

Unsold residential property stocks go up sharply in Hyd

Hyderabad: Once sold like hot cakes, residential properties of Hyderabad appear to have gone out of favor with property seekers these days.And the once most sought after property destination, Hyderabad has now won the dubious distinction of being the only city among major metros of the country, to have its unsold property stocks go up sharply.Across the country, the latest Anarock research highlights a promising trend of unsold inventory in the affordable housing segment (< Rs. 40 lakh) falling by 19 per cent across top seven cities in the past year, from 1.40 lakh units (Q1 2024-end) to 1.13 lakh units (Q1 2025-end).



GNS News Agency, April 15

New Delhi: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the Opposition over their silence on the violence in West Bengal's Murshidabad.During the inauguration of various development projects at the Amar Senani Raja Narpati Singh Memorial site in the Hardoi district, he referred to the ongoing communal tensions in Bengal, where Hindus were attacked during protests against the Waqf Act.

CM Yogi lambasted political opponents for what he called "selective outrage" and "appeasement politics".Addressing a large gathering, the CM said, "Those who create unrest and incite violence, their only treatment is with the danda (stick). You've all seen how West Bengal is burning, yet the Chief Minister there remains silent."

He further criticised Mamata Banerjee's stance, adding, "She calls the protesters and those causing unrest 'peace bearers'. But those who deserve a danda cannot be handled with words. In the name of secularism, they have given complete freedom to the unruly elements of society.""Murshidabad has been burning for a week, yet the state government chooses to stay quiet. Such intolerance cannot be accepted in a democratic society," CM Yogi added.CM Yogi also thanked the judiciary for stepping in to ensure the safety of citizens. "I would like to express my gratitude to the court for deploying Central security forces and taking action to ensure the security of Hindus."

Turning his criticism toward Congress and the Samajwadi Party (SP), the Chief Minister said, "Congress is silent on Murshidabad; SP is silent too. These are the same people who supported the unrest in Bangladesh. It seems they would rather go to Bangladesh than stay in India; why be a burden here?"Praising the Central leadership on the Waqf Act, CM Yogi stated, "I am indebted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for passing the Waqf Amendment Bill. It's a significant step to reclaim land that was forcibly taken from the poor."On Sunday, CM Yogi lashed out at his West Bengal counterpart Mamata Banerjee over the Murshidabad violence and said that the Hindus being targeted in Bengal were Dalits, who stand to gain the most from the amended Waqf Act.



GNS News Agency, April 15

Hyderabad: Former Minister and senior BRS leader T Harish Rao came down heavily on the Congress government for misleading women with hollow promises and inflated claims about interest-free loans.Calling out Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka's recent claim in Mancherla that interest-free loans worth Rs.21,000 crore were disbursed to women, Harish Rao termed it a publicity stunt. "As per GO 27, interest-free loans are applicable only up to Rs 5 lakh. Women are still paying interest on the remaining Rs.15 lakh," he said.He demanded for an immediate release of a government order, if loans up to Rs.20 lakh were indeed interest-free. He warned that failing to do so would expose the Congress's deceit. "If this is not corrected, women will teach Congress a lesson," he cautioned.The BRS MLA stated that the same loan insurance and accident insurance cheques were handed out twice by the Chief Minister, initially in Warangal in November last year and again in Hyderabad (March 2025)—but none were cleared yet.Harish Rao also slammed the government's mishandling of uniform stitching charges for students, questioning how Rs.75 would suffice. While the Congress increased uniform stitching charges from Rs.50 to Rs.75, the increased amount is yet to reach the beneficiaries."Even the additional Rs.25 has not reached women," he said, demanding the amount be increased to Rs.150.The former Minister also expressed concern over the mismanagement of Srinidhi, the lending arm for self-help groups, where 40 per cent of loans have turned into non performing assets (NPAs). He urged the government to appoint an IAS officer to salvage the issue."Revanth Reddy promised to make women millionaires.

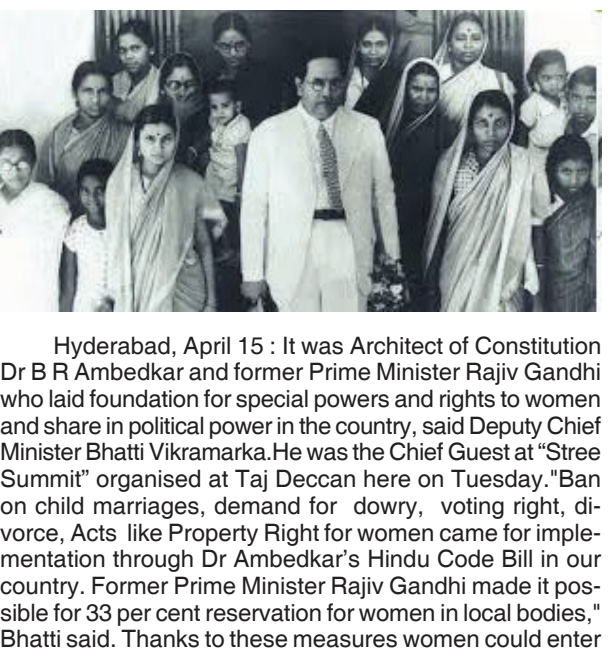
CM Revanth reprimands Congress MLAs over poor style of functioning



Hyderabad, April 15

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has expressed discontent with Congress MLAs regarding their ineffective approach to governance and their tendency to publicly discuss party matters.During a meeting of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) held at a hotel in Shamshabad on Tuesday, the Chief Minister emphasised that the MLAs' behavior would not be tolerated if they continued to speak freely about internal party issues. He voiced concerns about the conduct of numerous MLAs, noting that none of them were utilising social media to highlight the developmental works and welfare initiatives being carried out by the Congress government. The Chief Minister criticised the MLAs for failing to counteract negative narratives aimed at the government and pointed out that some MLAs were neglecting their constituencies and

Women got special powers thanks to Ambedkar, Rajiv Gandhi: Bhatti



Hyderabad, April 15 : It was Architect of Constitution Dr B R Ambedkar and former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who laid foundation for special powers and rights to women and share in political power in the country, said Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka.He was the Chief Guest at "Stree Summit" organised at Taj Deccan here on Tuesday."Ban on child marriages, demand for dowry, voting right, divorce, Acts like Property Right for women came for implementation through Dr Ambedkar's Hindu Code Bill in our country. Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi made it possible for 33 per cent reservation for women in local bodies," Bhatti said. Thanks to these measures women could enter



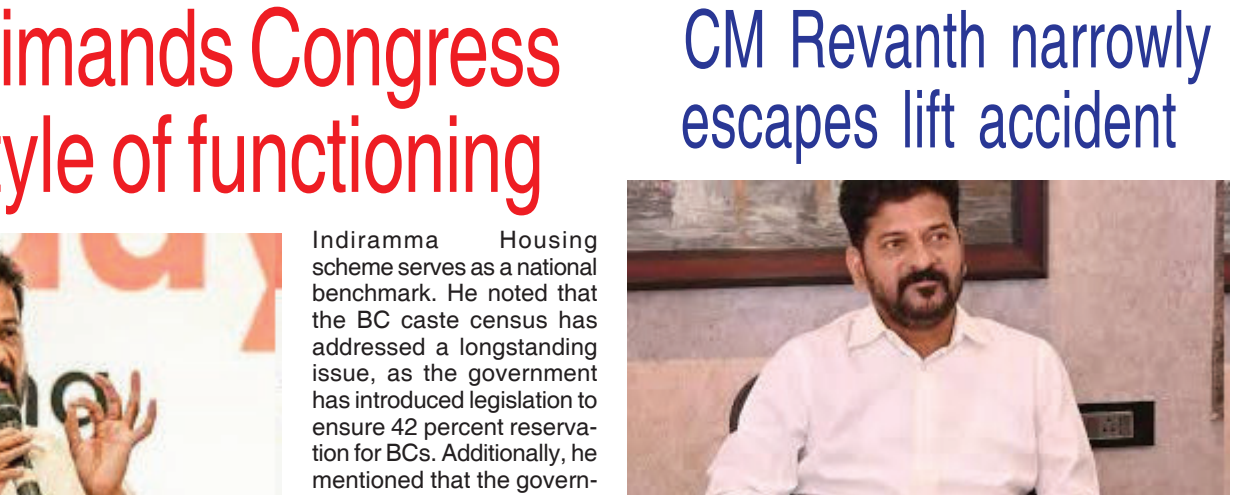
Hyderabad, April 15

Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu has announced that the State government plans to develop 200 million square feet of Grade-A commercial space in Hyderabad by the year 2030.He was speaking at the formal inauguration of the "Citizens Global Capability Center," a joint initiative by Citizens Financial Group (USA) and Cognizant Technologies, held in Nanakramguda on Tuesday.The Minister emphasised that Hyderabad is rapidly evolving into a Global Business Hub, resulting in a significant surge in demand for high-quality commercial space."Unlike metro cities such as Delhi and Chennai, where demand is tapering off, Hyderabad recorded a remarkable 56 percent year-on-year growth in commercial space absorption last year. The highest in the country. In the retail sector alone, 1.8 million square feet was leased by various firms in the previous year," he said.

Highlighting Hyderabad's growing global relevance, Sridhar Babu noted that the city currently hosts 355 Global Capability Centers (GCCs) from multinational corporations such as Amgen, GlobalLogic, Eli Lilly, Marriott, and Cigna, collectively employing over 300,000 professionals. More than 70 new GCCs have been established in Hyderabad

Rains lash several areas in city

Hyderabad, April 15 (NSS): Rain greeted the city residents, who were groaning under sweltering heat today. The rain lashed several parts of Hyderabad. Moderate rains lashed out at Begambazaar, Koti, Sultan Bazaar, Abids, Basheer Bagh, Nampally, Liberty, Himayat Nagar, Narayanaguda, Lakdikapool, Tank Bund and other areas in the city. The Motorists and passers-by faced difficulties due to rainwater flowing on the roads.The Rains lashed several parts of the city with gusty winds. The Roads were flooded in Begambazar, Koti, Basheer Bagh, Nampally, Lakdikapool, Tank Bund, Ameerpet, Khairatabad, Patny and Maredpalli areas. Vehicles were stranded for kilometers in several areas. The rains hit several areas across the State due to the influence of a surface level cyclonic circulation. The Meteorological Department has already issued warnings that there would be rains in Telangana for the next three days due to this effect. It has said winds were likely to blow at a speed of 30 to 40 kilometer per hour.



Hyderabad, April 15 : Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had a close call with an accident due to a brief malfunction in the lift at the Novotel Hotel in Hyderabad on Tuesday. The lift, which had unexpectedly halted while he was using it, was designed to accommodate 8 people but had been occupied by 13, leading to an overload.Initially, there was tension among the Chief Minister and his staff, as they were uncertain about the situation. However, after a short period, they managed to regain their composure and exited the lift.Hotel personnel and the Chief Minister's security team were promptly notified. The lift was eventually opened, and Revanth Reddy was escorted to the second floor via another lift. Officials and police personnel expressed their relief that the Chief Minister emerged unscathed.Chief Minister Revanth Reddy arrived at the Novotel Hotel for the CLP meeting. Government Whips and MLAs welcomed him and escorted him inside the venue. While heading to the upper floors, several leaders entered a lift that was designed to hold a maximum of 8 individuals. Inside the lift, there were 13 people present, including Revanth Reddy, which led to it immediately sinking due to the excess weight. Upon the activation of the alarm, officials and hotel staff quickly responded and assisted in getting everyone, including the Chief Minister, safely out of the lift.

Women got special powers thanks to Ambedkar, Rajiv Gandhi: Bhatti

electoral politics and administrationIn Telangana, the Congress government is working with the objective of women empowerment. It has set a target to make one crore women crorepaths in the State in five years, the Deputy Chief Minister s He stated that as part of its endeavour, the State government extended Rs 21,000 crore interest free loans to women belonging to SHGs in the first year exceeding the target. In the coming four months every year Rs 20,000 crore interest free loans will be extended to women, Bhatti said. Bhatti Vikramarka said that partnership was given to women in the new Green Power policy brought by the government to help women become entrepreneurs. He further stated that the agreement was entered with women groups to set up solar plants through bank linkage, government to give vacant lands on lease to set up solar plants and to buy back the solar power generated by women's groups.The State government also took up the process to make women groups buy buses through bank loans and give them on lease to RTC and benefit financially. In addition to this, opportunity is being given to SHG groups for setting up Indira Shakti canteens in all public sector enterprises in the State. These steps will help women to become financially strong," he added.The Deputy Chief Minister said programmes like "Stree Summit" would help in making people tread on right path and help government in enacting proper legislations.

