone to be laid by the Chief Minister on the 28th of this month at Tharluwada Google's arrival to bring global recognition to Visakhapatnam and attract tech companies

"From a Port City to a Data City"

Due to its coastal location, Visakhapatnam is highly suitable for establishing international submarine cable landing stations. The data center will be set up across approximately 600 acres in the regions of Tharluwada, Adavivaram, and Rambilli, with a capacity of 1 gigawatt (GW). Companies like Adani ConneX and Airtel Nxtra are partners in this project. The state government's long-term goal is to develop a multi-gigawatt digital hub with a total capacity of 6.5 GW across the state. Beyond infra-

structure development, the Google data center project is expected to generate significant employment opportunities. Thousands of jobs will be created in fields such as artificial intelligence, cloud operations, maintenance, cybersecurity, cloud architecture, and data science. The revenue generated from data centers will also strengthen the state's economy. Additionally, the project is likely to attract investments in allied sectors such as power systems, cooling technologies, server manufacturing, and networking—helping build a local AI ecosystem.

"Global appeal for Visakhapatnam"

With Google's AI cloud services, Visakhapatnam has the potential to become a major hub in Asia. It is also expected to attract AI-based companies, IT startups, research centers, cloud firms, and semiconductor companies. The government is making arrangements to supply green energy for the data centers being set up by Google and other tech firms. With leading tech companies focusing on Visakhapatnam, world-class infrastructure such as the Bhogapuram International Airport will soon be available.

Aligned with the "Viksit Bharat 2047" vision, this initiative marks a major step towards transforming Andhra Pradesh into a global technology hub.

Summer Rush: Special One-Way Trains Announced from Bengaluru

CHENNAI, APRIL 26:

To manage the heavy passenger rush during the summer season, Indian Railways has announced two special one-way express services from Bengaluru to long-distance destinations in the Northeast and East.

Bengaluru-Dibrugarh Special (Train No. 06573)

The one-way express special will depart from SMVT Bengaluru at 11:00 pm on April 27 and reach Dibrugarh at 4:30 pm on April 30. The train will run via key junctions including Jolarpettai, Katpadi, Vijayawada, Bhubaneswar, Kharagpur, and New Jalpaiguri.

The train will have a mix of AC three-tier, sleeper class, general second class, and Divyang-friendly coaches to accommodate different categories of passengers.

Bengaluru Cantt.-Malda Town Special (Train No. 06247)

Another one-way express special will leave Bengaluru Cantonment at 12:15 am on April 27 and reach Malda Town at 7:30 pm the next day. This service will also run via Jolarpettai and Katpadi, covering major stations along the route.

This train will include AC two-tier, AC three-tier, sleeper class, general second class, and Divyang-friendly coaches. Railways said these "Trains on Demand" are being operated to ease congestion and ensure smoother travel during the peak summer travel season.



Karnataka bridge collapses during procession after band troupe crosses safely

A bridge collapsed during a religious procession near Karnataka's Moodbidri, injuring eight devotees and damaging sacred items. Witnesses said the structure gave way as a palanquin approached, and officials are yet to confirm the cause. Eight people were injured after a bridge collapsed during a religious procession near Moodbidri in Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada district, in an incident that locals say unfolded moments after a band troupe safely crossed the structure but a palanquin carrying sacred items could not.

The collapse occurred at Bavada Bailu in Pucchemogaru during a Dharmanema ceremony, when devotees were carrying Bhandara,

sacred ritual items of the deities of Takode Barke, in a traditional procession from Bavadaguthu.

According to eyewitnesses, the band troupe accompanying the procession had already crossed the bridge without incident. However, as the group carrying the palanquin approached, the bridge suddenly gave way. Stones and concrete beams reportedly fell onto the devotees, injuring at least eight people and damaging the sacred items being carried.

The injured were rushed to a nearby hospital and are undergoing treatment. Authorities are yet to confirm the exact cause of the collapse, and further details are awaited.

"Integrity is the shield for journalists"

Veteran journalist S. Venkat Narayana

HYDERABAD, APRIL 26:

Veteran journalist S. Venkat Narayan (83) expressed that if journalists remain honest, they need not fear anyone, can walk with their heads held high in society, and will earn everyone's respect. He visited Vijayawada on Sunday to attend an event, where leaders of the APUWJ (Andhra Pradesh Union of Working Journalists) met him courteously, presented him with a bouquet, and invited him to the Press Club. On this occasion, he shared his experiences in journalism spanning over six decades with union leaders. He said he has traveled to 68 countries so far and has worked with several national and international publications. He recalled that when N.T. Rama Rao had newly entered politics, he had written in an English newspaper from Delhi—six months in advance—that NTR would become the

Chief Minister. At that time, no political leader in Delhi believed it. However, Indra Gandhi read the report and sent three people to gather more details. He said that after NTR became Chief Minister, he wrote a biography on him. For this, NTR allocated time to him for 15 days, from 4 AM to 6 AM every morning. He also mentioned that he has written a book on the current Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, which is set to be released at the upcoming Mahanadu event next month. Among those who met him were APUWJ State Vice President Chava Ravi, Vijayawada Unit Secretary Dharam Venkateswara Rao, Samma State General Secretary Ramanareddy, senior journalist S.K. Babu, The Hindu Deputy Editor Srinath, Jayaram Sridhar, AP Electronic Media Treasurer Edukondalu Srinivas Kumar, Neeli Megham Srinivas, and others.

Anti-drug awareness campaign: Delhi Police organises flash mobs, cycle rally

NEW DELHI: (APR 26)

Delhi Police organised flash mobs and a cycle rally across the city on Sunday as part of its anti-drug awareness campaign, "Nasha -- Not Cool", an official statement said.

Sunday was the third day of the week-long campaign. Flash mobs were organised at prominent public locations, including Central Park in Connaught Place, Kartavya Path and Select Citywalk Mall in Saket.

EDITORIAL

**DILUTED AMBITION:
WHY INDIA'S NEW CAFE-III NORMS
MAY STALL THE GREEN TRANSITION**

In the middle of April, reports surfaced that Indian auto-makers have reached a unanimous consensus on a fresh set of fuel efficiency and emissions reduction benchmarks proposed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE). This agreement arrives on the heels of a significant dispute late last year, sparked primarily by a rift between Maruti Suzuki—the dominant force in the small-car market—and rival manufacturers. The initial draft had essentially carved out a protective bubble for small cars, a segment representing roughly 14%-15% of total passenger vehicle sales, thereby slowing the transition toward cleaner propulsion systems. Conversely, manufacturers of larger vehicles faced much tighter restrictions, which threatened to handicap them regarding market pricing and capital investment. Although this friction prompted a revision of the standards, the final version that has emerged is only a slight improvement. More concerning, certain clauses seem to actively hinder the decarbonization of the transport industry, which remains India's third-most significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

At first assessment, the primary objective of lowering Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) targets—from approximately 113 grams of CO2 per kilometer in CAFE-II down to 77 g/km by 2031-32 under the new CAFE-III phase—seems quite bold. This upcoming regulatory cycle is scheduled to span from April 2027 through March 2032. However, the inherent flexibility within the framework's design risks diluting compliance and dragging out the necessary pivot toward cleaner tech, particularly full electrification.

While it is true that the blatant exception for small cars has been eliminated, it has effectively been swapped for a variety of alternative compliance routes. These include: Incentives for vehicles capable of higher ethanol blends, moving from E20 to E85 compatibility. Credits for minor technical additions like start-stop systems, regenerative braking, and advanced tyre pressure monitoring. The "Super-Credit" System: A battery electric vehicle (BEV), for example, might be counted as three separate units toward a manufacturer's fleet average.

While these features have some merit, they represent marginal gains that allow companies to hit their numerical targets without committing to a structural leap into electric mobility. Furthermore, the BEE has introduced a system of credit banking and trading; this allows early adopters to hoard surplus credits and sell them to manufacturers falling behind.

Crucially, compliance will now be measured over three-year intervals rather than through annual audits. By allowing manufacturers to average their performance over several years, the immediate urgency is removed, weakening the regulatory signal intended to force innovation. In an era defined by volatile fossil fuel markets, such a lenient policy seems inadequate to spark transformative change in a sector vital to climate goals, national energy security, and overall economic health. Without more rigorous incentives, CAFE-III may end up as a system that manages carbon footprints on a spreadsheet while failing to transform them on the road.

Declining Morality in Indian Politics: Eroding the Democratic System

"Saam, Daam, Dand, Bhed" is an ancient Indian strategic phrase for achieving goals or resolving conflicts by any means necessary, often translated as "Persuasion, Bribery/Price, Punishment, and Division". It represents a four-step approach ranging from diplomatic dialogue to the calculated use of force and dismantling an opponent's unity. From the Chanakya era to the present time, the policy still holds good. Even after independence previous central governments also had been utilising this policy to dismantle the duly elected governments, and during the last decade also, it is being retained as it was to make the efforts to weaken the opposition parties and topple the democratic governments using undemocratic methods. The latest step to destabilise the Aam Aadmi Party's web is the stunning defection of 7 Rajya Sabha members.

Sudden defection of Seven out of ten Members of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to the ruling BJP has not only shocked the AAP and its leaders, but also has sparked a question—'What Lures the Horses to Cross Over the Stable Wall?' Green Grass Pasture swaying outside the stable walls, when they are being fed dry and stale fodder? Callous and oppressive behaviour of the stable master? Wanning power of whip of the owner or something else?

The reportedly spearheading leader, in this event of defection, Raghav Chadha states – Why did they take such a step? Nearly all the defectors allege the party's supremacy and his coterie of third-degree behaviour and sidelining the main heroes of defection—Raghav Chadha and Sandeep Pathak, who were enjoying freehand before 2024. Raghav says, "I'm a founding member of AAP & no one knows them better than I do. The party that came with the promise of corruption free India is now compromised & corrupted".

He further revealed, "I am telling you the real reason as to why I distanced myself from party activities. I did not want to be a part of their sins. I was not eligible for their friendship because I was not a part of their crime. We had just two options – either quit politics and give up our public work in the last 15-16 years or we do positive politics with our energy and experience."

"So, we have decided that we, the 2/3rd members belonging to the AAP in Rajya Sabha, exercise the provisions of the Constitution of India and merge ourselves with the BJP."

Another Rajya Sabha member, Swati Malwal at her X @SwatiJaiHind tweeted on 24th April, "In 2006, I left my job to choose the path of national service. Through the RTI movement, the Anna movement, the formation of the Aam Aadmi Party, and 8 years of dedicated work in the Delhi Women's Commission, I contributed with complete honesty and devotion at every stage. With great sorrow today, I must say that the principles, values, and resolve for honest politics with which we began this journey have been abandoned by Arvind Kejriwal ji and, at his behest, the entire Aam Aadmi Party.

At his residence, on his signal, I was brutally beaten and treated with utmost indecency. To protect his goon, he went to extreme lengths and rewarded him with high positions. Threats

were made to ruin me, and every possible effort was made against me. Seeing the unchecked corruption growing in the Aam Aadmi Party under Kejriwal ji's patronage, incidents of harassment and assault against women, the promotion of thuggish elements, and the betrayal and looting happening with Punjab, I have decided to leave the party today."

Rajya Sabha MP Vikram Sahney, the third one saying good-bye to AAP, on quitting the AAP along with 6 other MPs, says, "In the 2022 Punjab elections, where the party got a very historic mandate, Sandeep Pathak and Raghav Chadha played a major role, in ticket distribution, candidate selection, and the overall strategy. But when they were sidelined, they became frustrated. Then, over the past two years, especially after losing the Delhi elections, a new team took over. This is what Pathak ji used to tell us. When Raghav ji was removed from the Deputy Leader post, it further aggravated the situation. The next day, he released a video. Somewhere, the sidelining and ignoring of these two core leaders led to growing frustration, which eventually spread. They spoke to other MPs like us, and it became clear that there was dissatisfaction among everyone. We felt we were not able to serve Punjab the way we should."

Raising the question of morality, CPIML Liberation leader Com. Dipankar Bhattacharya tweets, "Rajya Sabha MPs of Aam Aadmi Party joining BJP must first resign. Joining the BJP after getting elected on anti-BJP vote is a brazen betrayal of the electors' trust and mandate. These MPs are free to change their politics, but have no right to insult their voters." This is moral advice, but morality in politics has faded away in such a way that even in the speeches of the political leaders it is missing.

Political circles analyse that it is best known to the defectors, why they have boarded the BJP boat? Whether any compulsion, terrorising pressure or smelling a brighter future in the new entity? But one thing they should keep in mind is that BJP always applies use and through policy. It will first use them in trouble and then through in rubble. Haryana's JJP is the latest and perfect example of BJP's -Use-Fuse and Refuse theory.

Alleging BJP of foul play, in a press statement on 24th April, Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann said that BJP & these MPs have betrayed Punjab, and Punjab will certainly give them befitting reply. With no base in Punjab, BJP is resorting to manipulation & intimidation to buy leaders.

"The wise and brave people of Punjab will never forgive the traitors who have backstabbed them for their own vested interests. Punjabis have never forgotten acts of betrayal, and those who deceived them have vanished into political oblivion. In a democracy, the party is supreme, not individuals who come and go as per their whims and fancies."

But, commenting over the statement of Bhagwant Mann stating the defectors as traitors and betrayers of public faith, Shiromani Akali Dal Supremo Sukhbir Singh Badal on his twitter account @officeofsbadal pinches Bhag-

want Mann and Arvind Kejriwal, "As you sow, so shall you reap! You sowed corruption. You sowed moneybags. You sowed opportunists. You sowed outsiders. So how could you expect to reap commitment and loyalty? Yesterday's development is a direct outcome of your betrayal of Punjabis – by preferring corrupt outsiders and moneybags over your volunteers and people of the State. A sad day for Punjab, and a moment of deep reflection for everyone in the country."

How do the other leaders see this episode?

AAP Punjab chief spokesperson Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, lashing out at the Rajya Sabha members who bowed down to the BJP, said that the BJP has played a trick to silence our voice in the Rajya Sabha, and now the time has come to fight a fierce battle against this. The party had chosen people connected to various fields, but these traitors betrayed us! Dr. Daljit Singh Cheema, Senior Vice President, Shiromani Akali Dal satires, "The Chief Minister of Punjab is staging a drama by going to the President and invoking the anti-defection law. Because two-thirds of the members have gone, the anti-defection law does not apply to them.

Now that your members have left, you can't digest this fact. But when your party poached an MLA from the Shiromani Akali Dal and made him part of your government, where were your principles then? You tell us, what service towards Punjab did you see in them that you started making them Rajya Sabha members? In reality, looking at the failed performance of the government from all sides, Bhagwant Mann should dissolve the government."

Punjab Congress President and Lok Sabha Member, Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, commented, "The AAP is devoid of any ideology and its legislators and parliamentarians do not have any ideological commitments and it is not surprising that they joined BJP today. "Today it is just seven MPs, tomorrow it may be 50 legislators who may desert the AAP", he noted, adding that the way the AAP distributed RS and assembly tickets everyone knows.

About the RS members in particular, he pointed out that these were mainly given to the big industrialists and businessmen who helped the AAP in multiple ways. Today when they defected to the BJP, the AAP should not have been surprised as they were never ideologically committed to AAP and had joined the party purely for their business interests.

Quoting the example of Ashok Mittal, who recently faced ED raids, he said, this is a normal course in the current times that people join the BJP to avoid any inquiry or investigation.

The PCC president pointed out, everybody knew how these big businessmen who had nothing to do with Punjab were fielded by the AAP for the Rajya Sabha while the workers and volunteers were ignored.

Reacting over the current defection of AAP MPs, Former Rajasthan Chief Minister, Ashok Gahlot said, "

The BJP folks won't mend their ways with their antics. They are continuously murdering

democracy in the country. We have to admit that democracy is weakening right in front of everyone. All the agencies are under their control—raids were just carried out on Mittal, who is a Member of Parliament. The BJP had previously harassed Raghav Chadha too, and as for the others whose names you're taking, they had put all those names in the liquor case, so this is their policy—they must be feeling pretty pleased with themselves."

"A washing machine is in place—everyone will now come out squeaky clean. There won't be any cases left against anyone. This washing machine they've set up—they broke Congress people in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and they didn't spare anyone here either," added Gahlot.

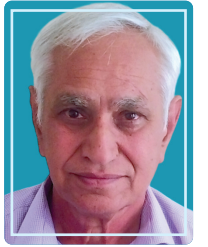
Will this defection affect AAP's scope in 2027 Punjab assembly elections?

Political observers see all this defection drama as the script of 2027 assembly elections in Punjab. Will BJP succeed to sail its old fogey boat in the five turbulent rivers of Punjab to win this political battle using these newly recruited generals? Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, Chief Spokesperson, AAP Punjab, says, "None of the people who joined the BJP could secure even 2,000 votes if they were to contest elections in Punjab. The Aam Aadmi Party will suffer no harm from their betrayal."

Punjab Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring said on 24th April, 2026, that the defection of seven Aam Aadmi Party MPs to BJP will not make any difference to anyone in Punjab as all these MPs are rootless and have no base in the state.

Now the question arises – whether BJP will get any boost through these defections in Punjab?

The political analysts conclude: The ground reality reflects that not even a single defector out of these seven self-claimed leaders possesses any mass following and base at grassroots in Punjab. Their joining hands with BJP does not seem to fructify any significant boost to the central party in the state. But one thing is very much clear that this defection certainly signals the weakening of the Aam Aadmi Party's organization, leadership, and base. It also indicates that AAP's vote bank may shift to the old rivals-- Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD). But it is the most expected speculation also that the SAD party will rejoin its former partner BJP in the forthcoming elections. Will the duo jointly make a remarkable score, still it seems a far-fetched thought.



JAG MOHAN THAKREN

THE MEASURE OF A HUMAN

Not in the architecture of the body, nor in the inheritance of names, does a human begin but in the quiet decision to see another as equal in breath.

Woman not a metaphor to be worshipped from a distance, nor a form to be consumed in fragments, but a consciousness—vast, veined with memory, bearing worlds without applause.

Man not a symbol of dominion, nor a figure carved in pride, but a becoming—a discipline of restraint, a courage shaped in care. Between them—no throne, no hierarchy—only a fragile, luminous field where dignity must be learned again and again.

Respect is not a declaration it is a daily alignment of the soul. Love is not possession; it is the courage to leave the other free. What we glorify, we often exile—what we dominate, we diminish and so, between pedestal and power, humanity fractures.

Violence is not born in the body it is cultivated in silence, watered by indifference, harvested in moments where empathy fails to arrive.

A bond is not a knot, but a living threshold it asks not for perfection, but for presence. Responsibility is not weight it is the gravity that keeps love from drifting into emptiness.

Freedom is not escape. It is the discipline to remain, without erasing oneself. A home is not walls. It is the place where no one must shrink to belong.

Let no hand revere the distant feminine and wound the familiar one for reverence without justice is only a refined form of betrayal.

Let no voice reclaim strength while silencing another—for power without compassion is merely fear in disguise.

The measure of a society is not its laws written in ink, but the tears it prevents from ever being born.

When no body is reduced to an object, when no silence is forced into submission, when consent is not negotiated but understood—then, perhaps, we will have learned what it means to be human.

Do not teach daughters only how to endure; teach sons how not to become a reason for endurance.

Do not divide virtue by gender—it withers in such narrow soil plant it instead in the shared ground of conscience.

For in the end we are not remembered by the roles we performed, but by the lives we refused to diminish.

And if there is a future worth inheriting, it will not be built by stronger bodies but by gentler hearts that refused to look away.

... Dr. Peruka Raju ...
7810032847

Role of Domestic Product Consumption in Atma Nirbhar Bharat

Consumption of domestic products is a powerful way to strengthen India and achieve Atma Nirbhar Bharat. When people purchase locally manufactured goods, Indian industries receive support and employment opportunities are created. Increased demand for domestic products encourages entrepreneurs to expand production and improve quality. This helps reduce dependence on imports, saves foreign exchange reserves, and strengthens the national economy. Small-scale industries, farmers, and startups benefit greatly from consumer support. Domestic consumption promotes innovation, competitiveness, and sustainable development within the country. It also increases trust in Indian brands and improves economic stability during times of global uncertainty. Through digital platforms, e-commerce expansion, local businesses, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and startups receive greater financial support. Awareness campaigns such as "Buy Indian" inspire people to purchase with a sense of patriotism. Therefore, choosing Indian products is an important step toward building a self-reliant and prosperous nation.

There are many reasons why consumers in India purchase foreign products. Better quality of imported goods, greater durability, globally recognized brands, strong marketing, advanced technology, improved design, packaging, changing lifestyles, and exposure to global trends through social media all influence consumer preferences. In some sectors, limited availability of domestic alternatives and competitive pricing due to large-scale global production also attract consumers. The sense of prestige associated with owning international brands moti-

vates some buyers. Easy availability through e-commerce platforms has also increased the habit of purchasing foreign products.

Lack of consumption of domestic goods can create many negative effects on the economy. When people do not purchase locally made products, demand for domestic industries decreases. As a result, factories and business organizations may reduce production or face losses. Small and medium enterprises are affected the most because they depend on local consumers. This situation leads to job losses and rising unemployment. Lower industrial activity also slows Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth. If imports are higher than exports, the trade deficit also increases. In 2024, India's imports of goods and services were around 23.49% of GDP, while the trade balance stood at -2.31% of GDP. This means the economy is spending a significant amount on foreign goods, especially oil, electronics, and machinery. If part of this demand shifts toward competitive Indian products, GDP, employment, and manufacturing output can increase. Therefore, the real issue is not foreign consumption itself, but excessive dependence on foreign goods even in sectors where India can efficiently produce domestically.

According to available market statistics, the majority of daily consumption in India consists of domestically manufactured or locally produced goods. In the consumption of food grains, fresh vegetables, milk, and basic grocery items, more than 90% are domestic products because these are largely produced within India. In consumer goods categories such as soaps, biscuits, tea, detergents, and packaged foods, around 70-85% of the products consumed are manufac-

ured in India. In the automobile sector, most two-wheelers and passenger vehicles sold in India are produced domestically. Depending on the model and brand, the level of localization ranges between 60-95%. In the pharmaceutical sector, since India is a global-scale producer, domestic medicines dominate local consumption. By volume, this is estimated to be more than 80%. Although the domestic share in the electronics sector is lower, it is improving due to "Make in India" policies. Smartphones and home appliances are being assembled locally, though many components still depend on imports.

Overall, according to estimates by economic experts, around 65-75% of products in the broad consumption of Indian households are domestically manufactured. The remaining 25-35% are fully or partially dependent on imports. In the electronics sector, such as smartphones, laptops, and components, the foreign share may be more than 40-60% due to imports. Government initiatives such as Atma Nirbhar Bharat and Make in India are gradually reducing dependence on foreign goods. According to a 2025 report conducted by Rukam Capital in collaboration with YouGov across 5,000 respondents in 18 Indian states, 58% of Indian consumers prefer purchasing from local or small business brands. Consumers choose Indian brands because of relatable stories, trustworthiness, accessibility, and innovative solutions for everyday needs. The report also found that 76% of buyers value honest communication, showing that trust is more important than celebrity advertisements. In West India, 61% of consumers preferred home-grown brands, while younger generations (Gen Z / Millennials) favored brands that support health, sustain-

ability, and women-led businesses. This indicates that India is shifting from the attraction of foreign brands toward value-based, trust-based, and identity-based consumption.

To increase the consumption of domestic products in India, several important methods should be followed. Consumers should first examine product labels and give priority to goods made in India. Awareness about quality is essential, so reliable Indian brands that meet standards should be purchased. Domestic producers can encourage wider consumption by setting competitive prices. Awareness campaigns such as "Vocal for Local" inspire people to support Indian products. Domestic goods should be easily available in shops and online platforms. Attractive packaging, innovation, and modern designs can help Indian products compete with foreign brands. Government support such as tax concessions, subsidies, and encouragement to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) can strengthen supply. While making purchases, consumers should value local artisans, farmers, and small industries. Reviews and word-of-mouth promotion increase trust in Indian brands. Quality, affordable prices, awareness, and patriotic buying habits together can significantly increase domestic consumption in India.



DR. PERUKA RAJU
Professor, School of Commerce and Management, Mohan Babu University, Sree Sainath Nagar

Banaras-Hadapsar Amrit Bharat Express to Launch on April 28

GORAKHPUR, APRIL 26, 2026:

To provide convenience to passengers, the railway administration will inaugurate a daily Amrit Bharat Express between Banaras-Hadapsar (Pune)-Banaras. The service from Banaras to Hadapsar (Pune) will begin on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, by operating train number 02531 Banaras-Hadapsar (Pune) Amrit Bharat Inaugural Special Train. This is a non-AC premium category train. The expected schedule of the inaugural special train is as follows: Train No. 02531 Banaras-Hadapsar (Pune) Inaugural Special Train will depart from Banaras at 16:45 hrs on Tuesday, April 28, 2026. It will reach Ghazipur Road at 17:40 hrs, Prayagraj Junction at 19:15 hrs, Fatehpur at 21:20 hrs, Govindpuri at 22:55 hrs, and on the second day, Orai at 00:30 hrs, Veerangana Laxmibai Jhansi at 02:40 hrs, Bina at 05:20 hrs, Rani Kamalapati at 07:40 hrs, Narmadapuram at 08:55 hrs, Itarsi at 09:30 hrs, Harda at 10:25 hrs, Khandwa at 13:20 hrs, Bhusaval at 15:05 hrs, Jalgaon at 15:40 hrs, Manmad at 17:50 hrs, Kopergaon at 18:50 hrs, Ahilyanagar at 20:40 hrs, and Daund Cord Line at 22:40 hrs, reaching Hadapsar (Pune) at 00:55 hrs on the third day. This train will consist of a total of 22 coaches, including 8 sleeper class coaches, 11 general second-class coaches, 2 SLRD coaches, and 1 pantry car.

Jharkhand Cop Booked for Treasury Fund Embezzlement in West Singhbhum

CHAIBASA (JHARKHAND): (APR 26)

An FIR has been registered against a police constable for his alleged involvement in the "embezzlement of Rs 27 lakh" from the West Singhbhum district treasury in Jharkhand, a senior officer said on Sunday. West Singhbhum Superintendent of Police Amit Renu told PTI that the FIR against the constable was filed at Chaibasa Mufassil Police Station in connection with the fraudulent withdrawals from the treasury at Chaibasa, the district headquarters.

Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy Participates in Self-Enumeration for Census 2027 in Telangana

Hyderabad, April 26, 2026: G. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of Coal and Mines, participated in the self-enumeration to process for Census 2027 in Telangana by registering his details through the designated online census portal, marking the commencement of the self-enumeration phase in the State on April 26, 2026.