200 million square feet of Grade-A commercial space by 2030 : Sridhar Babu

within just one year.Sridhar Babu underscored the state's vision to not only make Hyderabad a hub for GCCs but to also transform them into global value-added centers focusing on innovation, R&D, and product development. He expressed confidence that Telangana's contribution to India's GDP will reach one trillion dollars by 2030.The Minister reaffirmed the state government's commitment to attracting investments and generating employment for the youth. Criticising attempts by some to deliberately spread misinformation and discourage investment, he stated that under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the government enjoys the trust of the industrial community with many investors showing keen interest in setting up operations in Telangana.

Errabelli dares CM to hold local body elections

Mahabubabad, April 15

BRS party leader and former minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao today made sensational comments. He announced that if the Congress party wins the local body elections, he would quit politics.A preparatory meeting of the BRS party was held in Thorur in the undivided Warangal district on Tuesday. Errabelli Dayakar Rao participated as the chief guest in the meeting and addressed the gathering.

Speaking on the occasion, he challenged CM Revanth Reddy to hold the local body elections if he has courage. He stated that CM Revanth Reddy was afraid of holding the local body elections. He explained that out of the 119 assembly seats in the State, only 10 of them were in favour of the Congress party. He predicted that the BRS party would win in the remaining places. He made it clear that if local body elections are held, the true face of the Congress party would be revealed

CM Revanth narrowly escapes lift accident



Hyderabad, April 15 : Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had a close call with an accident due to a brief malfunction in the lift at the Novotel Hotel in Hyderabad on Tuesday. The lift, which had unexpectedly halted while he was using it, was designed to accommodate 8 people but had been occupied by 13, leading to an overload.Initially, there was tension among the Chief Minister and his staff, as they were uncertain about the situation. However, after a short period, they managed to regain their composure and exited the lift.Hotel personnel and the Chief Minister's security team were promptly notified. The lift was eventually opened, and Revanth Reddy was escorted to the second floor via another lift. Officials and police personnel expressed their relief that the Chief Minister emerged unscathed.Chief Minister Revanth Reddy arrived at the Novotel Hotel for the CLP meeting. Government Whips and MLAs welcomed him and escorted him inside the venue. While heading to the upper floors, several leaders entered a lift that was designed to hold a maximum of 8 individuals. Inside the lift, there were 13 people present, including Revanth Reddy, which led to it immediately sinking due to the excess weight. Upon the activation of the alarm, officials and hotel staff quickly responded and assisted in getting everyone, including the Chief Minister, safely out of the lift.

BRSV, BRSY launch three day long padayatra



Speaking on the occasion, Jagadish Reddy called upon the party leaders to leave no stone unturned for the grand success of the party meeting

Nalgonda, April 15

The BRSV and BRSY Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District wings have launched a three-day large-scale padayatra from Vemulakonda Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple to the feet of Yadadri Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy. Former minister & MLA Guntakandla Jagadish Reddy, former MLAs Paylla Sekhar Reddy, Dr Gadari Kishore Kumar, Kusukuntla Prabhakar Reddy, Bhullu Bhikshamayya Goud flagged off the padayatra. The main objective of the yatra was to make the BRS Party Silver Jubilee public meeting to be held in Warangal on April 27 a grand success.

Speaking on the occasion, Jagadish Reddy called upon the party leaders to leave no stone unturned for the grand success of the party meeting. He said the people of the State were eagerly waiting for hearing the speech of their party president and former CM KCR at the public meeting. The State party leaders like Gongidi Mahender Reddy, Chintala Venkateswar Reddy, Onteddu Narasimha Reddy, Kyama Mallesh, Palla Praveen Reddy, Regatte Mallikarjuna Reddy and others also took part in the padayatra

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Digital education must catch up

Public investment is a critical element of a country's educational development. Various schools of economic thinking — classical, neoclassical and Keynesian — have recognised the public-good nature of education, and advocated public investment for educational development. Greek economist George Psacharopoulos and others have demonstrated that there are private and social returns to education. From the human capital perspective, the trinity benefits of labour productivity and economic growth, poverty reduction and intergenerational mobility, and easing technological dissemination and adaptation have made a strong case for public investment in education. However, a 2022 UNESCO report has exhibited the experience of developed countries that continue to rely on public education, at least school education. However, the developing countries' experience, especially India, shows a growing share of the private sector in education. Digital education technologies have become an integral part of modern education systems across the world over the last few decades, with the rapid evolution in teaching systems. Covid-19 has only accelerated their adoption. As the quality of education is increasingly tied to digital, universal access to technology has become a necessity. Therefore, public investment in digital education technologies has become extremely critical. Most participant countries, about 133, in the Transforming Education Summit-2022 committed to making necessary arrangements and finances for digital education technologies. For various reasons, State governments in India continue to languish in providing proper buildings and other infrastructure in public schools. Further, they have also been unable to invest much in digital education technologies.

PhonePe goes live with UPI Circle



Hyderabad:PhonePe, today announced the launch of UPI Circle on its app, allowing its users to create a circle and make payments on behalf of their family, friends or trusted contacts. UPI Circle enables dependents to generate their own UPI ID without needing a linked bank account, opening up secure online payment solutions for those with limited access to digital financial services.

With UPI Circle on PhonePe, a UPI account holder (primary user), can add their family/trusted individuals (secondary user) to their circle using UPI ID or QR code and seamlessly authorize payments for them from anywhere. The primary user retains complete control over the usage, including the ability to review payment requests, track secondary user expenses, get secure access to detailed payment records within each circle and delink access from their UPI Circle, as needed.

The feature's enhanced security protocols and seamless integration with the PhonePe app ensures a secure, reliable, and inclusive payment experience for all users, ultimately simplifying everyday transactions for PhonePe users and their trusted connections. Speaking on the feature launch, Sonika Chandra, Chief Business Officer, Consumer Payments, PhonePe said, "UPI Circle is a significant step forward in extending the ease and convenience of digital payments for those who are underbanked and those new to the ecosystem. This can be a parent providing expenses to their college kids, authorizing payments on behalf of older parents who may be wary of digital payments or busy individuals who want to delegate household chores. Integrating UPI Circle into the PhonePe app, aligns perfectly with our vision of democratizing digital payments and making financial services accessible to all. This innovative addition to the UPI stack offering simplifies shared expenses and empowers users to create trusted payment circles that streamline their financial interactions. We're confident that this will further accelerate the adoption of UPI across India."

Six platforms to remain shut for over four months at Secunderabad Railway Station

GNS News Agency, April 15

Hyderabad: The railway passengers arriving at the Secunderabad Railway Station are likely to face temporary inconvenience as six platforms will be closed for nearly 130 days due to the redevelopment works being carried out at brisk pace in the station. The routes of at least 60 trains were being diverted from Secunderabad to Cheralapalli, Kacheguda and Nampally railway stations. In particular, more trains will start running from Cheralapalli to decrease the load on Secunderabad railway station.

As per available information, a huge two-storied sky concourse is going to be built at the station as part of the redevelopment project. This concourse will have all the facilities for passengers, such as restaurants, kiosks, escalators, lifts, foot over bridges, etc. Plans are made to connect all the sky concourses.

A huge 500-tonnes capacity heavy-duty crane is being installed between Platform Nos. 5 and 6. For this, the gap between the platforms will be filled with sandbags and construction work will be carried out with the help of a crane.

To relieve rail passengers from this temporary inconvenience, the South Central Railway (SCR) has made arrangements to run trains from Charlapalli, Kacheguda and Hyderabad railway stations.

Beri Ramachander Yadav participated in the distribution of BP Mandal Yadav awards



"Gachibowli April 15: The death anniversary of Shri Bindeshwar Prasad Mandal Yadav was celebrated at Basheerbagh Press Club. The awards of the BP Mandal were distributed at this event. Speaking on the occasion, Beri Ramachandra Yadav said that BP Mandal made many sacrifices and became the backbone of the poor and weaker sections of the country. He demanded that the central gov-

ernment should recognize his services and give him the Bharat Ratna award. The event was attended by elders of BC, SC and ST backward castes." "Speaking, the leaders of the Telangana BC JAC Ikya Vedita Samiti demanded that BP Mandal Yadav, who sacrificed his post as the Chief Minister of Bihar and fought for the backward castes, be given due respect, that his statue be installed in every village, and that the government think about making his history known in education up to the tenth grade." "He demanded that the central and state governments immediately implement the 40 recommendations proposed by BP Mandal. Gaddam Srinivas said that he would set up a building for the weaker sections of the society, BC, SC, ST and minorities with his own funds. He said that training classes for education and medical employment would be organized in it and all the youth should come forward." "First, Suraj Mandal, Bodi Ram Chander and BC movement leader Rajaram Yadav garlanded the portrait of BP Mandal."

"The program was attended by Satyanarayana Yadav, Andela Kumar Yadav, Students JAC Chairman RK Sayanna Mudiraj, BC Federation President Chinni Krishna Rao Yadav, Builder State BC Leaders, Medchal Malkajiri District President Medari Sangam State Leaders Gor Mukundam, Builder Koteswara Rao Yadav, Raghu Yadav, National Labour Welfare Association State President Ananthayya, Film Director Kumaraswamy Yadav, Congress Party Youth Leaders Gontu Suresh, State BC Leaders Paturi Krishnamohan, Muralidhar, Central University BC Student Association JAC Chairman Shiva, Andela Satyanarayana Yadav, Andela Kumar Yadav, Srisailam Yadav Kodakanchi, Gokul Youth Shivakumar Yadav, Sangareddy District Vidyavantula Vedita President Panduranga Rao Yadav, Sheep and Goat Breeders State President Kommu Ashok Yadav, Sarpanchula Forum founding president Soudhani Bhumanna Yadav, student division BC leaders Praveen Yadav, Tokala Srinivas Yadav, Pilli Ramaraju Yadav, contested MLA Shetty Vamsi Mohan Yadav, Langar House Division Yadava Sangam president Arella Srisailam Yadav, senior fans of the program" and many women and men corporators participated in the memorial program.

Tiruchanur police cleverly brought back children who had run away from home.



"April 15, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator" "The incident of 5 children running away from home in Mangalam under Tiruchanur Rural Police Station limits has created a stir. According to the details given to the media by Tiruchanur CI Sunil Kumar....five children from Mangalam, Aman, Asif (brothers), Venkatesh, Vasu, and Mithunvardhan, all aged 12 to 15, ran away with 3000 thousand rupees without telling them at home on Monday afternoon around 12 noon as they wanted to visit Pondicherry as it was summer vacation. The children reached Pondicherry in the evening and tried to stay in a lodge for



the night after wandering around there. The lodge staff, who became suspicious, asked the children for their details and provided information to the police. Tiruchanur police had already received complaints from parents and coordinated with Pondicherry police to cleverly call back the children. Tirupati District SP Harshavardhan Raju congratulated SS Jagannath Reddy and Sainath Chaudhary for their active role in this case on the orders of Chandragiri Sub-Division DSP Prasad. Tiruchanur CI Sunil Kumar appealed to parents to be vigilant about their children's activities as the summer holidays are approaching. He said that they will always be available to provide them with counseling.

"COMPREHENSIVE FIRE SAFETY DRILL ORGANISED FOR RTC STAFF AT MANTHANI DEPOT AS PART OF FIRE SERVICE WEEK"



" " P . S . A . S H O K A N " I N D I A N CHRONICLE "MANTHANI, APRIL 16." "In observance of National Fire Service Week, a comprehensive fire safety sensitization program was conducted on the second day of the week-long campaign at the Manthani RTC Bus Depot. The initiative aimed to fortify awareness and readiness among RTC personnel regarding fire emergencies, particu-

larly in public transport environments." "Manthani Fire Officer Mr. Shiva Shankara Vara Prasad, addressing the session, imparted vital knowledge on fire prevention protocols, emergency mitigation strategies, and effective crisis response techniques. Drivers and conductors were especially trained on how to manage critical situations such as onboard fire accidents and were instructed on administering CPR and ensuring passenger safety during unforeseen incidents." "Furthermore, in an effort to extend public outreach, fire department officials also distributed fire safety brochures to passengers at the bus station, promoting community-level awareness and preparedness." "Personnel who played a pivotal role in executing the program included Leading Fireman Meda Devender, Firemen Narender and Raghu, and RTC drivers Ramesh and Nagaraju, along with several other depot staff members. Their proactive participation reflected a shared commitment to ensuring a safer and more resilient transport system."

State Level Golden School Award to 'Disneyland' School and got Ranks in Olympiad..

"Damera, April 15 (Indian Chronicle): "The 'Disneyland' school has been ranked at the State Level Golden School Award and got ranks in Olympiad. The recent Indian talent exams conducted across Telangana state-wide Indian Talent Examinations. Oglapur Village, Damera Mandal of Hanumakonda District Disney land High School in state -level science, Maths Olympiad and Kairav Kant 8th, Samarla Srivani 15th rank Achieved.

The chief advisers of the school, Dayyala Mallaiiah, Dayyala Sadiha, Baluga Lakshminavasam, Directors Baluga Shobharani, Dyyala Rakesh



Bhanu and Dyyala Dinesh Chander expressed their displeasure over the rankings. Teachers and fel-

low students have been greeted by students who have been ranked in the state. And parents and well

-wishers congratulate the school ownership for winning the Golden School Award at the state level.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is a great visionary: TDP Shalivahana Parliament President Amudal Tulsidas

"April 15, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema co-ordinator" "TDP Shalivahana Parliament President Amudal Tulsidas praised Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as a great visionary." "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar" Celebrations were held at the Tirupati Parliament Office under the auspices of Yadava Corporation Chairman Narasimha Yadav to commemorate his 134th birth anniversary. Amudal Tulsidas, who participated in the program, garlanded the portrait of Dr. Ambedkar and paid tributes. Speaking on the occasion, Amudal Tulsidas recalled that Dr. Ambedkar was the hope of the weaker sections of the country. He made it clear that every common man is able to protect his rights only because of the Indian Constitution, which was born from his ideas. TDP leaders, fans and activists participated in this program in large numbers.



Students Samskruti Inter College celebrate victory."



"Student secures 2nd position at state level" "April 15, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator" "The students of Tiruchanur Samskruti College have achieved the best results in the recently released Inter results, said Praneeth Penumadu, the director of the institution. Speaking to the media on this occasion, "In the second year results, C.K. Jitesh stood 2nd at the state level with (991/1000) marks, and secured first position at the Tirupati district level." "In the Inter first and second year results, more than 50% students secured 90% marks, he said. The chairperson of Samskruti Inter College, P. Sulochana, and Director Praneeth specially congratulated the students who achieved excellent results as well as the faculty who worked hard for it."

Signify illuminates over 300 forest villages in Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh, under Har Gaon Roshan CSR project



Hyderabad:Har Gaon Roshan CSR project aims to enhancing safety in forest regions affected by human-wildlife conflict using the power of light. Bahraich is recognized as one of India's aspirational districts, with a focus on improving health, education, and infrastructure. The installation of energy-efficient lights has reduced human-wildlife conflict, allowing villagers to move freely and securely after dark, has also extended opportunities for livelihood activities and improved access to education, particularly for children studying in the evenings. By empowering communities with sustainable lighting solutions, this initiative has paved the way for a brighter future, where safety, opportunity, and progress shine brightly in the heart of rural Uttar Pradesh. The project executed in partnership with FINISH Society encompasses the installation of over 5000 high-quality LED and solar streetlights across a vast network of 300 forest villages. The recent inauguration event was attended by Mr B. Shiv Shankar, Divisional Forest officer (DFO) of Katarniaghat Wildlife Division, Bahraich. In addition, a calendar featuring slogans on forest and wildlife conservation was also launched at this event. Nikhil Gupta, Head of Marketing, Strategy, Govt. Affairs & CSR - Signify, Greater India, shared his thoughts on this project. "At Signify, we believe in the transformative power of light to uplift lives. Through this initiative, we are creating safer and more secure environments in some of the most remote villages. This initiative reflects our dedication to leveraging lighting technology for social impact, and we are honoured to collaborate with the forest department."

Citizens Financial Group to set up its first India GCC in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, April 15 Telangana continues to surge ahead as a global innovation powerhouse, as Citizens Financial Group (NYSE: CFG), one of the United States' premier financial institutions, has selected Hyderabad to set up its first Global Capability Centre (GCC) in India. In a strategic partnership with tech leader Cognizant (Nasdaq: CTSH), the centre will create 1,000 high-value jobs by March 2026 and become a key driver of Citizens' digital transformation journey. The launch event, held in Hyderabad, was graced by Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu, special chief secretary Jayesh Ranjan and IT Advisor Sai Krishna, along with senior leaders from Citizens and Cognizant. We're not just building infrastructure, we're building the future," Sridhar Babu said. Hyderabad's rise is not based on hype, but on hard numbers and bold decisions. With Citizens Bank and Cognizant joining forces here, we're moving closer to our goal of making Telangana the first Indian state to contribute \$1 trillion to the national GDP. We are transforming Hyderabad into a Global Value Centre — where innovation is born, IP is built, and world-class products are developed," he said. The Minister emphasised that

the State's success is rooted in visionary leadership, robust infrastructure, sustainable policies, and strong public-private partnerships — a sentiment echoed by both Jayesh Ranjan and Sai Krishna, who have played pivotal roles in shaping Telangana's vibrant tech ecosystem. The new GCC will serve as a next-generation innovation engine, focused on accelerating Citizens' enterprise tech capabilities, customer experience platforms, data analytics, and product innovation. The centre is a core pillar of the bank's strategy to reduce third-party dependencies and build strong in-house expertise. Michael Rutledge, CIO and Head of Enterprise Technology at Citizens, said: "Hyderabad offers a world-class talent pool and a dynamic ecosystem. This GCC will be central to our tech modernization, helping us bring modern banking products to market faster and deliver superior experiences for our customers."

Nageswar Cherukupalli, SVP and BU Head (BFSI), Cognizant, stated that Hyderabad has become the global HQ for BFSI innovation. With over 350 GCCs and one new GCC setting up every week, the momentum is real and Citizens is the latest elite name to join this journey," he said

“SCR Celebrates 134th Birth Anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar”

Hyderabad, April 15 : South Central Railway (SCR) celebrated the 134 th Birth Anniversary of Bharat Ratna, Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on Tuesday at SCR Headquarters, Rail Nilayam Auditorium, here. Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager, was the Chief Guest, Neeraj Agrawal, Additional General Manager and Siddarth Kati, Principal Chief Personnel Officer, South Central Railway were the Guest of Honour. Principal Heads of Departments, other senior officials and staff members, senior leaders from SC& ST, OBC associations and recognized trade unions also participated in the program and paid floral tributes to Dr. B.R Ambedkar.

Addressing the gathering, Arun Kumar Jain stated that the legacy of Dr. B.R Ambedkar is to encourage and inspire generations of Indians to realize their full potential through education and social reform. He stated that irrespective of caste, creed and religion all Indians are the beneficiaries of the great legacy of Dr. Ambedkar. Setting aside his personal family and health, Dr. Ambedkar worked relentlessly towards the upliftment of the deprived and equality of all Indians until his last breath, he said. The General Manager also stated that Dr. Ambedkar was not just an educationist but also an economist, Politian, social reformer and a champion of women and labour rights.

He stated that Dr. B.R Ambedkar has provided us with the long lasting constitutional framework which enables and empowers each and every citizen irrespective of their socio-economic status. He said that today we should reaf-



firm our commitment and imbibe the true spirit of Dr. B.R Ambedkar. He called upon each one to teach young children the ideals of Dr. Ambedkar particularly treating fellow Indian with equality. He said that we should treat everyone with equality and respect, not just at our workplaces but also in our homes. Let us respect the great soul and live up to his ideals, he added. The General Manager presented the awards to the winners in essay writing competition which was organized on this occasion by Personnel Department, South Central Railway on "Social Justice in India". Earlier, representatives of SCR SC& ST; OBC and Trade Union leaders have spoken about the achievements, contributions and legacy of Dr. B.R Ambedkar.

Kamala Hospital & Research Centre operating undere TSCS

Hyderabad, April 15 (NSS): Kamala Hospital & Research Centre for Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Disease, operating under Thalassaemia and Sickle Cell Society (TSCS), Hyderabad, has been officially designated as one of the key Thalassaemia International Federation (TIF) Collaborating Centres in India. This recognition places the facility among a global network of elite centres that are committed to raising the standards of care, education, and research in the field of haemoglobinopathies, including Thalassaemia and Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) making it a significant achievement in India's healthcare landscape. The prestigious selection is the result of a rigorous and multi-stage international assessment process conducted by world-renowned experts, following which Kamala Hospital and Research Centre (TSCS) has now joined a powerful global initiative led by TIF to enhance comprehensive care, strengthen medical training, and build capacity in countries with high disease burden.

In February 2025, an official on-site evaluation was carried out by an expert delegation comprising Prof. Antonio Piga and Prof. Dimitrios Farmakis. Their inspection included Kamala Hospital & Research Centre (TSCS) in Hyderabad, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS),

New Delhi, and Post Graduate Institute of Child Health, Noida. Following an in-depth post-visit assessment, Kamala Hospital and Research Centre (TSCS), Hyderabad, was selected as one of the two TIF Collaborating Centres in India. TIF collaborating centres network is a cornerstone initiative designed to close persistent gaps in care, education, and human resources across countries struggling with high burdens of Thalassaemia and Sickle Cell Disease. Speaking about the collaboration, Chandrakant Agarwal, President, TSCS said, "This designation by TIF is not only an accolade for Kamala Hospital and TSCS, but a beacon of hope for thousands of Indian families affected by Thalassaemia and SCD. It acknowledges TSCS outstanding patient care model, our unwavering dedication to equitable access, our leadership in voluntary blood donation and free treatment and our growing stature in research and prevention. As a TIF Collaborating Centre, Kamala Hospital Research Centre (TSCS) will now expand its impact beyond Telangana uplifting regional centres, supporting national policies, and collaborating with international experts". Dr Suman Jain, Chief Medical Research Officer and Secretary, TSCS, Prof Antonio Piga and Prof. Dimitrios Farmakis, Ratnavali Kottapalli, Vice President, TSCS also spoke.

EThames Business School teaming up with KPMG

Hyderabad, April 15 EThames Business School (EBS), a Hyderabad-based futuristic business management school, today announced that it is teaming up with KPMG in India to offer a suite of forward-thinking, industry-relevant academic programs that bridge the gap between education and professional practice, preparing students to excel in the ever-evolving business landscape. As part of this collaboration, KPMG in India, as academic partner will help in delivery of the following programs offered by EThames Business School (EBS). These include B.Com (Taxation), B.Com (Financial Accounting), BBA (Business Analytics), BBA (Financial Markets and Investment Banking), BCA (Data Science and AI) and BCA (Cyber Security).

These programs combine EBS's academic excellence with KPMG in India industry expertise, thereby providing

students with practical, real-world insights and a good blend of academic rigor and practical applications. Additionally, students enrolling for these programs, will also have access to hands-on learning experiences, valuable insights and skills, mentorship from experts, directly relevant for their future careers. "The job market today is constantly evolving, and it is essential for young professionals to stay up to date with the latest trends and skills to stay relevant" said Narayanan Ramaswamy, Partner and Head of Education and Skill Development, KPMG in India. By harnessing combined strengths, this collaboration aims to pave the way for high-quality and advanced education that aims to foster innovation, leadership, and critical thinking, making students professionally ready for a career in a competitive global workforce

implementation of four flagship programs of the State Government, showcasing the department's commitment to transformation and accountability. R.C Meena, IAS, was particularly impressed with the innovative and novel policy reforms implemented in Telangana State Civil Supplies to strengthen the paddy procurement and Public distribution system. He acknowledged the Department's success in plugging loopholes ensuring a streamlined process. He also lauded the Department's pivotal role in the implementation of the State Govt. flagship programs such as: Fine paddy procurement, by providing additional benefit of Rs 500/- per Qtl to the farmers selling Fine paddy (Sanna paddy) at notified PPCs of the Govt.

Two-day protest rally against Waqf Amendment Act, 2025 held

Kamareddy, April 15 Congress MLC Amer Ali Khan on Tuesday concluded a two-day protest rally against the Waqf Amendment Act, 2025, calling it a direct assault on the constitutional and religious rights of Muslims in India. The rally, which began in Adilabad on Monday, passed through Nizamabad and culminated with a massive public meeting in Kamareddy, where thousands participated. Addressing the gathering, Amer Ali Khan described the Act as a "draconian measure" aimed at seizing Waqf properties and stripping Muslims of their personal laws and religious autonomy. "This is not just about land or property. It is a deliberate wound to the dignity of Muslims and the soul of our Constitution," he said. He warned that the legislation violated Article 25, which guarantees the Right to Freedom of Religion, and accused the BJP-led Central Government of using the law as a tool to erode autonomy and allow encroachments on Waqf lands worth lakhs of crores. The two-day protest rally, held under the Congress party's national campaign 'Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan', witnessed strong participation from across communities. People joined on foot, bikes, and cars, carrying placards demanding the repeal of the Waqf Amendment Act. Amer Ali Khan said the Waqf Amendment Act was not

only a legal assault, but also a calculated political move to weaken the Muslim community. "We cannot stay silent while our protections are dismantled. Let us rise, protest, and reclaim the idea of India," he urged.