Addressing a press conference organised by the Office of the Director of Census Operations, Telangana, the Minister described the Census as a foundational pillar in India's development journey and a critical tool for planning, governance, and equitable development. He stated that accurate and comprehensive data is essential for effective

Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy Participates in Self-Enumeration for Census 2027 in Telangana Urges citizens to actively participate; highlights role of Census in inclusive development Emphasises role of Census data in achieving Viksit Bharat



policy-making and inclusive growth. Highlighting the significance of Census 2027, he said that it marks a transformative phase with the adoption of modern digital technology, ensuring greater transparency, efficiency, and inclusiveness. He informed that the self-enumeration facility is available from April 26 to May 10, 2026, followed by House Listing Operations from May 11 to June 9, 2026,

laying a strong foundation for comprehensive data collection. The Union Minister also emphasised that Census 2027 will provide a clearer understanding of socio-economic conditions across the country and help ensure that development benefits reach every citizen. On this occasion he urged citizens to participate in the Census and provide accurate information, stating that every data point contributes to the nation's future and the vision of Viksit Bharat of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Bharathi Holikeri, Director, Directorate of Census Operations, Telanga-

na, further informed that the Self-Enumeration (SE) facility enables citizens to directly participate in the Census through the official portal. She also highlighted that the data submitted will remain fully confidential and encouraged all residents to utilise the facility. She added that a Self-Enumeration ID will be generated upon submission, which will be verified and finalised by the enumerator also.

R. V. Karnan, Commissioner, GHMC, and Priyanka Ala, District Collector, Hyderabad, were also present on the occasion.

IJU NEC Meeting Opens in Kozhikode

KOZHIKODE, 26 APRIL 2026

The National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting of the Indian Journalists Union (IJU) commenced today at the Sea Queen Hotel, Beach Road, in Kozhikode, as part of MEDIA Conclave 2026 with strong assertions on press freedom, journalist safety, and institutional accountability. The inaugural session was attended by Shri O. Sadasivan, Hon'ble Mayor of Kozhikode Corporation, and Shri M.K. Raghavan, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, both of whom acknowledged the indispensable role of the press in sustaining democratic accountability. Presiding over the session, IJU President Shri Geethartha Pathak made it clear that attacks on journalists, economic insecurity, and increasing constraints on media independence are not isolated concerns but systemic challenges requiring urgent intervention. He stressed that the IJU will intensify its efforts to ensure implementation of Wage Board recommendations, defend press freedom, and hold authorities accountable where-



restrictions and conduct affecting media personnel. He urged the IJU to take up the matter forcefully with the concerned authorities to ensure that journalists are allowed to function freely and without intimidation in conflict zones. AMWJU General Secretary Shri Khvirakpam Naoba presented the Union's progress report for 2025-2026, detailing its welfare initiatives and the difficult conditions under which journalists in Manipur continue to operate. He emphasized that safeguarding journalists in such environments is not merely a professional issue but a democratic necessity. The AMWJU also acknowledged and appreciated the solidarity extended

by journalist bodies across the country. IJU Condemns Attack on Manipur Journalists. The NEC strongly condemned the recent attack on journalists in Manipur by security forces, terming it a direct assault on press freedom and democratic values. IJU President Geethartha Pathak expressed deep anguish over the incident and stated, "The attack on journalists in Manipur is not just an isolated act of violence but a dangerous attempt to silence the voice of the media. A free press is the cornerstone of democracy, and any attempt to intimidate journalists will be firmly resisted." Secretary General Sabina Inderjit said, "Journalists working in conflict and sensitive regions are already operating under immense pressure. Such brutal actions by security forces are unacceptable and must be condemned unequivocally. The government must ensure that media persons can carry out their duties without fear or obstruction." The IJU called upon the government to immediately identify

and nab the culprits responsible for the attack and initiate strict legal action against them. The Union emphasized that impunity in such cases only emboldens further attacks on the press. It further urged authorities to put in place concrete measures to guarantee the safety and security of journalists in Manipur and across the country. Speakers at the session underscored that the safety of journalists is intrinsically linked to the health of democracy, and any attempt to silence or intimidate the press must be firmly resisted.

The three-day MEDIA Conclave 2026, being held from April 24-26, has brought together journalists from across the country to deliberate on critical challenges confronting the media, including safety, labour rights, digital transitions, and policy frameworks. The NEC is expected to adopt strong resolutions on journalist security, accreditation, insurance, digital media regulation, and state-specific concerns, with a clear emphasis on ensuring accountability and safeguarding the independence of the press.

Gun Found in Hand, Man Dead in Car in Greater Noida

While investigators are currently processing the scene to determine the exact sequence of events, no suicide note has been recovered so far. The body of a young man, identified as grocery trader Rahul Bidhuri, was discovered inside a Scorpio SUV near Gharbara village under the jurisdiction of the Ecotech-1 police station.

Preliminary investigations suggest a case of suicide, as Bidhuri was found alone in the vehicle with a pistol still in his hand. The police believe that the man ended his life after shooting into his temple with the gun. While investigators are currently processing the scene to determine the exact sequence of events, no suicide note has been recovered so far. The local police have launched a detailed probe into the circumstances leading up to the incident to confirm whether it was indeed a self-inflicted injury or if foul play was involved. As part of the probe, the police have seized the car, the pistol, and several other belongings of the victim. Earlier this week, a man and a woman in their 20s,

who were living together in a rented apartment in Greater Noida, were found dead under suspicious circumstances. The deceased have been identified as 27-year-old Guddu Paswan, alias Golu, and 24-year-old Jyoti, both natives of the Deoria district in Uttar Pradesh. They were in a live-in relationship. The incident came to light on Wednesday night within the jurisdiction of the Knowledge Park police station. Upon entering the room, investigators found Paswan hanging from a ceiling fan, while Jyoti's body was discovered lying on the floor. Police are presently investigating the matter to determine the exact cause of death for both individuals.

Telangana's Welfare Model Emerges as National Benchmark at Chintan Shivir 2026

Chandigarh: Telangana's comprehensive and forward-looking welfare model has set a benchmark for other States, Welfare Minister Adhuri Laxman Kumar said while participating in the Chintan Shivir-2026, organised by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in Chandigarh on Sunday. The conclave brought together Ministers and senior officials from across the country to deliberate on key issues including social justice, effective delivery of welfare schemes, and the holistic development of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Backward Classes (BCs), persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and transgender persons. Addressing the gathering, the Minister said that under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Telangana is pursuing a governance model anchored in "equity, empowerment, and dignity." He noted that the re-naming of the Social Welfare Department as the SC Development Department reflects the State's sharpened focus on Dalit advancement. **Major Push in Education** Highlighting education as a

key driver of social transformation, Laxman Kumar said the State has spent ₹574.74 crore on Post-Matric Scholarships, benefiting 3.39 lakh students, and ₹66.31 crore on Pre-Matric Scholarships, covering 73,666 students. Under the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Overseas Education Fund, ₹103.49 crore has been spent to support 564 students pursuing higher education abroad. Additionally, ₹24.53 crore has been invested in TG SC Study Circles, enabling 2,426 aspirants to receive coaching for competitive examinations, including Civil Services. **Residential Support and Social Welfare** The government has allocated ₹628.42 crore towards SC hostels, benefiting 2.26 lakh students with free accommodation, food, and allied facilities. Under the Kalyana Lakshmi scheme, financial assistance worth ₹476.15 crore has been extended to 47,539 beneficiaries, easing the burden of marriage expenses among economically weaker sections. Further, incentives amounting to ₹43.06 crore have been provided to 1,723 inter-caste couples, promoting social integration.



Economic Empowerment of Youth Through the Rajiv Yuva Vikasam initiative, the State is promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship via bank-linked and non-bank subsidy schemes, alongside skill development and enterprise training programmes aimed at fostering financial independence among youth. **Legal Safeguards and Structural Reforms** The Minister said Telangana has spent ₹31,763.63 crore under the SC Sub Plan (SCSDF Act) since December 2023, with a budget allocation of ₹40,231.62 crore for 2025-26. He also highlighted strict enforcement of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and the Protection of Civil Rights Act, supported by special courts and mobile courts. In a significant reform, the State has enacted the Telangana SC Rationalisation of Reservations Act, 2025, aimed at ensuring equitable distribution of reservation benefits among Dalit communities. **Excellence in Residential Education** The Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TGS-WREIS) continues to deliver strong academic outcomes, with 268 institutions serving over 1.52 lakh students. The system has recorded an SSC pass percentage of 97.71%, along with notable performances in NEET and JEE.

Innovative interventions such as digital learning platforms, coding clubs, and long-term coaching programmes are being actively implemented. **Technology-Driven Governance** Emphasising transparency, the Minister said Telangana is leveraging ERP systems, e-Office platforms, Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT), and geo-tagged inspections to ensure efficient and accountable delivery of welfare schemes. **Inclusive Welfare for Vulnerable Sections - Persons with Disabilities** Under the Cheyutha pension scheme, 4.74 lakh beneficiaries are receiving a monthly pension of ₹4,016, with an annual outlay of ₹2,288 crore. Assistive devices worth ₹50 crore have been distributed to 7,570 persons with disabilities. **Senior Citizens** The State is extending pensions to 16.36 lakh elderly persons, with an annual expenditure of ₹3,958 crore. Measures such as day-care centres, old-age homes, and a dedicated monitoring system for senior citizen welfare have been instituted. **Transgender Welfare** The government has set up a Transgender Welfare Board and established 32 Maitri Clinics to provide accessible healthcare. Skill development programmes and financial assistance are being extended to enable sustainable livelihoods. **Drug Abuse Prevention** The State has reached 2.47 crore people through awareness campaigns and is setting up de-addiction centres in 36 government teaching hospitals, the Minister said. **Call for Stronger Centre-State Synergy** Laxman Kumar stressed the need for enhanced coordination between the Centre and States in advancing social justice. He advocated wider adoption of digital governance tools to improve transparency and speed in welfare delivery. Describing the Chintan Shivir as a "valuable platform for policy convergence and exchange of best practices," the Minister said Telangana views welfare not as expenditure, but as a long-term investment in human development. He reaffirmed the State's commitment to ensuring that "every citizen lives with dignity, every youth gets an opportunity, and every family progresses with confidence."



RPF of NFR Seized Ganja Worth over Rs 29 Lakh

Intensifies Its Drive against Trafficking of Contraband Goods

Maligaon, 26 April, 2026: Continuing its sustained drive against transportation of contraband substances through railways, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has achieved significant success in curbing ganja trafficking within its jurisdiction. During intensive checks and operations conducted from 20th to 22nd April, 2026, RPF teams recovered nearly 60 kg of ganja worth over Rs 29 lakh from different railway stations under NFR jurisdiction. In addition, three persons involved in illegal transportation of ganja were apprehended and handed over to the respective GRP outpost for further necessary action to be undertaken. On 20th April, 2026, RPF personnel of New Jalpaiguri Railway Station recovered substantial quantities of unclaimed ganja in two separate incidents during routine checking and drives. In the first case, approximately 18 kg of ganja worth Rs 9 lakh was recovered, while in another similar operation, approximately 13.80 kg ganja valued approximately Rs 6.90 lakh was seized. In both cases, the recovered contraband was subsequently seized and handed over to GRP outpost of New Jalpaiguri for further course of action. In another major operation on 21st April, 2026, RPF team of Agartala, in coordination with GRP, apprehended two persons at Agartala Railway Station and seized around 21.48 kg ganja worth approximately Rs 10.74 lakh from their possession. The apprehended individuals along with the seized ganja were handed over to GRP/Agartala outpost, for further necessary action. Further continuing the crackdown, on 22nd April, 2026, RPF team of Agartala jointly with GRP apprehended one person at Agartala Railway Station and seized around 6 kg ganja worth approximately Rs 3 lakh. The apprehended person along with the contraband item was handed over to GRP/Agartala outpost. RPF of NFR has been continuously undertaking focused drives, surveillance and intelligence-based operations to prevent misuse of railway premises and trains for trafficking of narcotic substances. These sustained efforts reflect the commitment of NFR towards ensuring a safe and secure railway environment for its passengers, by curbing illegal activities across its jurisdiction.



Chief Minister listens to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' programme in Gurugram

CHANDIGARH, APRIL 26

Haryana Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini on Sunday listened to Prime Minister, Sh. Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' programme in Gurugram. Before the programme, the Chief Minister paid floral tributes to Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya. Industries and Commerce Minister Rao Natar Singh, Mahesh Sharma and other dignitaries are also seen in the picture. government policies and initiatives to citizens and understanding their feedback is also an important aspect of this programme, he said. The Chief Minister said that 'Mann Ki Baat' is a powerful medium of communication between the Prime Minister and the general public. Through this programme, inspiring stories of positive efforts, social innovations, and public participation from across the country are highlighted, which spread positive energy in society and promote a spirit of harmony. The Chief Minister further said that the programme especially inspires youth towards innovation, self-reliance, and nation-building. 'Mann Ki Baat' not only provides direction to ideas but also conveys a message to citizens to move forward with a sense of development, service, and responsibility.

Bengal polls: Kejriwal asks 90 lakh deleted voters to support TMC and defeat BJP

KOLKATA: (APR 26)

AP leader and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday alleged that a BJP-EC conspiracy led to the deletion of 90 lakh voters from the electoral rolls in West Bengal under the SIR exercise, claiming it was part of a larger plan to target citizenship documents. Addressing an election rally in Rasbehari constituency here, Kejriwal also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "insulting" the people of the state by deploying 3.5 lakh security personnel for the Assembly polls.

Mali Defence Minister killed in terrorist attack

BAMAKO

Mali Defence Minister Sadio Camara was killed in an attack on his residence in the town of Kati, near the capital Bamako, carried out by armed terrorist groups, local sources reported.

According to the sources, who requested anonymity, armed terrorist groups launched coordinated attacks on several cities across the country on Saturday, leaving 16 people wounded. Camara's residence in Kati was also targeted, and both the minister and his second wife were killed.

In a statement on Saturday evening, the government of the West African nation said the attacks targeted multiple locations, including the garrison towns of Kati, Sevare, Gao and Kidal, as well as the capital, Bamako, reported Xinhua news agency.

The wounded, including civilians and military personnel, were taken to medical facilities, and the material damage was limited, the statement added.

As of Sunday, the government had not issued an official statement confirming the minister's death. The General Staff of the Malian Armed Forces said on Sunday that search operations against armed terrorist groups were continuing in Kidal, Kati and other parts of the country following Saturday's attacks.

In a separate statement, the army said the attacks were aimed at disrupting the country's defence system and spreading fear and chaos.

It added that alert levels had been raised nationwide, curfews imposed, large-scale patrols intensified, and checkpoints reinforced to enhance surveillance against security threats.

Israel Defence Forces intensifying operations in Southern Lebanon

JERUSALEM

The Israel Defence Forces struck several structures in Southern Lebanon on Sunday and issued evacuation alerts to seven villages in Southern Lebanon.

Military buildings and launchers used to advance terror plots by the terror organisation Hezbollah were struck, stated the IDF in a post on X on Sunday.

The spokesperson for the Israeli Defence Forces, Avi-chay Adrae, issued alerts for Mefdon, Shukin, Yahmar, Ar-noun, Zoter Sharqiya, Zoter Gharbiya, and Kafir Tibnit villages in Lebanon to evacuate.

He said, "In light of the terrorist Hezbollah party violating the ceasefire agreement, the Defence Army is compelled to act against it forcefully." He asked the people located in the area to evacuate their homes and stay at a distance of "no less than 1000 meters outside the specified area." The Israel Defence Forces clarified that "The attacked buildings were used by the terror organisation Hezbollah to advance terror plots against IDF forces and the State of Israel."

Trump calls attacker 'sick', praises agents

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Sunday described the suspect behind the foiled attack at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner as "a sick guy" and said early warnings about the individual may not have reached authorities in time.

"The guy is a sick guy, when you read his manifesto. He hates Christians, that's one thing for sure... and I think his sister or his brother actually was complaining about it. They were even complaining to law enforcement. He was a very troubled guy," Trump said in a Fox News interview.

The President indicated that he had only learned of prior alerts after the incident. "I heard about the London situation, and I wish they would have told us about it a little bit, but... it is what it is," he said.

Trump said the response by the Secret Service and other agencies prevented the attacker from getting close to the venue. "They stopped them cold. And there was no games being played, that I can tell you," he said.

He described the rapid intervention in vivid terms. "He came in running like he was an NFL running back. Frankly,



he was very fast, and they just stopped him cold. And there was no question. He never even came close to getting by the doors or getting through the doors," Trump said.

The President emphasised the multiple layers of protection at the event, noting that even if the suspect had breached the initial perimeter, additional security personnel were in place inside. "There were so many people in there, too, also security. And you have to go through a lot of layers," he said. "They did really a good job. I was very satisfied with it. So were most other people," Trump added.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt earlier

said the incident disrupted what "was supposed to be a fun night" celebrating free speech, alleging the suspect "sought to assassinate the President and kill as many top Trump administration officials as possible."

"I was with President Trump and the First Lady backstage after we were quickly ushered to safety by Secret Service," she said, adding that "this political violence needs to end."

Leavitt also praised law enforcement, highlighting "the brave agent who took a bullet to the chest and immediately moved to neutralise the shooter."

Trump said he hoped the correspondents' dinner could be rescheduled soon despite

est-profile annual gatherings, bringing together journalists, officials and public figures.

Caltex graduate named suspect in DC shooting

The man accused of opening fire at the White House Correspondents' Dinner has emerged as a highly educated but deeply puzzling figure, with a background that has shocked those who knew him.

Cole Thomas Allen, 31, of Torrance, California, has been identified by authorities as the suspect in the shooting that wounded a Secret Service officer and triggered a massive security response.

Allen is a graduate of the California Institute of Technology, one of the most prestigious scientific institutions in the United States. He earned a degree in mechanical engineering in 2017 and later completed a master's degree in computer science in 2025.

He worked as a tutor at a private education company, where he was recognised as "teacher of the month" in December 2024, according to a company post. Allen also pursued interests in software and game development, creating physics-based video games and describing himself as an independent developer.

The White House Correspondents' Association dinner is one of Washington's high-

Israel fighting for rights of Christians: PM Netanyahu

JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that Israel is fighting for the rights of Christians throughout the Middle East through a video message released by the Prime Minister's Office.

Netanyahu made the statement from the Prime Minister's office with a group of soldiers, he called them an exceptional group of young men and women and outstanding soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

He said that it is completely contrary to what is being presented outside, "Not only is Israel fighting for the rights of Christians throughout the Middle East, it has Christian soldiers who are fighting for the defence of Israel and for our Christian brothers throughout the region and beyond."

He also highlighted that he was impressed by the personal stories, commitment, sacrifice and their achievements.

He noted that "Israel is the only country in the Middle East where the Christian community is thriving, growing, and expanding. And it is very successful, with amazing men and women".

Earlier on April 20, PM Netanyahu condemned "in the strongest terms" the incident involving an Israeli sol-



dier damaging a Jesus Christ statue in Lebanon, saying that he was left "stunned and saddened" after learning about the episode.

The Prime Minister's statement came after a picture went viral on social media showing an Israeli soldier smashing a statue of Jesus Christ with a sledgehammer.

Netanyahu said that military authorities are carrying out a criminal probe into the matter and will take disciplinary action against the offender. He added that Israel cherishes and upholds the Jewish values of tolerance and mutual respect between Jews and people of all faiths.

On April 19, the IDF said that the incident is being viewed with great severity and the soldier's conduct is "inconsistent" with the values expected of its armed forces. It mentioned that the IDF's Northern Command is carrying out a probe into the incident and vowed to take appropriate measures against those involved.

South Korean President Lee to host luncheon with minor parties

SEOUL

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung plans to host a luncheon meeting with lawmakers from minor parties and independent members of the National Assembly this week, Cheong Wa Dae said Sunday.

The meeting will take place on Wednesday, with participants to include lawmakers from five non-negotiating parties, including the Rebuilding Korea Party and New Reform Party, as well as independents, according to presidential spokesperson Kang Yu-jung.

The exact time and venue will be announced later, she added.

World leaders condemn WHCD shooting

WASHINGTON

Condemning the shooting at the White House Correspondents' Dinner, world leaders have called it an attack on democratic institutions and urged restraint amid rising political tensions.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he was "shocked by the scenes" at the Washington event and stressed that "any attack on democratic institutions or on the freedom of the press must be condemned in the strongest possible terms." "It is a huge relief that @POTUS, the First Lady and all those attending are safe," he added. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni also expressed solidarity with the United States, describing the incident as a threat to democratic values.

"No political hatred can find space in our democracies," she said, warning that societies must



not allow "fanaticism to poison the places of free debate and information."

In Washington, lawmakers echoed those concerns and called for steps to address political violence.

Representative Ro Khanna urged the creation of a bipartisan national commission, saying: "We should look at social health issues. We should look

at language. But we need to do something to bring the temperature down," as reported by The Wall Street Journal.

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries said Americans must reject violence in political life. "Violence is never the answer, whether it's targeted at the right, the left or the centre," he said, according to The Washington Post.

The shooting, which prompt-

ed the evacuation of President Donald Trump and senior officials, has intensified debate over political rhetoric and security in the United States. The incident also had immediate diplomatic implications.

U.K. officials said they were reviewing security arrangements ahead of King Charles III's planned visit to Washington this week. "The government and the palace take the security of His Majesty very seriously," said Darren Jones, Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister, adding that "extensive discussions" were underway, according to The Wall Street Journal.

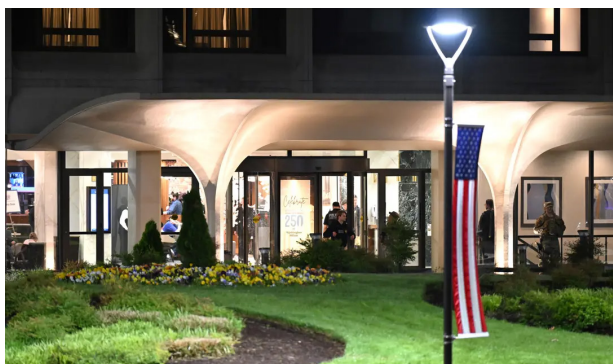
The United Arab Emirates condemned the attack as a "heinous crime" and reaffirmed its solidarity with the United States, stating that it denounces "all such criminal acts, forms of violence, extremism and terrorism," according to Fox News.

Security lapses questioned after shooting

WASHINGTON

Security arrangements at the White House Correspondents' Dinner have come under intense scrutiny a day after a gunman breached outer defences and opened fire at one of Washington's most high-profile events, raising questions over how the suspect accessed the venue with multiple weapons. Former law enforcement officials and eyewitness accounts have pointed to potential gaps in the layered security system at the Washington Hilton, where President Donald Trump, senior administration officials and hundreds of journalists had gathered.

Former D.C. police detective Ted Williams told Fox News that the security appeared "somewhat lax to some degree,



where you had these soft areas." He questioned how the suspect, identified as 31-year-old Cole Allen, was able to bring weapons into the hotel.

"But when you have a guy that, like, Cole Allen here, actually living, actually having a room there... one of the first things that came to mind for me was how did he get

these weapons in that hotel?"

Williams said. Authorities have said Allen was a registered guest at the hotel and had checked in before the event, suggesting he may have brought the weapons in ahead of time. He later rushed a Secret Service checkpoint armed with a shotgun, handgun and knives before opening fire.

Despite the breach, officials defended the overall response and insisted that the core security perimeter functioned as intended.

Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said the suspect did not reach the ballroom where top officials were present and praised the rapid response. "The system worked. All of us were safe. President Trump was safe," he said in interviews cited by The Washington Post and The New York Times.

Blanche emphasised that the concentration of security around the inner perimeter prevented a far more serious outcome. "The fact that the vice president and other leadership were there... is why we had such a robust security surrounding the place," he said.

However, critics argued that

vulnerabilities existed beyond the immediate security ring.

Reports from Fox News and NBC News indicated that while the ballroom area had tight controls, access to other parts of the hotel remained less restricted. The Washington Hilton typically remains open to regular guests during the annual dinner, creating a complex security environment.

Williams also highlighted crowd density as a concern. "There were too many people in that ballroom at any one given time," he said, warning that the situation could have turned "very catastrophic" if the attacker had penetrated deeper into the venue. Law enforcement officials said the suspect was stopped near the outer security perimeter and did not enter the main hall.

'Before war mediation, Pakistan needs to prioritise internal stabilisation'

ISLAMABAD

For Islamabad, it would be wiser to "redirect its diplomatic initiatives toward internal stabilisation rather than focusing on mediating distant conflicts", an opinion piece in the local media said.

The neighbouring country has attempted to mediate between the US and Iran amid the West Asia conflict.

In the middle of the war in the Middle East, Pakistan and China had announced a Five-Point Initiative for restoring peace and stability in the Gulf and the wider Middle East in March, contributing columnist Samee Ullah wrote in the Pakistan Observer.

The announcement reflected a joint commitment to dialogue, cooperation and a more secure future for the region, he noted.

The columnist said that among such a "diplomatic ambition", "Pakistan must carefully balance its longstanding partnerships with countries like China and Iran, while at the same time maintaining a measured and constructive posture toward other key players".

Thrusting itself forward as a mediator, Islamabad also hosted quadrilateral talks with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey.

Samee Ullah, who is based in Islamabad, highlighted that Pakistan's domestic Shia mi-

nority shared border vulnerabilities and deep economic ties via the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which brings the country to a crossroads to balance between key parties.

"For China, Pakistan's efforts seem like a practical step linked to the Belt and Road Initiative, focusing on reopening the Strait of Hormuz to prevent disruptions in energy supplies," the columnist wrote.

He cautioned that if Pakistan gives in to much of the US's demands, it will betray China's vision of a multipolar order where America retreats. Moreover, he opined that Iran's push for Beijing as a guarantor may further sideline Pakistan. What may force the country



into "awkward compromises" is its recent mutual defence pact with Saudi Arabia, which,

along with other Gulf nations, demands the reopening of the crucial Strait of Hormuz.

The columnist contends in the Pakistan Observer piece that in the past, the Islamic na-

tion has been a US ally against the Soviets in Afghanistan, but post the 9/11 attacks, it turned towards China amid CPEC's \$62 billion infusion and 80 per cent arms dependency, while maintaining Iran ties despite sectarian risks.

"Efforts to maintain a non-aligned or 'no camps' approach have become increasingly difficult, especially as renewed engagement with the United States under President (Donald) Trump highlights competing pressures from both Iran and China," Samee Ullah mentioned.

In its mediation attempt, the real test for Pakistan lies in maintaining "strict diplomatic balance".

Calling Pakistan's economy "fragile", he said that remittances from Gulf workers are under threat from regional instability.

According to Samee Ullah, militancy and political polarisation are part of the nation's internal security challenges, and Pakistan should spend its resources in strengthening its "domestic resilience".

Further, the columnist asserted that prioritising counterterrorism reforms, economic recovery through IMF-backed measures and infrastructural development would result in substantial gains on the external front and enhance Pakistan's credibility in peace initiatives.