Referring to widespread poverty among Muslims, especially in Hyderabad, he raised serious questions about the effectiveness of previous government efforts. "BRS says it spent Rs 12,000 crore on minority welfare. But why are Muslims still living in poverty and miserable conditions?" he asked. He also announced a commitment to bring one lakh Muslim families living below the poverty line out of deprivation. "Why have minorities fallen so low in every sector of life?" he asked. "Is it because of government negligence, failed Muslim leadership, or our own silence? We must ask ourselves these tough questions."

Amer Ali Khan said the rally was not the end, but the beginning of a broader national campaign against the Waqf Amendment Act. He reaffirmed that the Congress party would fight this law both politically and legally, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the people. "Let us protect our rights. Let us protect our Constitution. Let us protect our India," he appealed.

‘Agraharamlo Ambedkar’ film unveiled

Hyderabad, April 15 Marking the 135th birth anniversary of Dr B.R. Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, the first look of the film "Agraharamlo Ambedkar" was officially launched. The event was graced by Telangana MLC Addanki Dayakar, who attended as the chief guest. The critically acclaimed film, which has already bagged awards at several prestigious international film festivals, is produced and directed by Mantha Krishna Chaitanya under the banner of Ramoji-Lakshmoji Films. Notably, Krishna Chaitanya also plays the lead role in the film. Speaking on the occasion, the filmmakers stated the primary objective of the film is to revive and globally promote the fading ideology of Ambedkar. MLC Addanki Dayakar emphasized the importance of honouring Ambedkar, saying, "Every citizen should respect Ambedkar, the creator of our Constitution. His statues should be installed in every school." He also pledged full support towards the film's release. The launch event wit-

nessed the presence of several dignitaries, including renowned director Chandramahesh, noted producer Tummalapalli Rama Satyanarayana, Santosham Suresh, senior actor Ramki, Telangana Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chairman Hari Govinda Prasad, Makers of Milkshakes CEO Rahul, Royal Ridge Properties CEO Srivikas, Civil Court Judge Suresh, Ambedkar activist Anitha, and Venkat Bulemoni, head of Cinetaria Media Works. All extended their best wishes for the film's grand success. The film is set to be released globally by Cinetaria Media Works.

Highlighting the efforts behind the project, actor-producer-director Mantha Krishna Chaitanya shared that the film is a heartfelt tribute to Dr Ambedkar, who worked tirelessly to create an inclusive society beyond caste, religion, and regional divisions. He also expressed his gratitude to everyone who supported him throughout the making and upcoming release of the film.

Won't topple Revanthh govt: Kishan Reddy

Hyderabad, April 15 Union Minister Kishan Reddy today said there was opposition to the Congress government in Telangana and questioned as to what the BJP would gain if the Congress government was toppled? He said they would not topple the government in Telangana in a hurry and added that the State government has five years.

Speaking to media persons, Kishan Reddy said "We have no intention of toppling the Congress government. There is no profit for the BJP by doing this. There is opposition to the Congress government. Everyone knows that. The BJP will win the next assembly elections," he said. Commenting on the appointment of the State BJP president, Reddy said there was no hurry for them in appointing the Telangana State party president and added that a new president would be appointed soon. He criticised that

Telangana had been made number one in selling lands, selling liquor, and taking loans. "Incidents of cutting down trees with floodlights at midnight have not happened anywhere else in the country except in Telangana. If a case is filed against the AI video post of cutting down trees in HCU, then file it. We have the responsibility to protect the land for future generations. Don't think that the government should run by selling the lands. CM Revanth's brand will be clear in the next elections. Nationalism is my brand," he said.

He wondered as to how can they complain to the National Dam Security Authority about SLBC if the project is not completed? He said if they come to power, they would reimburse the IT Taxes of Singareni workers while noting that Singareni workers are working by risking their lives

Web portal, mobile app for Kaleshwaram Saraswati River Pushkaralu launched

Hyderabad, April 15 Minister for Endowments Konda Surekha and Minister for IT and Industries Sridhar Babu officially launched a web portal and mobile application at the Secretariat on Tuesday for providing the comprehensive information regarding the 'Saraswati Pushkaralu,' which is scheduled to take place from May 15 to 26 at the Kaleshwaram temple in the Jayashankar Bhupalpally district. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Konda Surekha said the State government is making elaborate arrangements at the cost of Rs. 35 crores for the grand success of Pushkaralu and it is estimated that about 50,000 to one lakh people will come to the Pushkaralu every day. She stated that the Endowment department has benefited from the free bus scheme, being implemented after the Congress government came to power in Telangana as women are com-

ing to temples in large numbers. A 17-foot monolithic stone statue of Goddess Saraswati will be installed on the Saraswati Pushkara Ghat. Welcome arches will also be constructed at both the ghats," Konda Surekha said. She stated that arrangements have been made for special homas and cultural programmes during the 12 days of Pushkaralu at the temple. "For the convenience of devotees coming for Pushkaralu, special medical camps will be set up at the temple, at the bus stand and parking lots at the Ghats, with doctors and medical staff available 24 hours a day," she added. Principal Secretary (Endowments) Shailaja Ramaiyar, Commissioner Sridhar, Dharmika Parishad Advisor Govinda Hari, Bhupalpally District Collector Rahul Sharma, Temple EO Mahesh and other officials participated in the inaugural programme.

Public resistance is inevitable if the huts of the poor are removed: John Wesley

Hyderabad, April 15 : CPM State Secretary John Wesley today said that public resistance would be inevitable if the state government removed the huts of the poor in Mahabubabad district .

In a statement, he said that Thousands of homeless poor people had been living in huts on government land in the district headquarters of Mahabubabad for the last three years. "This morning, the police, revenue and municipal officials tried to demolish those huts with JCBs. There is a situation where people are afraid that if the huts are removed, they will douse themselves with petrol and commit suicide. There is a conspiracy to remove the huts of the poor on this land and build houses for the influential people . The CPI(M) Telangana State Committee is demanding that the Chief Minister immediately intervene and take steps to issue pattas to all the poor living there and take up house construction," he said . He alleged that Many landlords had al-

ready occupied a large part of the 200 acres of government land in Survey No. 255/1 near Kuravi Gate and had tried to sell it and added that out of the remaining land , only 20 acres were occupied by the poor, who have built huts and have been living there for the past three years. He alleged that the previous BRS government also tried to demolish the huts 19 times and claimed that It filed illegal cases against 200 people and sent them to jail. The poor are living there, resisting the government's detention. After the Congress came to power, it tried to demolish them twice. The CPI(M) is warning that the government should not indulge in a conspiracy to remove the huts and bind some followers to them," he said . Wesley said that When the local MLA brought it to the attention of the current Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to issue land titles and build houses for these poor people, he assured them that steps would be taken to provide the house sites to the poor.

We will never topple Revanthh govt: Kotha

Siddipet, April 15 (N Dubbaka MLA and BRS party leader Kotha Prabhakar Reddy has clarified that he never said that they would topple the Revanth Reddy government. He explained that they discussed the issues brought to their attention by the respective groups in a meeting of their party activists.

Speaking to media in Siddipet on Tuesday, MLA Kotha Prabhakar Reddy alleged that the Revanth Reddy government had failed in all fields for a year-and-a-half year and added that the dissatisfaction of the people with the government was the result of the same. He said his party leader KCR himself had desired that the Revanth Reddy government should last for five years while noting that the Opposition against the Congress party will help the BRS party to rule for another 20 years. He countered by questioning as to why they would topple the Revanth's government when



KCR wished it to last for five full years? He explained that he had been in charge of Gajwel assembly constituency for seven years and added that he had done many development works with the cooperation of former CM KCR in Gajwel.

When the walls came down, unheard voices found their way in



For 46 years, K.Pitchaiah has clutched onto hope the way most people might hold on to a fading photograph — weathered, creased but never discarded. Now a frail septuagenarian, the farmer still makes the arduous journey to government offices to secure a patta (possession document) for a modest one-acre of land in Errasanigudem village in Telangana’s Nalgonda district. Assigned to him in 1978, the land in survey number 215/3 remains his, yet the pattadar passbook — his legal entitlement — continues to elude him. For the 74-year-old, it is not a mere document; it is the key to dignity, ownership and closure. But despite changing governments, shifting policies and decades slipping by, Pitchaiah’s quest continues, lost in the maze of files and official apathy.

His case is not an exception. In late 2020, Rukmini, a middle-aged resident of Edulabad village in Medchal Malkajgiri district near Hyderabad, was shocked to find that her 16 guntas of land — her only asset — no longer belonged to her, at least on paper. The Dharani portal, touted as a revolutionary land records system by the previous Bharat Rashtira Samithi government, had erroneously recorded someone else’s name in her pattadar passbook. For over three years, Rukmini, who hails from a farmer’s family, made rounds of sub-registrar offices, pleading for a correction. Dharani, meant to be a one-stop solution, turned into a bureaucratic nightmare. Then there was Juman Bi, a grocery shop owner in Saidabad area of Hyderabad whose struggle was of a different nature. Coming from an economically disadvantaged background and having lost her husband a few years ago, her 14-year-old daughter’s critical illness became an unmanageable financial burden. Corporate hospitals were beyond her reach, and there was no place she could turn to for the treatment of her child’s neck tumour.

CM Revanth leaves for Japan to attract investments

Hyderabad, April 15 : Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy began his trip to Japan on Tuesday night. During his week-long visit from April 16 to 22, the Chief Minister will head an official delegation to Tokyo, Mount Fuji, Osaka and Hiroshima. As part of the visit, the Chief Minister will inaugurate the "Telangana Pavilion" at the Osaka World Expo 2025. Aiming to attract huge investments, the Chief Minister’s delegation will meet with leading company managements, industrialists, and several representatives of Japan. In scheduled meetings with the prospective investors, the official team led by the Chief Minister will explain the investment prospects in Telangana and also industrial and technical cooperation offered by Telangana State to Japan companies to set up their manufacturing units in the Telangana State

We won't spare anyone, who harassed us: BRS MLC Kavitha

Hyderabad, April 15 (NSS): Making it clear that they write down the names of all those, who are threatening them in the pink book, BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha said they would not spare them under any circumstances. MLC Kavitha came down against the Congress party leaders, who are harassing the BRS party workers. Kavitha participated in the party’s silver jubilee preparatory meeting in Banswada Assembly constituency and spoke.

It is learnt that some people are threatening us by calling us not to go to the BRS silver jubilee meeting. There is no question of forgiving those who have dragged our party leaders to the police stations and filed cases. There is no way that any Congress leader and official, who harassed the BRS party workers will be left alone. There is no need to fear the slaps of Congress leaders,” she said while addressing the gathering.

MLC Kavitha made it clear that they were not afraid of anybody. She claimed that the Congress party’s nature was to go back on their word and turn their backs. “The Congress leaders distributed guarantee cards signed by Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi to every house and got votes. Now the Congress government is cheating by not implementing the guarantees. In the past, the Congress party promised to give Telangana and then reneged on it for ten years. The Congress party is the reason for the sacrifices of hundreds of Telangana children,” she said. Kavitha criticized that the Congress government, which has generated so much opposition in just one-and-a-half years of rule, should get a Noble Prize for its achievements. She said one person from every house should come to the silver jubilee meeting

GOC TASA held Protocol meeting with AP Governor

Hyderabad, April 15 : Major General Ajay Misra, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Telangana & Andhra Sub Area (TASA), held a protocol meeting with Syed Abdul Nazeer, Governor of Andhra Pradesh. During the meeting, they discussed crucial aspects related to the role of Army in State & Nation Building. The importance of the Army’s involvement in nation-building initiatives and its role in supporting State development. Ex-Servicemen (ESM) Welfare, key issues affecting the welfare of ex-servicemen and potential solutions to address their needs, aspects of the Flag Day Fund, which supports the welfare of ex-servicemen and their families. The meeting aimed to foster cooperation and understanding between the Army and the State government, ultimately benefiting the people of Andhra Pradesh

These are not isolated incidents, but indicative of a larger picture that defined much of Telangana’s first decade as a separate State. Since its formation on June 2, 2014, thousands like Pitchaiah, Rukmini and Juman Bi found themselves adrift, with no formal channel to take their woes to the corridors of power. The then Pragati Bhavan, official residence of the Chief Minister, remained off-limits for the public. An intimidating fortress, access was restricted not just for ordinary citizens, but also elected representatives and senior bureaucrats, unless invited. It was, for most, a symbol of how far the State had moved from the people who had once fought for it. This wasn’t always the case. Many remember how the same premises once echoed with the footsteps of the poor and ailing during the tenure of the late Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy. Patients would line up with hope, and YSR would refer their cases for treatment under the Chief Minister’s Relief Fund, an initiative that laid the foundation for the pioneering Rajiv Arogyasri health scheme, later emulated across the country.