SOCIAL

SOCIAL Launches 'Voices from the Hood'

A Cultural Report Decoding the Pulse of Urban Youth

HYDERABAD APRIL 26, 2026

SOCIAL, one of India's most influential youth culture hubs, has launched "Voices from the Hood," a first-of-its-kind cultural report capturing the attitudes, lifestyles, and aspirations shaping young India today. Based on insights gathered from over 10,000 respondents across multiple Indian cities, the report offers a data-backed look at how young Indians

are navigating social life, digital culture, entertainment, travel, relationships, and career aspirations in a rapidly evolving cultural landscape. The findings point to a generation that is experience-driven, digitally connected, and culturally fluid balancing ambition with lifestyle, tradition with modernity, and online identity with real-world community. The report highlights how shared experiences, social spaces, and digital

platforms continue to shape the everyday lives of young Indians. For over a decade, SOCIAL has functioned as a melting pot for communities, creators, students, professionals, and entrepreneurs, offering a front-row seat to the evolving behaviours and conversations shaping urban youth culture. With Voices from the Hood, the brand extends this role by documenting the voices, aspirations, and habits of India's next generation.

"At SOCIAL, we've always believed that culture is shaped in the spaces where people come together to connect, collaborate and celebrate," said Riyaz Amlani, Founder & Managing Director, Impresario Entertainment & Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. "Voices from the Hood is our attempt to capture the spirit of young India, their ambitions, their anxieties, their everyday rituals and the cultural moments that define this generation."

"Voices from the Hood is rooted in something very simple: listening to young India at scale. What emerges is a generation that is deeply expressive, highly aware and constantly shaping culture through everyday choices; from how they socialise and spend, to what they aspire to do and how they discover the world. For us, the report is both a cultural lens and a strategic tool for staying meaningfully connected to the realities of youth today," said, Divya Aggarwal, Chief Growth Officer, Impresario Entertainment & Hospitality Pvt. Ltd.

Speaking about the visual language and design of the report, Santanu Hazarika said, "Building on SOCIAL's attempt to document the voice of young India, I wanted this report to feel like a cultural artifact, almost like a modern-day consumer bible. Something that captures the chaos, ambition and contradictions that define youth today, not just through data, but through a living visual language. The design is intentionally layered, each page feels like a fragment of a generation, blending energy, symbolism and nostalgia in a way that mirrors how young India experiences the world today. It's a form of controlled chaos, where every visual invites interaction, reflection and a deeper connection with the culture it represents."

Key Insights from Voices from the Hood

Lifestyle & Entertainment For young India, leisure is no longer passive, it is participatory, social and deeply digital. Entertainment today spans

multiple worlds simultaneously: streaming platforms, social media, gaming ecosystems, live experiences and travel. Youth move fluidly between screens and shared experiences, balancing digital entertainment with real-world recreation.

Highlights

- Movies remain the most popular recreational outing at 65%, making cinema the top activity outside cafés, bars or restaurants.
- Adventure and activity-based outings follow closely at 63%, reflecting the growing appeal of experiences such as trekking, paintball and go-karting among late Gen Z and early Millennials.
- Cultural experiences continue to attract youth audiences, with stand-up comedy (26%) and theatre (21%) emerging as popular urban activities.
- Live entertainment is firmly embedded in youth culture: 17% attend gigs or concerts weekly, while 16% attend monthly, showing sustained engagement with music and live performance scenes.
- Mobile behaviour underpins daily routines, with 35% spending 1-3 hours on apps each day and 28% spending 3-5 hours, highlighting how digital platforms shape communication, entertainment and discovery.
- Streaming platforms dominate home entertainment, with Netflix leading subscriptions at 77%, followed by Amazon Prime Video (54%) and Ji-Otstar (42%).
- Travel preferences reflect a shift toward experience-driven exploration, with 55% preferring adventure-based travel, followed by relaxation-focused trips at 37%. Together, these patterns show a generation that sees entertainment as both identity and experience, where digital culture and real-world exploration coexist.

Aspirations & Beliefs

Young India is both ambitious and reflective; pursuing financial independence while negotiating identity, relationships and values. The report highlights a generation that places strong emphasis on career success while simultaneously redefining traditional markers of adulthood such as marriage, cultural belonging and personal fulfilment.

Highlights

- Cultural roots remain deeply embedded in youth identity, with 46% saying traditions are very important to their lifestyle and values.
- At the same time, perspectives on relationships are evolving: 43% favour marriage, while 31% express openness to modern relationship structures.
- Youth ambition remains strong, with 67% saying financial success is very important and for 15% somewhat important in their lives.
- When asked about the biggest challenges facing their generation, respondents identified education (28%), mental health (26%) and employment opportunities (24%) as the most pressing concerns.
- Entrepreneurship continues to attract youth imagination, with 42% naming business ownership as their dream career path.
- Dating is a regular part of youth life, with 19% saying they go on dates thrice a week and 21% saying they do so once or twice a week. These insights reflect a generation that is goal-driven yet introspective, balancing ambition with evolving social values.

Dining

Dining out has evolved into a core social ritual for young consumers. Restaurants today function as gathering spaces where youth

celebrate milestones, connect with friends and unwind from daily routines. Food culture is deeply tied to social identity, discovery and shared experiences.

Highlights

- Dining out is a frequent activity, with 28% going out for a meal once or twice a week and 21% dining out three to four times weekly.
- 19% report eating out almost daily, particularly among urban professionals and students in metro cities.
- Spending patterns reflect a balance between accessibility and indulgence, with ₹1,000-₹2,000 emerging as the most common dining-out budget (34%).
- Discovery of new restaurants increasingly happens online: word of mouth leads at 53%, followed by social media ads (36%) and influencers (25%).
- Food discovery apps play a central role, with Zomato/ District used by 54% of respondents. These trends show that for youth today, restaurants function as modern social living rooms, where food, friends and experiences converge.

Nightlife

Nightlife for young Indians is increasingly about experiences, music and social energy rather than just drinking. Going out after hours has become a space for self-expression, community and entertainment, shaped by digital discovery and evolving drinking preferences.

Highlights

- 56% say they enjoy drinking alcohol when they go out partying, while 18% drink occasionally, showing flexible drinking behaviour across audiences.
- 26% report not drinking alcohol, highlighting the diversity of nightlife preferences.

- Frequency of nightlife engagement remains steady, with 23% going out once or twice a week for parties or social outings.
- Night-out spending reflects mainstream affordability, with ₹1,000-₹2,000 emerging as the most common spend bracket (33%).
- Discovery of nightlife experiences is largely digital, led by social media (34%), influencers (19%) and aggregator platforms (16%).
- Premium alcohol preferences are rising, with 50% choosing premium labels, signalling a shift toward quality-driven consumption. Nightlife today reflects community and cultural participation, where experiences, music and social interaction drive engagement.

Delivery

Food delivery has become a routine lifestyle behaviour driven by convenience, variety and digital access.

Highlights

- Delivery platforms are deeply embedded in youth consumption patterns.
- Zomato leads usage at 44%, followed by Swiggy at 25%, while 27% of users actively switch between both platforms.
- Delivery behaviour is often driven by convenience, variety and time constraints rather than occasional indulgence. Beyond statistics, Voices from the Hood serves as a cultural snapshot of contemporary youth capturing their ambitions, anxieties, digital lives, and the social spaces where culture unfolds. As India's youth population continues to shape cultural and economic trends, the report aims to provide brands, creators, and cultural observers with a deeper understanding of what motivates and inspires this generation.

ABOUT SOCIAL

SOCIAL is a path-breaking urban hangout that's designed to take you offline while still keeping you connected. From an all-day café serv-

ing great food, coffee, and cocktails, SOCIAL transforms from this creatively charged collaborative space into a high-energy bar when work hours end, striking the perfect balance between work x play. Each

outpost is a representation of the neighbourhood it resides in, from the pin code to the people. It's a second home, workplace, and hangout, all wrapped up in one mind-blowing experience.

ABOUT IMPRESARIO ENTERTAINMENT & HOSPITALITY PVT. LTD.

Impresario Entertainment & Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. (Impresario) was founded in 2001 with its maiden venture Mocha -

Coffees and Conversations. Today, Impresario boasts a network of 60+ restaurants across 20+ Indian cities. Alongside SOCIAL, its umbrella brands include scaled brands such as antiSOCIAL, Smoke House Deli, and Mocha, as well as boutique one-

offs such as Bandra Born, Slink & Bardot, BANG and Prithvi Café. The company's core strength lies in understanding the changing dining habits of young India and delivering quality experiences tailored to delight its patrons.

Digital fraud is getting smarter as AI fuels more complex scams, but are banks ready to keep your money safe in the age of instant payments?

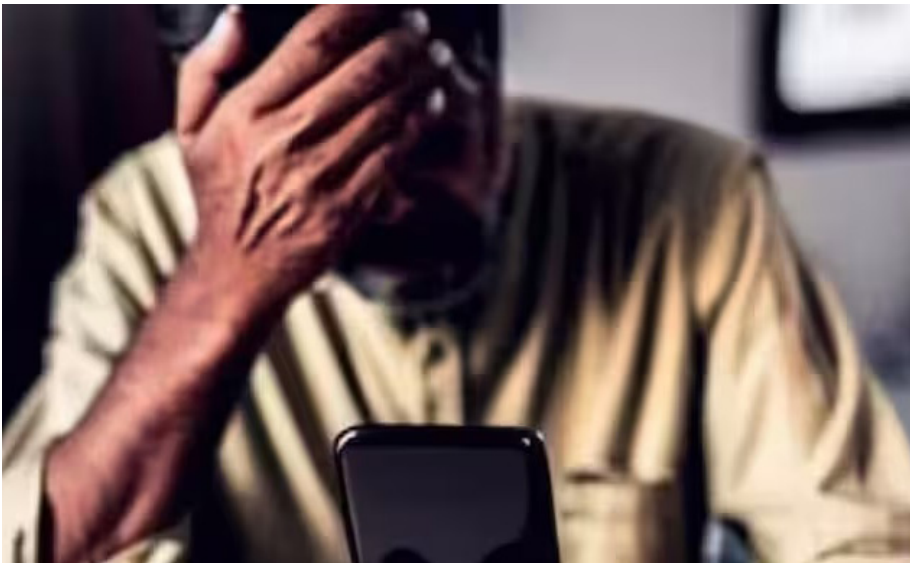
As AI makes scams more sophisticated, banks face growing pressure to keep your money safe in the age of instant payments. In January, a 76-year-old woman in Delhi was allegedly cheated of Rs 1.64 crore in a digital fraud case after being drawn into what investigators described as a "digital arrest" scam. In April, an elderly man in Ahmedabad allegedly lost Rs 1.43 crore to callers posing as Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) officials. Across the country, thousands of smaller cases unfold more quietly. A fake UPI collect request. A bogus customer-care number. A phishing link that looks genuine. An OTP shared in panic. Different methods,

different victims, same anxiety. That brings us to the central question of this story: if scams are becoming more sophisticated, are banks doing enough to keep your money safe? It is no longer just a question asked by worried customers. Earlier this year, the Supreme Court sharply questioned banks over digital fraud cases, asking why suspicious transactions were not being flagged quickly enough and why vulnerable customers were being left exposed after losing savings. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has now separately raised AI-linked cyber risks with bank chiefs. If you missed that development, we explained why the finance minister's warning matters in our earlier report. When judges, policymakers and customers all begin asking versions of the same question, it usually means the issue has become difficult to ignore.

FRAUD IS CHANGING, NOT DISAPPEARING

While reporting on digital fraud trends in recent weeks, one pattern kept appearing in the numbers. We also recently examined how India's digital boom is being accompanied by fraud that is becoming harder to detect.

According to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, bank frauds in India rose to Rs 36,014 crore in 2024-25, nearly three times the previous year, even as the number of reported cases fell. Separately, data tabled in Parliament showed around 24 lakh digital fraud cases involving losses of more than Rs 4,200 crore in the first ten months of 2025. These figures capture different parts of the same ecosystem. One reflects higher-value banking fraud. The other captures retail scams affecting ordinary users. Taken together, they suggest that fraud is not simply rising or falling. It is evolving. "The RBI's own data makes the pattern visible. Fewer incidents, far greater damage. This is not less fraud. It is smarter fraud," Sandesh Gs, CTO at Bureau, told IndiaToday.in while discussing findings from the India Fraud Report 2026. That helps explain why many customers feel scams are getting harder to spot.



Digital fraud is rising. Are banks doing enough to keep your money safe?

FASTER PAYMENTS, MORE RISKS

India's banking transformation over the past decade has been dramatic. UPI now processes billions of transactions each month. Account opening is quicker. Transfers happen instantly. Bills are paid in seconds. Loans can be approved in minutes. For customers, that has meant convenience at an enormous scale. But speed changes risk too. If money can move instantly, fraudulent money can move instantly. If onboarding becomes frictionless, fake identities may try to enter faster. If banking shifts to smartphones, fraudsters know exactly where to follow. That does not mean banks ignored



security. Most large lenders have invested steadily in fraud monitoring, stronger authentication, analytics, cybersecurity teams and customer alerts. The challenge is that fraud tactics have evolved alongside banking systems.

MANY SHADES OF DIGITAL FRAUD

Beenu Arora, Co-founder and CEO of Cyble, an AI-powered cybersecurity and threat intelligence company, said banks remain attractive targets because they are "data-heavy digital platforms".

He added that cyberattacks are no longer "manual or sporadic", but increasingly "automated, scalable and more difficult to detect". That sounds technical, but many customers recognise the real-world version. The message looks cleaner. The fake caller sounds calmer. The request feels personalised. The timing feels believable.

Arora warned that deepfakes can replicate voices or video images of senior executives to authorise fraudulent transactions or manipulate employees. Generative AI can create hyper-personalised phishing messages. Synthetic identities can combine real and fake information to bypass checks and obtain loans. While some of these threats sound corporate or high-level, the impact often reaches ordinary users through scams, fake payment requests and account takeovers.

A 2025 survey by LocalCircles found that one in five UPI users in India had experienced fraud at least once. That suggests scams are no longer fringe risks affecting only careless users. They are now part of mainstream digital life.

WHERE BANKS MAY BE PLAYING CATCH UP

One recurring concern from experts is that many systems

still respond after the money has moved. "For most institutions, the honest answer is no," Sandesh said, when asked whether fraud detection had fully kept pace with digital growth. According to Bureau's estimates, around Rs 1,120 crore in losses could have been prevented using systems that already exist.

That concern also echoed in the Supreme Court's remarks, when it questioned why suspicious transactions cannot be suspended quickly and alerts sent immediately when unusual activity is detected.

Those observations go to the heart of the modern banking dilemma.

Customers expect seamless payments. They also expect protection when something clearly looks wrong.

Sometimes those two expectations collide.

THE AI CHALLENGE

Dr. Kanishk Agarwal, Chief Technology Officer at Judge Group, described AI as "a new force multiplier for financial crime". He said the difference lies not only in sophistication, but in the velocity and scale of attacks.

In practice, that can mean more convincing scam calls, cleaner phishing messages, faster identity fraud and repeated automated attempts to test systems for weakness.

He also said banks have long relied on one-time PINs, voice authentication and behavioural analytics. Those tools still matter, but may lose effectiveness if not upgraded for an AI-driven fraud environment.

If you want the deeper AI

angle, we unpacked the Myths debate and what it could mean for Indian banks in a separate analysis.

ROAD AHEAD FOR BANKS

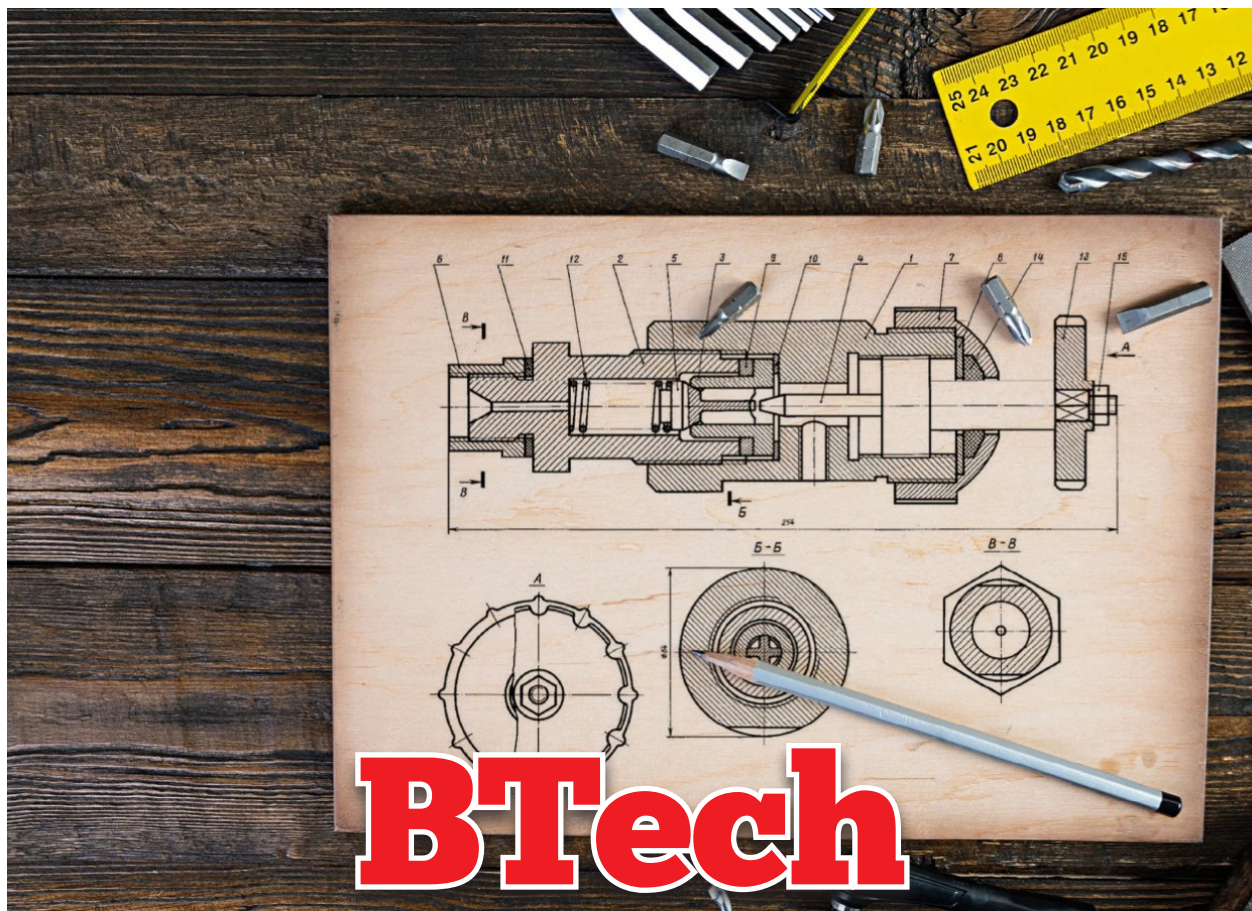
Banks are likely to spend more on real-time fraud detection, stronger identity checks, quicker complaint handling and better customer awareness. Some experts also support adding extra friction to certain risky transactions if it creates a short window to detect suspicious activity.

That debate has now reached the RBI as well. Earlier this month, the central bank released a discussion paper proposing a one-hour cooling-off period for certain digital transfers above Rs 10,000, giving customers extra time to pause or review suspicious payments before funds move irrevocably.

While that may feel inconvenient in a world where we have become so used to instant payments, convenience means little when there is a higher risk of fraud. To sum up, India's banks are stronger than they were a decade ago. Payments are faster, fraud controls are sharper, and digital access has expanded dramatically.

The challenge, however, is that fraud has evolved just as fast. Scams are more convincing, attacks are more targeted, and stolen money can move before victims realise what has happened.

That is why the real test for lenders may no longer be how quickly they move money, but how quickly they can recognise when it should not move at all.



BTech Mechatronics

The Ultimate Versatile Degree of 2026

In the rapidly evolving landscape of the 21st century, the traditional boundaries between engineering disciplines are dissolving. The modern world no longer operates on purely

mechanical gears or isolated electronic circuits; instead, it thrives on the seamless integration of both. This convergence has given birth to one of the most dynamic and future-forward fields of

study: B.Tech in Mechatronics Engineering. As India pivots toward "Industry 4.0" and "Make in India" initiatives, Mechatronics has emerged as the backbone of the nation's technological

transformation. It is the invisible hand behind everything from the robotic arms in automobile factories to the sophisticated drones monitoring agricultural yields.

What is B.Tech Mechatronics?

At its core, Mechatronics is a multidisciplinary branch of engineering that blends Mechanical Engineering, Electronics, Computer Science, and Control Systems. If Mechanical engineering is the "body" of a machine and Electronics is its "nervous system," then Computer Science is its "brain." Mechatronics is the art of harmonizing these elements to create "smart" systems. The four-year undergraduate program (B.Tech) is designed to produce engineers who don't just understand how a motor turns, but how to program a microprocessor to control that motor based on real-time data from an infrared sensor.

The Versatile Uses of Mechatronics

The application of Mechatronics is so pervasive that it is often taken for granted. Its uses span across several critical sectors: Industrial Automation & Robotics: This is perhaps the most visible use. Mechatronics engineers design and maintain robotic systems that perform high-precision tasks—welding, painting, and assembly—far more efficiently than human hands.

Automotive Industry: Modern cars are "computers on wheels." From Anti-lock Braking Systems (ABS) and cruise control to the self-driving algorithms in Teslas and high-end EVs, Mechatronics is the driving force. Healthcare and

Bio-Mechatronics: This includes the development of robotic surgical assistants (like the Da Vinci system), advanced prosthetic limbs that respond to neural signals, and automated diagnostic equipment.

Consumer Electronics: Your washing machine, dishwasher, and even the autofocus mechanism in your smartphone camera are mechatronic systems.

Aerospace and Defense: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), missile guidance systems, and satellite positioning mechanisms rely heavily on the integration of mechanical precision and electronic control.

Curriculum and Skill Development

A student pursuing B.Tech Mechatronics doesn't just sit in a classroom; they spend a significant amount of time in "mechatronics kits" labs. The course offering typically covers:

Mechanical Domain: Engineering Mechanics, Thermodynamics, Kinematics of Machinery, and Fluid Power Systems. **Electronics Domain:** Analog and Digital Electronics, Microprocessors, and Microcontrollers.

Computation & Control: Programming in C++/Python, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, and Signal Processing.

The Bridge: Sensors and Actuators, PLC and SCADA, and Computer-Aided Design (CAD). **Job Opportunities:** Where Do Mechatronics Engineers Work? The beauty of a Mechatronics degree is its flexibility. Graduates are not pigeonholed into a single industry. They are hired as:

Robotics Engineers: Designing and testing robots for various applications.

Automation Engineers: Streamlining manufacturing processes for companies like Tata Motors, Maruti Suzuki, or Bosch.

Control System Engineers: Working on the stability and behavior of dynamic systems.

Data Scientists (Manufacturing): Using AI to predict machinery failure (Predictive Maintenance).

R&D Scientists: Working in defense labs like DRDO or space agencies like ISRO.

Key Recruiters in India:

Automotive Giants: Mahindra & Mahindra, Hero MotoCorp, Hyundai.

Tech & Electronics: Siemens, ABB, Schneider Electric, General Electric (GE).

Startups: GreyOrange (Robotics), Tonbo Imaging, and various EV startups like Ather Energy and Ola Electric.

Future Prospects in India (2026 and Beyond)

The future of Mechatronics in India looks exceptionally bright. As we move further into the decade, three major trends are set to skyrocket the demand for these engineers:

1. The EV Revolution

India's aggressive push toward Electric Vehicles (EVs) requires a workforce that understands battery management systems, electric drivetrains, and electronic sensors—the very core of the Mechatronics curriculum.

2. Industry 4.0

Factories in India are transitioning

to "Smart Factories" where machines communicate with each other via the Internet of Things (IoT). Mechatronics engineers are the architects of this interconnectedness.

3. Agri-Tech and Healthcare

With the rise of drone-based farming and tele-surgery in urban centers, the demand for precision-controlled mechanical devices is no longer a luxury but a necessity for national growth.

4. Space Exploration

With ISRO's expanding roadmap—including Gaganyaan and Moon-to-Mars missions—the need for engineers who can build robust, autonomous systems for extreme environments is at an all-time high. B.Tech Mechatronics is more than just a degree; it is a gateway to the "Smart Age." For a student in India who possesses a curiosity for how things move and a passion for the digital world, this course offers a perfect blend of both. While it is a challenging field that requires a constant update of skills, the rewards—both intellectual and financial—are immense. In the battle of man vs. machine, the Mechatronics engineer is the one who ensures they work together for the progress of humanity.



Polyworking Era..

Why One Job is No Longer Enough

The traditional "nine-to-five" monolith is crumbling, replaced by a more fluid, diversified approach to professional life known as polyworking. For decades, the gold standard of career success was linear: climb the ladder within a single organization, accumulate years of service, and retire with a pension. However, in 2026, the workforce is witnessing a seismic shift toward "fractional" careers. This model allows professionals to split their time, energy, and expertise across multiple organizations simultaneously, functioning not as temporary "gigs" but as high-level, integrated contributors to various teams. The rise of polyworking is a response to both a volatile global economy and a profound desire for individual autonomy.

working prevents the stagnation often found in long-term single-employer roles. By working across diverse industries, fractional professionals are constantly exposed to new problems, tools, and cultures, which drastically accelerates their "skill-stacking" and cross-pollination of ideas.

For companies, the fractional model is equally transformative. Small to medium-sized enterprises can now access top-tier talent that they might not have the budget to hire on a full-time, permanent basis. They get the strategic "brainpower" of a veteran leader for a fraction of the cost, paying only for the impact and results rather than for desk time. This synergy is particularly potent in the tech and sustainability sectors, where specialized knowledge is in high demand but

often required only for specific strategic phases.

However, the polyworking lifestyle is not without its challenges. It demands an extraordinary level of self-discipline, time management, and "context-switching"—the ability to jump from a high-level board meeting for one client to a granular product review for another within the span of an hour. The burden of administrative tasks, such as managing multiple tax filings and health insurance, also shifts to the individual. Yet, for the modern worker, the trade-off is often worth it. Polyworking offers a sense of "portfolio living" where work is no longer an all-encompassing identity, but a series of engaging, high-impact projects.

As we look toward the future of the global labor market, the fractional career represents the ultimate evolution of the knowledge economy. It represents a shift from "renting out time" to "selling outcomes." By decoupling the worker from the workplace, polyworking empowers professionals to design lives that prioritize variety, resilience, and true intellectual freedom. The "career ladder" has officially been replaced by a "career web," where the strength of the professional lies in the breadth of their connections and the diversity of their contributions.