Change finally came when the Congress party took the reins of the State after the last Assembly elections. One of the first decisions by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy was to dismantle the physical and metaphorical walls around the Jyotirao Phule Praja Bhavan (previously Pragati Bhavan). Rejecting its exclusivity, he chose not to reside there himself. Instead, the space was repurposed, to serve the very people it had once shut out. On December 8, 2023, just a day after Revanth Reddy took oath as CM, the complex reopened under a new name and purpose. Pragati Bhavan became the beating heart of Prajavani, a citizen grievance redressal platform that allows people to walk in, voice their struggles and seek support from the government. Since then, a steady stream of people — farmers, widows, the sick and ailing, the displaced — have found their way to this newly accessible hub, holding onto documents, and hope. Prajavani, literally translating to “voice of the people”, has become a powerful symbol of Telangana’s evolving relationship with its citizens, one that is rooted not just in governance, but in empathy. And it’s working: Pitchaiah finally received his long-pending pattadar passbook, the error in Rukmini’s land records was corrected, and Juman Bi secured free treatment for her daughter — all within days of registering their respective complaints. Every Tuesday and Friday, the once-distant corridors of power now open their doors wide as citizens line up to submit their petitions, each a story of struggle, loss or hope. At the heart of this weekly ritual is a renewed

Covid scam panel recommends action against deputy commissioners of 3 Karnataka districts and BBMP officials

GNS News Agency, April 15

While four zones procured Covid equipment and medicine worth Rs 184.62 crore during the period, irregularities worth Rs 113.09 crore were found in almost two-thirds (61.31 percent) of them. While four zones procured equipment and medicine worth Rs 184.62 crore during the period, irregularities worth Rs 113.09 crore were found in almost two-thirds (61.31 percent) of them. The Justice Michael D’Cunha Commission, which probed a Covid-time procurements scam in Karnataka, has recommended an investigation against top Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike officials and the Bengaluru Rural, Gadag and Koppal deputy commissioners. It found irregularities in 54 per cent of the purchases (worth Rs 157.55 crore) by four BBMP zones and the three districts

A recent cabinet note on the second report by the commission, accessed by indianexpress.com, said that action should be initiated against joint commissioners, health officials and others posted in the Bommanahalli, Bengaluru South, Bengaluru West and Yelahanka zones between March 2020 and December 2022. The report was submitted to the government on April 5. While the four zones procured equipment and medicine worth Rs 184.62 crore during the period, irregularities worth Rs 113.09 crore were found in almost two-thirds (61.31 percent) of them. Along with a probe by Lokayukta or other investigating agencies, Justice D’Cunha has also recommended action to recover losses suffered owing to the irregularities. Recovering additional amounts from companies that benefited from the scam is also among the key recommendations.

Similar punishment should be initiated against the deputy commissioners, district health officer and other officials of the three districts, the commission has said. In Bengaluru Rural, the commission flagged procurements worth Rs 27.83 crore in the files of purchases worth Rs

Mamata’s Bengali New Year wish receives taunt from Oppn and an invitation to Murshidabad

GNS News Agency, April 15

On the morning of Bengali New Year’s Day, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee took to X and wrote, “Ami Banglai gaan gai... (I sing in Bengali).” Soon after the post, a fresh war of words and jibes among the prominent parties in West Bengal erupted. Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly Suvendu Adhikari posted, “While Rome was burning, Emperor Nero was playing the flute! When communal violence is blazing in the state, it is natural for you to sing... But the melody of the song has become out of tune!”

Congress leader Adhir Chowdhury said, “Chief Minister, your representative went to Manipur, and Hathras. Please come to Murshidabad... You love travelling. Come and travel along the bank of Ganges. You will write poetry there.” Chowdhury also said, “Now some people are shouting in Murshidabad that this area has become Afghanistan. That is not true. Many people used to go to other states for earning and they will not get jobs in the future. This situation was created because two political parties are playing the religion card.” BJP leader Dilip Ghosh said, “We always hope that the Bengali new year will bring prosperity, but never thought that a Bengali on this day would have to flee away from his house. It’s a terrible situation. While we always expect on this day to hear Rabindra Sangeet, we are hearing sounds of bombs and firing. Very unfortunate.”

Adhikari on Tuesday went to Tamluk to pay his tribute at Bargabhimanda mandir. He said, “On this day, I am wishing to God to change the situation of Bengal. All Bengalis should pray to God for Bengal’s situation to change.” However, state

promise: that no voice will go unheard. Each petitioner receives an acknowledgment slip bearing a unique ID, a small but significant assurance that their plea is part of an accountable process. These grievances are then routed to the relevant authorities, be it heads of departments, district collectors or mandal-level officials, based on the jurisdiction from which the grievance had been received. But the government hasn’t merely built a funnel for grievances; it has also created a mechanism of response. Realising that certain departments such as Revenue and Welfare attract a heavier flow of petitions, specialised desks manned by senior officials have been set up within the complex. These are active helpdesks where officials offer immediate solutions, guidance, and, often, resolution. All grievances are recorded and updated on the Prajavani portal (prajavani.cgg.gov.in), adding a layer of transparency and efficiency that has been missing from such public systems for years. To ensure follow-through, the government has mandated the presence of top-level officials, including the State Planning Board vice-chairman holding a Cabinet rank, to promptly handle urgent or complex matters. Beyond merely receiving petitions, the initiative emphasises direct human engagement. The officials concerned interact with citizens, understand the depth of their issues and commit to a time-bound response. Help desks assist those who may struggle to articulate their problems in formal language, ensuring that technicalities do not drown out genuine voices. Recognising that not all of Telangana’s citizens live within its borders, the government has also created a separate ‘Pravasi Prajavani’ counter for grievances related to migrant workers in the Middle East and Gulf countries. It is perhaps one of the most telling gestures of an administration trying to bridge distances, both literal and figurative. Getting to the root of issues To many bureaucrats, Prajavani has evolved into more than a complaint redressal platform. “It is a vital barometer of governance,” says one senior official, adding, “It allows us to spot gaps, tweak policies and design better systems.” One of the defining features of the programme is root cause analysis — an attempt not just to resolve the grievance at hand, but to dig deeper into why it occurred in the first place. This proactive approach feeds directly into policymaking and ensuring that services reach marginalised communities effectively. A case in point is the launch of Indira Giri Jalavikasam, a scheme specifically tailored for tribal farmers cultivating podu lands. Based on patterns in grievance data, the government realised a glaring need for irrigation support.



45.55 crore. In Koppal and Gadag districts, there were irregularities to the tune of Rs 5.04 crore and Rs 11.56 crore, respectively, against purchases worth Rs 23.71 crore and Rs 35.13 crore. The commission has recommended action against the officials for violation of norms prescribed in the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act, procedural lapses, improper management of files related to the purchases, breaking rules to aid a few companies while procuring medical equipment, and differences in expenses recorded over actual expenses. There was also a mismatch in the number of files related to several purchases, the commission noted. “Whether the files are hidden or expenditure statements altered is unclear,” it said. The first report of the commission, formed in August 2023, was submitted in August 2024. The government has extended its tenure till the end of 2025. The first report recommended action against former chief minister B S Yediyurappa and former health and family welfare minister B Sriramulu, among others. Huge discrepancies were reported in the BJP government’s purchases of ventilators, PPE kits and medicines, among other things, in the peak Covid years of 2020 and 2021. The Congress government has formed a Special Investigation Team to frame charges in connection with the Covid procurements scam.



finance minister Chandrima Bhattacharya during her ‘Nababarsha’ puja with other TMC woman leaders, said, “It is clear now that some people plan the violence in Murshidabad to tarnish our state’s image. It is now as clear as daylight and people can also understand that. So, people will give a befitting reply to those who created this.” Last week, parts of Murshidabad saw violence during protests against the recent amendment of the Waqf Act. On Monday, the Chief Minister said, “I should say that anybody can engage in movements in a peaceful and democratic way, but don’t take the law in your own hands. There will be many provocations but you should not be provoked.” Without naming any political organisation, she said, “When I go to some specific programmes, they (Opposition) change my surname... Religion means respect, humanity, peace, culture, harmony. There is no bigger religion than love human beings. If you love people, you can conquer everybody.”

Amravati airport set for commercial operations from tomorrow

GNS News Agency, April 15

After years of planning and multiple delays, Amravati in Maharashtra will finally join the aviation map with scheduled commercial flights set to begin operations from Belora Airport on Wednesday, April 16.

A 72-seater plane run by Alliance Air will take off from Amravati at 11.30 am and touch down in Mumbai, situated over 690 km away, in just 1 hour and 45 minutes, marking a major step towards improved connectivity and growth in the Vidarbha region. Union Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu will flag off the inaugural flight under the Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) regional connectivity programme in the presence of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and other state and Civil Aviation ministry officials. According to sources, all 72 seats for the first flight were booked by Tuesday, well before the launch. The fare per person is Rs 2,100, ensuring affordable travel for a larger segment of the population. After the first flight, Alliance Air will have regular flights between Amravati and Mumbai on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. “Mumbai flights will leave at 2.30 pm and reach Amravati by 4.20 pm. The return flight will leave Amravati at 4.50 pm and arrive in Mumbai at 6.35 pm,” a spokesperson for Alliance Air told The Indian Express.

Located 15 kilometers from Amravati, Belora airport is constructed by the Maharashtra Airport Development Company (MADC) to meet the air connectivity requirements of Amravati and neighbouring Vidarbha districts with a new 1,800x50 meter runway and safety features like the Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI). MADC vice-chairperson and Managing Director Swati Pandey inspected the facility last week and called the launch “a new era” for Maharashtra’s aviation sector. “The airport was first developed in 1992 for non-scheduled operations. With UDAN funding and state support, we have transformed it into a fully operational commercial hub,” she said. The airport will become a multi-purpose facility with South Asia’s largest pilot training academy — Air India’s Flying Training Organisation (FTO) — with 34 aircraft by the end of 2025, and the soon-to-be-completed 1,000-acre PM MITRA Mega Textile Park expected to draw global investment, create jobs, and benefit farmers, traders, and tourists through improved connectivity.

Besides trade, the airport will also increase connectivity to tourist spots such as the Melghat Wildlife Sanctuary and the Ambadevi Temple in Amravati.

Pune man booked for tearing passport pages to hide Bangkok trips at Mumbai Airport

GNS News Agency, April 15

Mumbai passenger tears off passport pages to hide Bangkok trips The immigration officer, while checking his passport, learnt that the passenger had arrived from Indonesia via Vietnam. A 51-year-old man from South Pune was intercepted by immigration authorities at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport for allegedly tearing pages from his passport in an attempt to conceal past trips to Bangkok from his family on Monday. The man has been booked by Mumbai Police for defrauding immigration authorities.

According to Rajiv Ranjan Kumar, the immigration officer who filed the complaint, he noticed the irregularity when the passenger arrived at the immigration counter in the early hours of Monday. Upon presenting his passport and boarding pass, it was noted that the traveler had arrived from Indonesia via Vietnam. Upon further inspection, the officer discovered that several pages on his passport were missing. The officer then took the passenger for further inquiry.

During questioning, the passenger allegedly admitted to tearing out certain pages nearly a year ago to hide details of previous trips to Bangkok from his family, according to the FIR. Describing the act as illegal tampering with official travel documents, immigration authorities filed a complaint with Sahar Police Station. The man has been booked under Section 12 of the Passports Act and Section 318(4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

‘Poor experience’: Passengers left frustrated as FLY91 flight from Goa to Pune delayed by over 4 hours



GNS News Agency, April 15

Pune The passengers reported receiving multiple notifications pushing back the departure time, first to 10.30 pm, then 11.30 pm and so on. The passengers reported receiving multiple notifications pushing back the departure time, first to 10.30 pm, then 11.30 pm and so on. (Credit: Pexels) Passengers were left waiting at Goa’s Manohar International Airport for hours after a flight from Pune was delayed by over four hours Sunday night. Around 40 passengers were scheduled to take the FLY91 flight which was to depart at 8.05 pm and reach Pune by 10.30 pm. However, the flight departed after midnight and landed around 1.15 am. The passengers reported receiving multiple notifications pushing back the departure time, first to 10.30 pm, then 11.30 pm and so on. Ameya Kunte, one of the passengers, took to X and posted: “The Goa (GOX)- Pune (PNQ) flight, scheduled for 8 pm, was delayed by 4 hours. Finally, it took off past midnight. There was no advance intimation, apology, or food. There was no pickup bus at Pune airport, so passengers were forced to walk to the arrivals area, putting travelers at risk. The manager and ground staff were fighting. It was a poor experience.” FLY91 airlines attributed the delay to a technical issue in flight IC 1378, following which a spare aircraft was deployed later.

Telecom operators publish mobile network coverage maps in accordance with TRAI mandate



Hyderabad: In a landmark step toward greater transparency and consumer empowerment, mobile network coverage maps have been published by the major Telecom Service Providers (TSP). This step, after all, was brought into force by the mandate of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) to aid users make informed choices regarding mobile and broadband services.

The initiative was in accordance with TRAI's revised regulations known as 'The Standards of Quality of Service of Access (Wireline and Wireless) and Broadband (Wireline and Wireless) Services Regulations, 2024 (6 of 2024)' that became effective from October 1, 2024, across the country for wireline and wireless services alike. According to the

new rules, all service providers implementing wireless access would be required to post service-wise geospatial coverage maps on their websites. These maps should clearly offer a visual representation of areas where wireless voice or broadband services could be subscribed for under a standard format issued by TRAI. The final date for publication has been set for April 1, 2025. In the spirit of common execution, TRAI directed extensive technical guidelines for format and structure of the maps via Direction no. RG-17/(3)/2022-QoS, dated November 22, 2024. This document is accessible via the official TRAI website. In an effort to ease access, TRAI also provided the links to all operator coverage maps under the "Mobile Coverage Map" section available at its website (www.trai.gov.in) under the path: Consumer Info ? Mobile Coverage Map ? The users may also provide their feedback and/or flag any coverage discrepancies through integrated tools within the maps for which TRAI observed that real-world coverage would vary, especially inside buildings, due to series of dynamic environmental factors. Apart from consumer benefits, these maps will eventually facilitate national interests by aiding in planning for telecom infrastructure and determining whether any policy or regulatory measures should be adopted. Consumers requiring further information or clarifications may reach out to Shri Tejpal Singh, Advisor (QoS-I), TRAI, by sending an email to adv-qos1@trai.gov.in or by contacting +91-11-20907759.

‘What will Governor do with so much land?’ BJP MP Udayanraje Bhosale urges Amit Shah to announce Shivaji memorial at Raj Bhavan

GNS News Agency, April 15

Ahead of Amit Shah's visit to Raigad on the death anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji on Saturday, BJP MP Udayanraje Bhosale, who is the descendent of the Maratha ruler, said Friday that he urged the Union Home Minister to announce the construction of a Shivaji memorial at the Raj Bhavan in Mumbai. "It was decided to have a monument for Maratha king Shivaji in the Arabian Sea near Mumbai. Its foundation stone was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and we were also present on the occasion. However, the work did not start, most likely due to environmental issues," Bhosale said in Pune after visiting Phule Wada on the birth anniversary of social reformer Mahatma Jyotiba Phule.

Speaking about the 50-acre land at Raj Bhavan, which is next to the Arabian Sea, Bhosale said, "What will the state Governor do with so much land? Part of it can be used for developing the proposed memorial for Maratha king Shivaji. I have already discussed the same with Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. I hope that they will declare the same tomorrow at Raigad."

The MP said he hopes that the Union government will also accept his demand for a law against those making derogatory statements on national leaders. "Those making



derogatory remarks against our national heroes and figures should be charged under non-bailable offence and punished," he said. The BJP leader said action should be taken against charitable hospitals for not giving free treatment or concessions to patients from poor families. "Charitable hospitals get government land almost free of cost but fail to provide free medical treatment to poor patients," he alleged. Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, minister Chandrakant Patil, NCP MP Chhagan Bhujbal, NCP(SP) executive president Supriya Sule and state Congress chief Harshwardhan Sapkal also visited the Phule Wada separately to mark the birth anniversary of the social reformer.

Debt, despair and the dark side of online gambling in Telangana



GNS News Agency, April 15

Tears brim in Edire Laxmi's bloodshot eyes as she stands outside the gate of the house where her son took his last breath. "I cannot open the door and see inside. It is too traumatic," murmurs the frail 39-year-old from Pochamma Basti, Maheswaram, about an hour's drive from Hyderabad. Unable to return home, she now stays at her mother's house in a maze of narrow lanes lined with small dwellings in the prosperous village. Inside a cluttered room filled with rice sacks, utensils and a faded calendar, Laxmi squats beside her mother, staring blankly at her phone. Memories flood in — of her quiet, brooding son, Sai Kiran, juggling three mobile phones, worrying constantly about money, and rarely meeting friends.

December 19 had started like any other day. That morning, her 21-year-old son skipped college and stayed home. "I made him breakfast and left for the farm around 9 a.m.," she says. Then came the call. Her son had set himself on fire. When she reached home, she found thick grey smoke pouring from the house, the acrid stench of burning flesh and petrol filling the air. Neighbours threw water, but inside, Sai Kiran sat still — legs stretched out, hands slightly raised, body burnt beyond recognition. Against the soot-stained wall, he remained unmoving. Laxmi's mother trembles as she recalls his final words: "I have a lot of debt. I can't take it anymore," he had whispered through scorched lips. The day before, he was seen with a friend. He later stepped out to buy petrol for his motorcycle, but instead he doused himself in it and set himself ablaze.

Financial struggles weighed heavily on him. His father, a groundskeeper in Shankarpally, couldn't afford medical college, so he switched from engineering to a commerce degree in Hyderabad's Narayanguda. But money woes followed him. He persuaded his family to buy him a ₹2-lakh motorcycle, promising to handle the payments. What they didn't know was that he had taken loans against it, leading to relentless calls from lenders. "I assumed it was just ₹16,000 in monthly installments," Laxmi says, adding, "But later, I found out he had taken a ₹1-lakh loan on it. He borrowed another ₹40,000 from a friend. He never told me the full story." The debts kept piling up. Sai Kiran had borrowed 50,000, ₹20,000, ₹30,000 and ₹15,000 from different sources to buy an iPhone and other devices. When the pressure mounted, he admitted he couldn't go on. Laxmi borrowed ₹2 lakh from a village elder to clear his debts, thinking it would end there. "I told him to stop taking loans, to focus on studies, that we would get him married at the right time. But he wanted to earn. Money came and went. What was the point?" The last time his father saw him, he gave

him ₹200. It was their final conversation. Moments before his death, Sai Kiran told his grandmother he was drowning in debt. Police linked his suicide to online betting, but Laxmi isn't convinced. "At the morgue, police said his friends mentioned gaming and betting. That's what went into the report, but no one ever told me. If he had, I would have done anything to save him." Sai Kiran wasn't alone. Since 2020, Telangana has recorded 42 gambling-related deaths, eight in 2025 alone. Illegal betting spikes during IPL season, indicating a surge in market activity. Just days before Sai Kiran's death, Chenamoni Shivalingam, 28, of Thulekalan village in Telangana's Ranga Reddy district met a similar fate. On December 15 last year, he stepped out of home, doused himself in diesel, and set himself ablaze. His family managed to put out the flames and rushed him to Osmania General Hospital, but he succumbed after three days. His brother later revealed Shivalingam had been trapped in online betting, buried under debt he couldn't escape. Like Sai Kiran, Shivalingam showed no signs of struggle until it was too late. Lured by the promise of quick money, both fell into a system designed to keep players chasing losses. What seems like chance is, in reality, a rigged game where the house always wins. Illegal betting platforms use sophisticated algorithms to create an illusion of near-wins, keeping players hooked while pushing them deeper into debt. With instant loans just a click away, many don't realise the trap until they are drowning in losses.

For families like Laxmi's and Ramalingam's, the realisation came too late. Their sons, once full of promise, are now just statistics in a growing crisis. As illegal betting thrives, fuelled by aggressive ads and an unchecked digital ecosystem, one question lingers: How many more lives will it claim before action is taken? Gambling addiction among Telangana's youth is rising, driven by easy access to online platforms. Once confined to matka dens, betting now requires nothing more than a smartphone, making it dangerously convenient. Diana Monteiro, a Hyderabad-based counseling psychologist who has seen a surge in young clients struggling with gambling-related debt, says: "More people are coming in with major financial stress, and it's only going to grow. The lure of fast money makes gambling seem like an easy solution." She links the problem to a digital upbringing that fosters instant gratification. "From birth, they have been exposed to quick rewards — games, social media, entertainment. Gambling operates on the same principle: thrill, anticipation, and the rush of winning. Their brains are wired to seek these highs, making addiction almost inevitable." Academic, professional and social pressures add to the problem. Many struggle to keep up — chasing the latest gadgets, social status or even family expectations to earn early. Purnima Nagaraja, a psychiatrist in Hyderabad, says, "This pushes them toward quick money-making methods, and gambling becomes an easy escape." Dr. Monteiro warns of another alarming trend: "Young people are bombarded with offers of instant loans — no paperwork, no questions asked. This ease of access to both gambling and quick money is a dangerous mix." The warning signs are often clear. Addicts may withdraw socially, take loans, steal money or sell valuables. "If someone constantly talks about quick money, borrows frequently or has extreme mood swings, they might be struggling. Lying to family, risking jobs or relationships, and chasing losses — these are all red flags," she says.

4 arrested for killing man with choppers in Bandra, dargah land dispute behind attack: Mumbai police



GNS News Agency, April 15

The Mumbai police arrested four people on Friday for allegedly attacking and killing a person over an old property dispute related to a dargah land in Bandra. Three relatives

of the deceased who tried to save him also sustained minor injuries in the attack.

According to the police, the four accused — Imran Khan, 35, his wife Fatima Imran Khan, 37, Usmanali Shaikh, 31 and his father Zakir Ali Shaikh, 62, all residents of Dargah Galli, behind Badi Masjid, Bandra (West) — attacked Shakir Ali Shaikh with choppers after a heated argument over the property dispute. Shakir Ali Shaikh's relative Afzal Ali Shaikh, who is the complainant in the murder case, Afzal Ali's mother, and another relative Khijatali Sandole, tried to save Shakir Ali but were attacked too. The fight stopped after the locals intervened, and the police were called. The injured were rushed to the Bhabha hospital, where Shakir Ali succumbed to his injuries. Dikshit Gedam, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Zone 9, Mumbai police, said, "The Bandra police registered a case under Sections 103(1), 109, 118(1), 115, 49, 352, 351(2), 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Sections 4 and 25 of the Arms Act."

Mumbai One smart card to be launched soon: Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis

GNS News Agency, April 15

Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis to launch Mumbai One Smart card. The project seeks to do away with the inconvenience of purchasing separate tickets for different modes of public transport. Mumbai residents will soon have the convenience of availing all public transport in the city on a single card with the new 'Mumbai One' smart card, after Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw gave the go-ahead Friday. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis confirmed the development, saying the backend work and digital architecture of the card would be done within a month. "Once we have the system architecture in place, we will roll out the Mumbai One card for all Mumbaikars. It will indeed be a game-changer for urban mobility," he said.

Fadnavis also highlighted the need for Indian Railways' backing in integrating the local train services, which constitute the backbone of Mumbai's transportation system. "Railways have a significant contribution to make towards Mumbai's daily commute. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw gave a green signal to this ambitious initiative, and we are ready to roll out the card," he added. The project



seeks to do away with the inconvenience of purchasing separate tickets for different modes of public transport. The card will provide access to local trains, the metro, the mono-rail, and Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) buses. Other public transport systems, including Thane Municipal Transport (TMT) and Navi Mumbai Municipal Transport (NMMT) in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), will also come under the card.

Police official ‘who kicked protesting teachers at Kasba’ made IO in the case against teachers; removed after objections

GNS News Agency, April 15

The police personnel of Kolkata police who allegedly kicked protesting teachers in front of the DI office of Kasba on Wednesday was deputed as the Investigating Officer of the case lodged against the teachers. However, after a series of protests from different corners, Kolkata police withdrew him and named another officer as the IO. On Wednesday, teachers who lost their jobs after the Supreme Court cancelled the recruitment of over 25,000 school staff — carried out in 2016 by the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) — gathered at the office of the District Inspector (DI) of schools at Kasba to protest against the state government. The office was locked, and the protesters allegedly tried to break the lock.