At the heart of this movement is the fractional executive—experts in finance, marketing, or technology who provide their services to three or four startups at once rather than tethering themselves to a single entity. For the professional, this offers a unique form of job security. In an era where industry-specific layoffs can happen overnight, having multiple income streams serves as a financial hedge; if one sector falters, the others remain. Moreover, poly-



The Doom Jobbing Epidemic

Why India's Youth are Applying More and Learning Less

In the high-pressure corridors of India's hyper-competitive labor market, a new psychological and professional phenomenon has taken root among Gen Z and early-career professionals: "Doom Jobbing." Much like its digital predecessor, doom scrolling, it is a compulsive, anxiety-driven habit. However, instead of refreshing social media feeds for catastrophic news, India's youth are refreshing job portals, frantically clicking "Easy Apply" on hundreds of roles for which they may not be qualified, and obsessively tracking the layoff announcements of strangers. While it mimics the appearance of productivity, it is quietly eroding the very job readiness required to survive in the volatile economy of 2026.

The Illusion of Progress and the "Easy Apply" Trap

Doom jobbing is defined by a preference for quantity over quality, fueled by the fear of being left behind and constant reports of a "job identity crisis," many young Indians are now sending out 50 to 100 applications a day. Research indicates that while a staggering 72% of Indian professionals are actively applying, over 80% feel fundamentally unprepared for the techni-

cal requirements of the roles they seek. This creates a destructive "doom loop." The job seeker applies randomly to any open listing, receives a generic automated rejection—or worse, total silence from an AI-filtered Applicant Tracking System (ATS)—and experiences a surge of inadequacy. They respond to this rejection not by pausing to analyze their fit, but by doubling down on the volume of applications. This cycle consumes the precious hours that should be spent on skill-building, which remains the only true currency of the modern workforce.

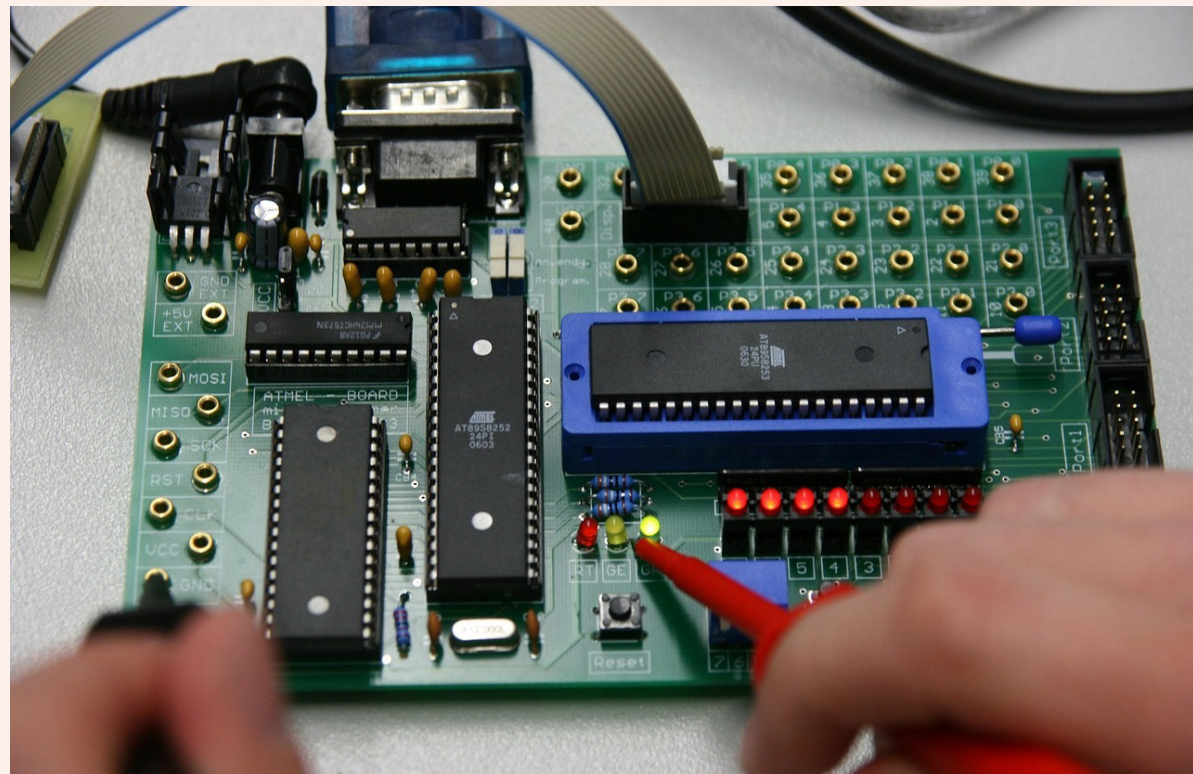
The Readiness Gap: Sharpening the Wrong Spear

The true cost of doom jobbing is the widening "readiness gap." In an era where nearly half of daily professional tasks in India now involve sophisticated AI collaboration, "readiness" has shifted from simply possessing a degree to having demonstrable, hands-on expertise. Doom jobbers are often so preoccupied with "hunting" that they stop "sharpening the spear." Skill Stagnation: Every hour spent on a repetitive, thoughtless application is an hour lost from acquiring micro-credentials or upskilling in high-demand sectors like AI ethics, cybersecurity, or advanced data an-

alytics. The Erasure of Personal Branding: By mass-applying, candidates fail to tailor their portfolios. In 2026, recruiters are increasingly ignoring resumes in favor of "demonstrable work samples." A doom jobber possesses a broad, shallow presence that lacks the specificity needed to trigger a human recruiter's interest. The Psychological Toll: The constant barrage of rejection leads to "reactive" rather than "strategic" thinking. When a legitimate interview opportunity finally arises, the candidate is often too mentally exhausted or cynical to perform effectively, inadvertently confirming their own fears of inadequacy.

Breaking the Cycle: From Volume to Intent

To reclaim job readiness, the Indian youth must pivot from a "volume-based" search to an "intent-based" strategy. This requires setting strict boundaries: limiting job search time to two hours a day, focusing on five high-quality, tailored applications per week, and dedicating the majority of their energy to "future-fit" skills. In a market defined by rapid disruption and AI integration, the winner isn't the one who clicks the most buttons—it's the one who stays prepared for the one right opportunity.





Sunil Narine, Rinku Singh help KKR clinch Super Over win over LSG

LUCKNOW

Sunil Narine's double strike and Rinku Singh's decisive boundary helped Kolkata Knight Riders clinch a dramatic Super Over victory against Lucknow Super Giants and get off the bottom spot in the points table in a tightly contested clash in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the BRSABV Ekana Stadium in Lucknow on Sunday.

After both teams were tied at 155, the 16th such instance in the tournament's history, thanks to a last-ball six from Mohammed Shami, it paved the way for the first Super Over of the ongoing season to take place. LSG sent out Nicholas Pooran and Aiden Markram, followed by Rishabh Pant. Narine was entrusted with the ball and immediately swung the contest in KKR's favour.

Pooran was bowled on the first delivery while attempting a slog sweep. After Pant managed a single, Markram fell to a brilliant relay catch involving Rovman Powell and Rinku Singh near the boundary rope, meaning LSG could make only one run in their Super Over innings – the lowest score in the one-over shootout in an IPL game.

In reply, KKR relied on Rinku and Powell to finish the job. Prince Yadav was given the responsibility of defending four runs, as Mohsin Khan, who had taken a five-for earlier, was subbed out. As soon as Prince missed the yorker, Rinku opened the bat face and sliced through the square boundary on the off-side, and the boundary sealed victory for KKR off the very first ball of their chase.

The finish capped a remarkable night for Rinku, who earlier smashed four sixes in the final over to take LSG past 150 by hitting his highest T20 score of 83 not out off 50 balls, and took four catches in the outfield in regular game time. With Narine delivering with precision under



pressure, Rinku's composure and power ensured KKR got their second win of the season.

Previously, things hadn't gone right for KKR as Mohsin ran through the line-up to pick 5-23, the best figures in this season. Rinku then stepped up to lift KKR out of trouble through his unconquered 51-ball knock laced with seven fours and five sixes at a strike-rate of 162.75, including hitting Digvesh Rathi for 26 runs in the final over.

KKR's innings began shakily as Tim Seifert chipped to cover off Mohsin, who then removed Ajinkya Rahane for 10 after miscuing to mid-on. Angkrish Raghuvanshi was controversially adjudged out for obstructing the field on

nine, while Rovman Powell departed soon after – gloving behind off Mohsin – to leave KKR at 31/4 in 6.1 overs. Cameron Green attempted a counterattack, striking three sixes in his 21-ball 34, but Mohsin's relentless spell accounted for him as well. The left-arm pacer completed a five-wicket haul by dismissing Anukul Roy for a golden duck, as KKR looked destined for a below-par score.

Rinku, however, held firm and stitched brief stands of 20 and 62 not out with Ramandeep Singh and Sunil Narine. He reached his fifty off 42 balls with a drive off Mohammed Shami in the 19th over. His acceleration came late but decisive. After surviving a review in the final over, he launched Rathi for four consecutive

sixes – over long-on, deep extra cover, long-on again, and cow corner – in a stunning display of power hitting.

That sequence propelled KKR to crossing the 150-run mark, something which seemed improbable when the side was seven down, as Rinku's late surge gave the three-time champions a fighting chance to win the game.

Chasing 156, LSG lost Mitchell Marsh early to Vaibhav Arora in the powerplay, but Rishabh Pant and Aiden Markram steadied the innings with a 57-run stand. Markram's fluent 31 ended with him caught by long-off, while Pant never kicked into taking more risks until he was dismissed for 42 by Sunil Narine after a successful review.



Whatever performance I've had should convert into a win: Mohsin Khan

LUCKNOW

After picking a brilliant 5-23 for Lucknow Super Giants in their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 clash against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), left-arm pacer Mohsin Khan said his only priority was to ensure his performances are converted into a victory for the side.

Mohsin's five-for, the best bowling figures in IPL 2026, helped LSG keep KKR to 155/7. "Right now, I'm only thinking that the team should win first. Whatever performance I've had should convert into a win, and our team should win. We will try to bat well too - winning is very important for us," Mohsin said to broadcasters after his spell at the BRSABV Ekana Stadium.

He also confirmed that he was fully fit and credited his off-season work with trainer Soham Desai for keeping him in shape. "I'm absolutely fine, fully fit. I've worked really hard, especially in the off-season with our trainer, Soham bhai. My body feels good, and everything is going well," he said. Mohsin explained how he executed the team's plans, particularly against individual batters, and how variations on the slow surface brought him success. "Whatever we discussed with Rishabh bhai and the plans we made for each batsman, I tried to follow exactly that."

"I read the pitch, and I felt that if I bowled a slower ball, it would hold up a bit. I sensed a shot was coming, so I changed the pace, and that got me the wicket. I'm focusing on my body, just trying to stay fit and healthy and keep playing matches. That's all," he said. Despite LSG conceding 55 runs in overs 17-20, Mohsin remained confident about the team's chances of winning the game. "We bowled good overs. Maybe a few runs came in the last one or two overs."

IPL 2026

MS Dhoni 'keen' but another calf setback delays comeback



CHENNAI: Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming has indicated that MS Dhoni's return to the playing XI for the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 has been further delayed after the veteran wicketkeeper-batter suffered another setback in his recovery from a calf injury. Dhoni, who was initially expected to miss only the opening two weeks of IPL 2026, has now been sidelined for nearly a month, with CSK already eight matches into their campaign without their talismanic former captain featuring even once.

TEST CRICKET

Tanzid earn maiden call-up in Bangladesh announce squad



DHAKA: Bangladesh have unveiled a 15-member squad for the opening Test against Pakistan, with uncapped batters Tanzid Tamim and Amite Hasan earning maiden call-ups in the longest format as the selectors continue to invest in emerging red-ball talent. Najmul Hossain Shanto will continue to lead the side, with all-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz appointed as his deputy as Bangladesh aim to begin the home series on a strong note. The two-match series begins on May 8 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur, before moving to Sylhet for the second Test from May 16.

Madrid Open: Sinner cruises into fourth round, extends Masters 1000 streak

MADRID

World No. 1 Jannik Sinner delivered another clinical performance to move into the fourth round of the Madrid Open ATP Masters 1000 event, brushing aside Denmark's Elmer Moller in straight sets on Sunday.

Taking on the 22-year-old for the first time, Sinner showed his class and composure in a 6-2, 6-3 victory that lasted just 77 minutes at the Manolo Santana Stadium. The result extended his remarkable winning run in ATP Masters 1000 events to 24 matches, placing him among the longest streaks recorded in the series.

Moller, ranked No. 169 and playing his maiden match against a top-10 opponent, found himself under immediate pressure as Sinner dictated play from the outset. After a brief exchange of games early in the first set, the Italian surged ahead by reeling off four consecutive games. Although Moller managed to break serve once, Sinner responded swiftly to wrap up the opener. The Dane showed resilience despite requiring a medical timeout late in the first set due to



an abdominal concern, and he raised his level in the second set, particularly with his backhand. However, a pair of double faults at a crucial stage handed Sinner the decisive break, which the top seed converted with authority to seal the match. Reflecting on his approach, Sinner said, "I tried to stay calm and serve well in important moments. I think that was the key today. There was not a lot of rhythm, so I tried to stay quite compact. Let's see what's coming in the next round." The Italian has now compiled a 26-2 record this season.

IPL 2025-26: Dempo SC hold firm to deny Shillong Lajong in goalless stalemate

SHILLONG

Shillong Lajong FC were held to a goalless draw by a resolute Dempo SC in their Championship Phase fixture of the Indian Football League (IFL) 2025-26 at the SSA Stadium in Shillong on Sunday. The result keeps Shillong second in the table with 18 points, seven behind leaders Diamond Harbour FC, while Dempo remain sixth with 10 points.