When police resorted to lathi-charging to make the protesters disperse, the teachers alleged that one of the officers kicked a teacher and that many of the teachers were injured. After this, DI Sanjay Chattopadhyay lodged a complaint with police, where he wrote, "This is to inform you that today (April 9) at about 12.11 pm, all of a sudden, a crowd of nearly 400-500 protesters assembled at the gate of Siksha Bhavan and started slogan saying 'Aake DI office bhenge debo, eder jonne amader chakri geche' (Today we will break the DI office, we lost our jobs because of them) loudly, and then without any provocation, instantaneously broke the locked main gate of the campus. They rushed to the ground floor of this office and abused and attacked the working employees of the office." The complaint further read, "At that time, a few (police) tried to pacify them, but the protestors began to beat the office employees and police personnel with fists and blows and as a result, one police-



woman fell down on the ground and policemen were also injured while trying to pacify the protestors. Thereafter, the protestors tried to vent out their anger by damaging the furniture of the office."

The Kasba police station filed an FIR against protesting teachers. Ritan Das was named as the IO, but after protests from people, including from some Opposition party members, the IP was changed. A senior official of Kolkata police said, "Kasba PS was told to change the name of the IO from the headquarters. Top officials of Kolkata Police are not happy with this decision." The FIR was filed under sections 190 (unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object), 191(2) (rioting), 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 132 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 121(1) (voluntarily causing hurt or grievous hurt to deter public servant from his duty), 351(2) (criminal intimidation), and 285 (danger or obstruction in public way or line of navigation) of the BNS.

Punjab deputy commissioners list challenges as HC cracks whip on highway construction

GNS News Agency, April 15

The deputy commissioners and police chiefs of the districts in Punjab where national highways are under construction reported a range of local challenges — from land disputes and compensation issues in Sangrur and Fazilka to possession delays and negotiations in Gurdaspur, Ludhiana, and Moga. They filed the report before the Punjab and Haryana High Court last week following criticism over repeated obstructions in the construction of the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway and related highway corridors across Punjab. The court, during the hearing, directed the officials to hand over all land acquired for National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) projects without delay. Sandeep Rishi, Deputy Commissioner, reported obstruction on a 70-metre stretch in Jhaneri village, where farmers objected due to lack of approach to their remaining land and low compensation. He stated a notification for the approach road would be issued within two weeks, resolving the issue.

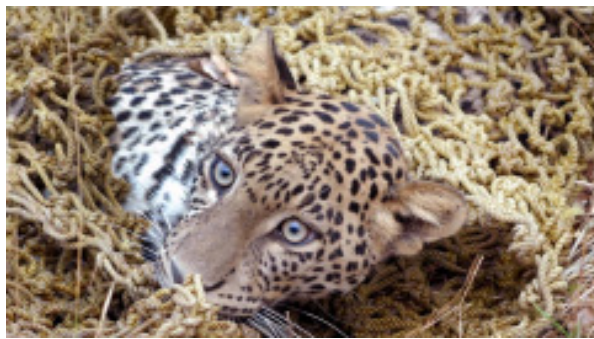
Viraj Shayamkarn Tidke, Deputy Commissioner, said that issues across 836 metres had largely been resolved, except for five locations where farmer protests continued. He sought 20 days to clear the remaining stretches. Rahul, Deputy Commissioner, and Abhimanyu Rana, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), sought time until May 3 to hand over possession, citing standing crops and compensation disbursement issues. They affirmed continued efforts to support the NHAI. Dalwinderjit Singh, Deputy Commissioner, detailed ongoing work across multiple expressway packages. Hindrances stemmed from standing crops, partition-related disputes, and inadequate compensation. He reported progress following intervention meetings and sought four weeks to resolve pending issues. Himanshu

Jain, Deputy Commissioner, and Abhimanyu Rana, SSP (Rural), said around 86 per cent of land had been taken. Pending areas included stretches in Rajgarh and Kaind villages due to illegal occupation and demands for higher compensation. For the Ludhiana-Bathinda and Ludhiana-Rupnagar projects, officials cited resistance from farmer unions and ongoing arbitration as reasons for partial delays. Himanshu Aggarwal, Deputy Commissioner, reported that land in Lohian Khas, Domana, Phull, and Gudhuwal was yet to be handed over. He committed to completing the process by April 30 after crop harvesting. Amit Kumar Panchal, Deputy Commissioner, said only an 80-metre stretch in village Meera remained. The possession was delayed due to the presence of a mint plant and machines. Notices had been issued, and possession was expected within four weeks. Showkat Ahmad Parray, Deputy Commissioner, confirmed that all possession issues in the district had been resolved. Amarpreet Kaur Sandhu, Deputy Commissioner, and Varinder Singh Brar, SSP, said a 1.77-km stretch in Abohar-2 (Pakka Seed Farm) remained due to occupation by 'Gair Marusi' cultivators demanding compensation on a par with private owners. They expected to secure possession after crop harvest or through police assistance if needed.

T Benith, Deputy Commissioner, listed several meetings that were held between March 7 and 28 to resolve resistance in villages such as Badthana, Senha, and Rangarh. The administration engaged directly with farmer unions and landowners and undertook repeated site visits to defuse opposition. Sagar Setia, Deputy Commissioner, and Ajay Gandhi, SSP, reported that 98.06 km out of 99.9 km had been handed over.

A devout Muslim who staunchly believes in the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, Araqchi has served under presidents whose instincts have ranged from pragmatic to headline. Throughout his tenure, Iran's relationship with the wider world has been partly defined by its nuclear programme - which it says is only for civilian purposes but many Western countries maintain is aimed at developing the means to build atomic bombs. His reputation in Tehran may shield him from internal criticism if Iran is forced to concede on key issues in the talks with the United States. Despite being a political insider with close ties to Khamenei, Araqchi has kept himself distant from "political frays and infighting" between factions, according to a senior Iranian official. "He has good relations with the supreme leader, the Revolutionary Guards and all political factions in Iran," the official said.

Living with leopards in Mysuru



For a city recognised as a tourist destination for all seasons, Mysuru is also the gateway to famed tiger reserves and elephant sanctuaries like Bandipur and Nagarahole — both of which are just a short drive away. While the city is no stranger to wildlife, which is part of the region’s identity, Mysuru was in the spotlight in recent times due to high frequency of leopard sightings in its industrial and residential localities.

It is not that leopards have suddenly made their way into Mysuru — they have long been a part of the region’s landscape. But with unchecked urbanisation and the city’s horizontal sprawl steadily encroaching upon their natural habitats, encounters between leopards and residents have become increasingly common. This is drawing attention to the ‘presence’ of the spotted big cats but which, in fact, have always been around. Forest department spent nearly a month looking for a leopard which was sighted on Infosys campus in Mysuru in January 2025, but it evaded capture and gave them a slip. Forest department spent nearly a month looking for a leopard which was sighted on Infosys campus in Mysuru in January 2025, but it evaded capture and gave them a slip. | Photo Credit: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTTwo recent casesIn recent months, two high-profile industrial installations in Mysuru suffered a “security breach”. A leopard sauntered into the 350-acre campus of Infosys forcing the company employees to work from home. The Forest Department scoured the campus for almost a month, deployed its staff on a 24x7 basis to monitor the site, installed camera traps and checked for fresh pugmarks but only to draw a blank after which the search operation was disbanded. Within weeks, another leopard slipped into the woods surrounding the Reserve Bank of India’s currency note printing unit. However, the leopard was not as lucky as its counterpart at Infosys, and after a few weeks of persistent effort, the forest department managed to outwit the big spotted cat and capture it much to the relief of the employees.

Leopard sighting and their capture from the industrial areas in and around Mysuru are not new, and multiple incidents – of leopard capture – have been reported from the BEML campus alone. In November 2022, a leopard sneaked into Brindavan Gardens, a popular tourist destination, and forced the authorities to close the gardens for public for a prolonged period. In addition, presence of wildlife in industrial areas such as Metagalli, Hootagalli, Belawadi, Kadakola etc have been reported in the past and is not hard to explain as these were villages surrounded by scrub vegetation. They were developed into industrial layouts only in the recent decades. And contrary to prevailing narrative it is not that leopards stray into villages or cities, but it is human intrusion in to their territory that has increased sightings and augmented conflict. Multiple incidents of leopards being captured from the BEML campus in Mysuru have been reported over the years.

Even today, scrub forests and agricultural fields extend to miles on end beyond the factory clusters. Though the habitat has eroded over the years, leopards have adapted to the changing milieu and thrived, according to forest department officials. Mysuru is about 80 km from both Bandipur and Nagarahole, but the forest boundaries are linked by stretches of scrub jungle, which in turn connect to agricultural lands with a mosaic of sugarcane fields, fallow plots, and patches of wilderness. This landscape continuity provides crucial connectivity for leopard movement and dispersal. Within the city, Chamundi Hills, designated as a reserve forest, along with its surrounding areas, also serves as a green pocket within the urban sprawl—offering cover, prey, and passage for wildlife all of which have combined to create a unique setting where humans and leopards increasingly cross paths. In addition, Chamundi Hills itself is sur-

rounded by a landscape marked by agricultural fields and patches of wilderness that connect to reserve forests including Arabhittitu, facilitating free movement of leopards.

While the proliferation of CCTV surveillance cameras and the social media have played a role in high rate of detection of leopards and dissemination of the news, the reality is that the big spotted cats have for long lived alongside humans, silently navigating the fringes of the city. Experts and wildlife biologists have emphasised that, unlike tigers, leopards are the most adaptable of the big cats as they can survive not only in dense forests but also in agricultural fields, farmhouses, and semi-urban areas. And from the leopard’s perspective, Mysuru ticks all the right boxes as it provides the perfect blend of conditions required for them to thrive. That leopard population is significant in the landscape around Mysuru is evident in the statistics provided by the forest department. According to Dr. I.B. Prabhugoud, Deputy Conservator of Forests and head of Leopard Task Force, nearly 150 leopards have been captured and translocated from Mysuru and surrounding regions in two years. The Leopard Task Force was established in January 2023 as in the preceding few months, four people were killed in leopard attacks in T. Narsipura taluk alone. And ever since it was established, the LTF has attended to nearly 2500 complaints pertaining to leopard sighting - though a majority of them could not be described as a conflict.

Though the LTF handles cases in Mysuru, Mandya, Chamarajanagar districts, out of 150 leopards that were captured till the end of March 2025, 122 of them were captured in Mysuru district. Of these, 48 were from Mysuru taluk which underlines how the landscape was suitable for leopards to survive and live cheek-by-jowl in a human-dominated landscape. But for wildlife like leopards to survive, there should be adequate prey population and Dr. Prabhugoud pointed out that livestock is their first preference, as evident in the number of complaints pertaining to cattle kills by leopards. Around the city, leopards prey on street dogs apart from poultry waste that is dumped on the city outskirts. While increase in leopard sighting heightens tension in the local community, forest department has made efforts to educate the public about leopard behaviour and the dos and don’ts that need to be complied with, to evade a conflict. The key is to stop dumping poultry and meat waste on the outskirts of the localities which draws dogs and in turn, are preyed upon by leopards. There is a surge in leopard sightings during winter as it is mating season and hence people are advised to walk in groups during dawn and dusk, which is when the leopards are most active. Farmers have been instructed to be in large groups in their fields during sugarcane harvesting which is where leopards tend to leave behind their cubs. Or the mother could be with the cubs making it susceptible to be more aggressive when it senses danger from humans. But generally, leopards tend to slither away at the sight of a crowd and hence people are advised to seek security in numbers. Keeping livestock tethered in secure enclosures is another advisory to reduce predation on domestic animals and mitigate conflict. The landscape surrounding Mysuru includes agricultural fields and reserve forests where leopards come to dwell.

While the forest department is pursuing a “capture and relocate” protocol with regard to leopards in human landscape, there is also a proposal to create an enclosure or sanctuary to house leopards captured in conflict situations. A 92-acre plot of land which is part of territorial forest at Yelwal, on the outskirts of Mysuru city, has been identified for the purpose. The facility will have a capacity to house 100 leopards and cost ₹73 crore in the first phase. Though it may appear to be a practical solution, experts aver that housing leopards in confined spaces or in cages was not the way forward to redress the problem. A more realistic approach is to protect the wilderness of the city through habitat conservation, besides strengthening and securing wildlife corridors through scientific landscape management. This could be reinforced by implementing conflict mitigation strategies such as early warning system, reduction of prey animals in peripheral areas by adopting animal birth control measures for dogs, garbage management etc and nudge the leopards toward their natural habitat, rather than allow them to be lured to the city periphery due to easy availability of prey animals. Experts believe such an approach offers a living example of co-existence with wildlife. It also represents a sustainable alternative providing a win-win situation for both humans and leopards and should be pursued, instead of locking them in cages.