Shillong named an unchanged starting XI from their last match, while Dempo made two changes, with Sebastián Gutiérrez Atehortua and Vieri Colaco replacing Ariston Costa and Richmond Kwasi Owusu.

Shillong imposed themselves from the outset, applying immediate pressure on Dempo straight from kick-off. Inside



the opening minute, a long ball into the box created an early opening as Phrangki Buam rose to meet it, but the defence recovered in time to clear. The hosts sustained a high tempo in the early exchanges, unsettling Dempo's backline before the visitors slowed the pace and attempted to play out from

the back. Both sides showed a clear inclination to build through the flanks, with Buam and Ephraim Lalremtluanga stretching play for Shillong, while Saish Bagkar and Kapil Hoble looked to supply Gutiérrez and Marcus Leric Jr Joseph centrally. Shillong's sharpness in pos-

session, aided by strong home support, translated into early control. In the eighth minute, Lamallian found space in the final third and struck at goal, but Aubin Kouakou positioned himself well to block.

Dempo's attempts to construct from deep led to repeated turnovers under Shillong's high press. Everbrightson Sana Myllimpdah tested Ashish Sibi with a skidding effort from distance that the goalkeeper handled securely.

Shillong also limited Nestor Dias' influence in midfield, restricting his ability to dictate play and connect with the forwards. Although Hoble looked to release Joseph with early passes from wide areas, Shillong's compact defensive shape ensured those moves did not develop.

MotoGP 2026: Flawless Alex Marquez keeps Bezzecchi at bay for victory as Marc Marquez crashes in Jerez

JEREZ (SPAIN)

Alex Marquez (BK8 Gresini Racing MotoGP) achieved a dream as he rolled out a stunner by storming to back-to-back victories at his home GP in a dramatic 2026 Grand Prix of Spain that saw Marc Marquez (Ducati Lenovo Team) crash out of second place on Lap 2 in Jerez in Spain.

Marc Bezzecchi's (Aprilia Racing) record-breaking victory run is now over, but the Italian's P2 is another fantastic result for the championship leader as compatriot Fabio Di Giannantonio (Pertamina Enduro VR46 Racing Team) earned P3 to jump up to third in the standings.

Marc Marquez got away from pole perfectly and grabbed the holshot with both arms as the field dived into Turn 1, with Bezzecchi getting a stormer – unlike in the Sprint – from the second row to jump to P2. And Alex Marquez (#73) got a corker too. The 2025 Spanish GP winner was P3, then P2 behind Marc Marquez after the Gresini Racing star shoved his way past the Championship leader at Turn 9. Alex Marquez didn't wait long to pounce on Marc Marquez either. Turn 6, the Dani Pedrosa Corner, saw the #73 shove his way past the reigning World Champion. Now, could Marc Marquez respond? Huge drama unfolded for the #93 on Lap 2 as Marc Marquez crashed out at the rapid right-hand turn of 11. The front-



end washed away, and there was no chance of saving that one, as the home-crowd hero suffered a very early DNF in Jerez for the second year running. Thankfully, the Spaniard was up on his feet and OK, but that's another early dent to the Champion's title charge.

Back on track, Alex Marquez was lapping 0.6s ahead of Bezzecchi as Di Giannantonio also passed Jorge Martin (Aprilia Racing) for P3 on Lap 5. At this stage of the Grand Prix, Digia was a second behind compatriot Bezzecchi. A small but costly mistake

from Pedro Acosta (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing) at the start of Lap 6 saw the Spaniard slip to P9 from P7 following contact with Raul Fernandez (Trackhouse MotoGP Team), leaving the #37 one place ahead of Francesco Bagnaia (Ducati Lenovo Team) and without some front-end aero. That was then one place behind Pecco, as the Italian made a move stick on the KTM rider at the final corner.

Up front, Alex Marquez was beginning to stretch his legs. At the start of Lap 10, his lead was 1.6s over Bez-

zecchi, who in turn had Di Giannantonio lingering 0.6s behind. Martin remained well within reach of the podium battle too; the 2024 MotoGP World Champion was a further 0.6s back in P4, with Johann Zarco (Castrol Honda LCR) a second back from the second Aprilia in P5. At the start of Lap 12, misery was compounded in the factory Ducati box. Pecco encountered some form of problem with his Desmosedici, and the sight of the #63 pulling into the pitlane signalled a nightmare Sunday in Jerez for the top two in the Tissot Sprint.

'It was a challenging pitch, we couldn't adapt to the conditions,' says Gaikwad after CSK's loss

CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings captain Ruturaj Gaikwad admitted that his side struggled to adapt to challenging pitch conditions as they slumped to an eight-wicket defeat against the Gujarat Titans in Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Sunday.

Reflecting on the surface, which offered variable bounce and inconsistent pace, Gaikwad highlighted how difficult it was for batters to settle in despite initial plans.

"To be honest, sometimes I hate to assess in that way, but I felt it was challenging. I was holding a bit for the pacers; the pace was inconsistent, and the bounce was up and down. But if we hadn't lost too many wickets, we could've reached 170-180. Not expected to be honest, it's tough to assess the conditions here. In the last three matches, we learned how the game would play out. We had a 60-70% chance in the last two or three games, but we didn't expect it to play like this today. We just couldn't adapt to the conditions," Gaikwad said after the game.

CSK, who eventually posted 158/7, had to recover from early setbacks after losing wickets in clusters. Gaikwad pointed out that the inability to adjust quickly to the surface proved costly, particularly



during the Power-play and middle overs when partnerships were crucial. Elaborating on his communication with the team management during the innings, Gaikwad revealed that even a proactive approach could not overcome the pitch's unpredictability.

"In the first timeout, I told Flem that I was trying to be positive and aggressive. But at times, the ball popped out with an inconsistent bounce. I told him I was trying to adapt, but it wasn't possible. You couldn't judge, and you couldn't expect it to turn out well. We were lethargic and didn't start well, but we needed to do better," Gaikwad said. Despite the difficulties, the

CSK skipper anchored the innings with a composed knock, finishing unbeaten and attempting to steer the side towards a competitive total. However, he acknowledged that wickets at regular intervals disrupted momentum and forced a change in approach.

"I got off to a good start (10 off 6), I thought I would keep the momentum, but then we saw 3 wickets fall while we were trying to build a partnership. Another wicket fell, and I wanted to take my time. For any other pitch, I might've rotated the strike better. Once I got hit, I just thought I would take my chances and get some momentum back," he said.

Shruti begins shooting for item song in Peddi

Breaking the usual norm of no shoots on Sundays, the team of "Peddi" kickstarted filming for a special song today in Hyderabad, with Shruti Haasan joining the sets. Shruti Haasan is set to perform a high-energy special number for the film, with music composed by A. R. Rahman. The choreography is being handled by Jani Master. The shoot is currently taking place on a specially constructed set near Janwada, Hyderabad. This project also marks Shruti Haasan's reunion with Ram Charan after "Yevadu," and only her second special song appearance in Telugu cinema. Reports suggest she has been paid a hefty remuneration for this performance. Alongside Ram Charan and Janhvi Kapoor, the film features a strong supporting cast including Shiva Rajkumar, Jagapathi Babu, and Divyendu. The film is slated for a June release.



Peddi item song shoot: Ram Charan, Buchi Babu share selfies

Ram Charan and director Buchi Babu Sana shared light moments on the sets of "Peddi," as the duo posed for casual selfies that are now doing the rounds on social media. Known for his trademark style of posing with folded hands, Buchi Babu struck his signature pose, with Ram Charan playfully joining in and mirroring the same gesture, adding a fun touch to the behind-the-scenes moment. As reported earlier, the shoot of a special song began today at One Film Studios in Mirzaguda, Hyderabad. The four-day schedule features Ram Charan and Shruti Haasan dancing to a high-energy number choreographed by Jani Master, with music composed by A. R. Rahman. The song, said to be inspired by Uttarandhra folk beats, is expected to wrap up by April 30, marking the completion of the film's shoot. Set in the 1980s rural backdrop, "Peddi" stars Ram Charan alongside Janhvi Kapoor. After facing a couple of delays, the film is now eyeing a theatrical release on June 25, 2026, although an official confirmation is still awaited.



Deepika resumes shooting post pregnancy news

Deepika Padukone is back at work soon after announcing her second pregnancy, putting an end to speculation about her upcoming projects.

The actress recently shared the joyful news through a social media post.

Amid curiosity about her professional commitments, the latest reports confirm that Deepika has already resumed shooting. She reportedly worked for three days in Mumbai, taking part in an action sequence for "King," starring Shah Rukh Khan. In addition to King, Deepika is also expected to complete her portions for Raaka, where she stars opposite Allu Arjun in a major role. Her quick return to sets highlights her commitment as she balances personal milestones with a packed film schedule. Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone's husband, is one of Bollywood's leading stars, who recently delivered record-breaking hit, Dhurandhar 2. They have daughter, Dua.



Rukmini emerges as new front runner for Subbulakshmi biopic

Rising Kannada actress Rukmini Vasanth is reportedly being considered to play legendary singer M. S. Subbulakshmi in an upcoming biopic directed by Gowtam Tinnanuri. The project, backed by Geetha Arts, initially generated buzz when Sai Pallavi was linked to the role, largely due to her strong classical dance background. However, recent reports suggest that Sai Pallavi has stepped away from the film, with Rukmini Vasanth now emerging as a strong contender.

Social media reactions have been mixed. While many fans feel Rukmini's graceful screen presence and poise align well with Subbulakshmi's iconic persona seen in archival images, others believe Sai Pallavi would have been a more fitting choice.

The film is a prestigious project centered on the life of M.S. Subbulakshmi, the legendary Carnatic vocalist and the first musician to be honored with the Bharat Ratna. Director Gowtam Tinnanuri has reportedly been focusing on this biopic following the underperformance of Kingdom, which starred Vijay Deverakonda. Meanwhile, Rukmini Vasanth is also part of a high-profile project, starring alongside NTR Jr. in Dragon, directed by Prashanth Neel.

Satyadev's novel Rao Bahadur locks June release

Rao Bahadur starring Satyadev has been creating good buzz and anticipation with its glimpse, music and highly novel storyline. Written, directed, and edited by Venkatesh Maha, the movie promises to bring a very fresh and unique story to the audience. It is presented by GMB Entertainment and produced by Chinta Gopalakrishna Reddy, Anurag Reddy, and Sharath Chandra. Now, the makers have announced the release date, 5th June 2026. The new announcement poster has caught everyone's attention. It shows Satyadev in a completely new and quirky look. He is seen wearing a grand purple outfit and a turban with a large beetle sitting on top of it. The background features a huge, slightly mysterious palace, which makes the world of the movie feel even more interesting.

Adding to the excitement is the massive success of the film's music. The recently released O Sundari song has been very well received and highly appreciated by listeners everywhere. With beautiful music composed by Smaran Sai and soothing vocals by Vijay Yesudas, the hit song combined with the striking poster has made Rao Bahadur a highly anticipated release.



PURI ROCKING WITH MUSINGS; WHAT ABOUT FILMS?

Acclaimed director Puri Jagannadh completely went out of form, after films like Double Smart and Liger, and many feel that he has reached a point of no return. However, gaining all the strength, resources and money, he carved out "Slumdog" with Vijay Sethupathi, and that film is struggling to see the light of the day. At this juncture, Puri Jagannadh has come with a musing on 'arrogance' and it impressed many.

Apparently, the director's musing says: "When someone among us gets sudden success, their style, everything gets changed. He keeps his

head high and looks us down. Not just outsiders, even family members also notice this behavioural difference. After looking at that, people come to an agreement that this guy is showcasing arrogance. But that guy never understands that. He feels that it's confidence. All the arrogant feel their arrogance as confidence only. Confidence means the belief in our capabilities, but arrogance just keeps our ego up, even if the range of success is small. Sometimes arrogance comes from insecurity, as they tend to project themselves as bigger folks." He further adds, "We have to

identify our mistakes, flaws, and weaknesses and learn from the criticism. As long as we have money and success, everyone keeps encouraging us, keeps praying to thousands of gods for our failure. Later, when we see failure, they all keep them away. But due to our arrogance, we feel that everyone cheated us."

On a finishing note, he concludes, "Respect is not earned by force, but by our personality. Arrogance is a barrier, one that separates people from connections, understanding and progress". While the musing is fine, many are wondering what about his film.



Backrooms: Indie to Studio

Filmmaker Kane Parsons is ready to take Backrooms from YouTube to the big screen. The 20-year-old Parsons, who will become A24's youngest feature director when the studio releases his horror movie in theaters on May 29, took the stage at CCXP Mexico on Saturday to share insight into his process. Chiwetel Ejiofor, Renate Reinsve, Mark Duplass, Finn Bennett and Lukita Maxwell star in the film that counts James Wan, Shawn Levy and

Osgood Perkins as producers and has a script from Will Soodik. Backrooms adapts the YouTube series that Parsons began uploading to YouTube as a teen in early 2022. Taking its origins from urban legend and various web posts, the videos centered on an infinite maze of rooms with humming fluorescent lights and yellow wallpaper. In the A24 film, Reinsve plays a therapist who must track down a missing patient in a bizarre dimension.

Parsons explained that the movie uses the existing series and lore as a jumping-off point to examine its characters. "It does take more of a specific approach, where you're seeing it through the lens of these specific characters — these individuals living these atomized, lonely lives," he said. "In the film, there is rarely a moment where there's more than one or two characters on screen at a given time. It's a pretty lonely film."