Trade wars benefit no one: Italian Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani



Trade wars benefit no one, said Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani who landed in Delhi on Friday for a bilateral visit, stressing the hope that after pausing reciprocal tariffs for 90 days, the US can engage with the European Union for an agreement, and that India and the EU also conclude the BTIA this year. In a written interview to The Hindu, Mr. Tajani admitted that it would be hard to achieve the India-Middle East- Europe Corridor (IMEC)’s potential until there is peace in West Asian countries, but said Italy is keen to promote Trieste port as a hub for the trading route. My dream is to see zero tariffs! Tariffs hurt both consumers and businesses alike. We firmly believe in the power of open markets, free and fair competition, and a level playing field for all.

President Trump’s decision to pause his tariffs plan for 90 days is a signal that we want to interpret positively, hoping that it will facilitate negotiations. Trade wars serve no one’s interests, especially when it comes to the vital transatlantic trade relationship. Italy fully supports the European Commissioner Sefcovic’s efforts to initiate a positive dialogue with the US. We are confident that through constructive negotiations, we can find mutually beneficial solutions. PM Meloni has said that she often gets asked where Italy stands- with Europe or with US. Given that Ms. Meloni even attended US President Trump’s inaugural, is Italy disappointed that the US has not consulted the EU more, leading to many public differences in the past few months, including over Mr. Trump’s claims on Greenland?

Italy, like India, has already built strong ties with the Trump Administration. At the same time, Italy remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting an effective dialogue between Europe and the US on key issues, from security to trade. President Trump is driving a bold agenda both domestically and internationally, which can sometimes cause friction, even with close partners like the EU. However, we have also seen a genuine willingness from Washington to collaborate with Europe. An example is the series of Quint meetings convened by Secretary of State Rubio, which I have praised as a significant step forward. We must do everything we can to prevent a transatlantic divide. Regarding President Trump’s tariff policies, our approach must be one of constructive engagement, not confrontation, prioritizing open and honest dialogue with Washington. I firmly believe there is room for mutual understanding and greater reciprocity. The transatlantic relationship needs to evolve and find a new equilibrium, and I am optimistic that this process will unlock fresh opportunities for cooperation—opportunities we must be ready to embrace.

During her visit to India in February, EC President Ms. Von Der Leyen and PM Modi set a year-end deadline for the EU-India BTIA to be finalized. How likely is this, given previous delays and in what sectors could India and Italy most benefit from a trading agreement? We recognize that past negotiations have not always gone as planned, but it is undeniable that the political momentum behind the current talks is stronger than ever. The visit of the entire European Commission to New Delhi last February was a powerful signal of trust and political will directed toward the Indian leadership. The EU is determined to be a key partner to India, and there is broad consensus across Brussels and European capitals on the importance of securing a meaningful agreement. Italy fully supports the Commission’s efforts in these negotiations, eager to see them reach a successful conclusion.

One of the major blocks to the BTIA negotiations has been on India’s tariffs and market access issues for wine and spirits, and agriculture and dairy products. Given that

the India-US BTA is being negotiated this year as well, would Italy and EU expect the same terms as those being offered to the US in BTA negotiations?

Every trade relationship is unique and we do not assume that what works for India and the US will automatically benefit the EU as well. In the context of ongoing negotiations, what we seek is the flexibility needed to achieve the mutually beneficial agreement we all aspire to. On our part, we are fully committed to going the extra mile to secure a meaningful and balanced EU-India trade agreement, and we are confident that our counterparts share this same determination.

Can any progress be made on IMEC between India and Italy’s Trieste without peace and stability along the route between UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel’s Haifa Port, countries that have tense ties at present?

Of course, until peace in the Middle East is established, it will be hard to achieve the full potential of the Corridor. Nevertheless, for the Italian Government, this project represents a beacon of hope. It holds the promise of acting as a catalyst for stability across the broader region. It is essential to start shaping a new vision for progress today—one that focuses on strengthening geo-economic and intermodal connectivity between Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. This is why we are offering the port of Trieste as a hub to support the “Cotton Road”. Trieste is a key port in Northeast Italy, a region that leads in our economy and drives growth and innovation. Our newly appointed Special Envoy will focus on key areas, including the development of vital port, railway, and digital infrastructure, as well as securing the necessary financial support, with a strong emphasis on the EU’s Global Gateway initiative. I plan to organize a Ministerial meeting with all countries part of the Cotton Road with the goal to strengthen further our cooperation!

Do you support the US’s negotiations with Russia on Ukraine?

I look forward to discussing the war in Ukraine with Minister Jaishankar, we appreciate very much the role of India in fostering peace and dialogue in the international arena. We deeply appreciate Washington’s efforts to foster confidence-building measures between the parties, with the ultimate goal of achieving a just and lasting peace. The Black Sea deal and the prisoners exchange were encouraging first steps, facilitated by the US, but much more goodwill is needed, particularly from Moscow. This war must come to an end, and the tragic loss of lives must stop. Achieving this requires a genuine commitment from all sides, along with good-faith negotiations and concrete actions that follow through on the agreements made.

Your visit to India comes a few months after PM Modi and PM Meloni adopted the Joint Strategic Action Plan on the side-lines of the G-20 in Brazil. How much has been done in concrete terms to take it forward since then?

This moment reflects the culmination of a deepening of our bilateral relationship—one that has never been more robust or dynamic. Following the adoption of the Joint Strategic Action Plan, a series of high-level institutional visits have laid the foundation for the ongoing Political Consultations with Minister Jaishankar. Together, we have identified key priority areas for cooperation in the coming years (2025-2029), all brimming with untapped potential. These include energy transition, innovation, connectivity through IMEC, advanced manufacturing, defence, security, renewable energy, tourism, migration and mobility. During my visit, I will inaugurate the representative office of the Italian joint-stock company, which promotes Italian companies’ investments abroad (SIMEST).

Your visit is part of the “political dialogue” pillar, what are the issues you hope to raise in your meetings with External Affairs Minister Jaishankar and Commerce Minister Goyal?

Minister Jaishankar and I will take a comprehensive look at the Joint Strategic Action Plan for 2025-29, focusing on immediate priorities while setting the stage for future collaboration at 360 degrees. In addition to strengthening bilateral ties, we will address the most urgent regional and global challenges. In today’s fast-evolving and often turbulent world, the high-level political dialogue between India and Italy is more crucial than ever.

Sabha: A new public space for arts and culture in Bengaluru

“With the world getting very polarised, arts and the humanities are extremely important,” says Ravichandar V., explaining the raison d’être behind Sabha, a new arts and community centre in Bengaluru, which is all set to host its first open house this weekend. And it is why places like Sabha, envisioned by Ravichandar as a “privately enabled, public purpose space,” with a “focus on arts, crafts and culture,” are needed.

As someone who has been deeply invested in organising and promoting cultural events in the city for decades, Ravichandar firmly believes that there are simply not enough public spaces for the arts in Bengaluru. Unfortunately, it is also an area where overall philanthropic funding is traditionally low in India. “We have a lot of problems in health, education, livelihood, and so on, so understandably, the bulk of philanthropic money goes towards them,” says the Bengaluru-based civic evangelist and cultural advocate, a trustee of Ammini Trust, which has spearheaded and funded this project. “So, my wife and I decided that our family trust, Ammini Trust, would help create public spaces in Bengaluru for arts, crafts and conversations,” he says, adding that Sabha will be primarily geared towards showcasing visual and performing arts and for artisans to display their work. “The primary motivation really was to create a public space since we don’t have enough,” he says. “Of course, other people are doing amazing work, but we could do much more for a city of 14 million.” On a warm weekday afternoon, I visit Sabha, located on the Kamaraj Road in Shivajinagar, flanked by shops and houses, a light-filled, airy oasis of calm in the city’s busy commercial hub. Ravichandar shows me around the place, highlighting the attempts to retain the original structure and repurpose already-existing material, a nod to minimal environmental impact and heritage preservation. The property, which consists of two buildings, one with a flat Madras Terrace and the other with a pitched roof, linked by a courtyard, retains its old-world charm, thanks to its carved wooden pillars, large windows and heavy doors. But there is no stinting on contemporary accoutrements, either, including a retractable platform, air conditioning, a projector screen and top-class lighting and sound systems. According to Ravichandar, the school, the first building of which was built over 160 years ago, belongs to the RBANM’s Educational Charities, founded by Dharmarathnakara Rai Bahadur Arcot Narrainsawmy Mudaliar, one of the most wealthy gentry of those times. Narrainsawmy Mudaliar, a self-made man who had started his life as a vegetable trader, was deeply invested in education, especially for the less fortunate, and went on to establish many educational institutes in the city.

“His descendants continue to run these schools as non-profits, focusing on education for the underprivileged,” he says. “Among their many properties is this one on Kamaraj Road, which has now become Sabha. “

Some of the changes that were made included restoring the 160-year-old Madras Terrace of the first building, using the original construction method, and redoing the new roof of the second building to make it a performance space. The property, which has been in disuse for over 20 years, was in bad shape when the Ammini Trust took over. “The wood had given way, the structures were damaged, there were a lot of leakages,” recalls Ravichandar, listing some of the changes that were made, which included restoring the 160-year-old Madras Terrace of the first building, using the original construction method, redoing the new roof of the second building to make it a performance space, doing a damp proof course to prevent water seepage into the walls and raising the plinth of the building to make it flood proof. Architect Bijoy Ramachandran of Hundredhands, the same person who did BIC, was roped in to restore this property with minimum waste, he explains. “We also had a well-respected conservation consultant, Professor Rabindra Vasavada, based out of Ahmedabad, who guided us through this whole process,” he says.

While Ravichandar prefers not to disclose the actual cost of the entire restoration, he does mention that restoration is around 40% more expensive than constructing a new building from scratch. However, he is also convinced that the additional expense is worth it and hopes that it will inspire more philanthropists to go down the heritage-restoration route. “I wouldn’t look at it as an expensive project, but one worth investing in because the city benefits, there is this learning moment about heritage conservation and a connection between past traditions and current modernity. You cannot put a value to those things.” As far as ensuring economic sustainability is concerned, Ravichandar says that they plan to cover the running costs of Sabha by “renting the place out, carefully curating this by ensuring that the people who come fit into our larger ethos,” he says. Additionally, any surpluses generated will go towards bringing arts and crafts to underprivileged children. “We have built a community here of 60 kids from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds and do art classes for them,” says Ravichandar.

Sabha, which was finished in March 2024 and has already hosted several events, including those that were part of the BLRHabba and Bangalore Art Weekend, is now all geared towards hosting its first open house weekend. “This

is the first time Sabha is doing its own programming,” says Dipti Ramesh, Ravichandar’s daughter-in-law, who has curated this event. “We decided to do a little bit of our own programming to showcase the full capacity of what Sabha has to offer.” The lineup for this open house weekend, to held on April 12 and 13 from 10 am onwards, will have something for both children and adults, free of cost, including music performances, sketching sessions, talks, heritage walks, a flea market, storytelling and magic shows and a book launch by a young author. Some of the highlights include a special morning walk through the neighborhood around Kamraj Road led by Arun Pai of Bangalore Walks; a show by young magician Jayant Patwari, all of 14; a traipse through the Bangalore Cantonment area at night, led by Gully Tours; a talk about the city’s temples and a performance by Susheela Raman, Sam Mills and Jeet Thayil, titled A Golden String, which delves into the prophetic words and vision of the poet William Blake. According to Dipti, two main ideas went into the programming. “We wanted to stay rooted in RBANM’s value system of this being an educa-



tional space, so we wanted to keep the doors open for children,” she says. Additionally, there is a lot of focus on the city of Bengaluru. “The idea was to keep us rooted in the culture of the children and the culture of heritage, and how we were placed at the juxtaposition of those two,” says Dipti, who believes that while this is the first of Sabha’s original programming, more such will follow.

Meet the man who made music portable: MP3 format co-inventor in Hyd

Hyderabad: Remember the times when music was downloaded, stored, and shared as MP3 files? While streaming services and newer formats have become more common, MPEG-1 Audio Layer III — popularly known as MP3 — is still in use due to its compatibility, simplicity, and small file size. The mention of it brings back many memories for a lot of people, especially millennials, who used the format extensively for consuming music before gradually shifting to streaming services. One of the fathers of the revolutionary invention that made the storage of music more personal and portable, Prof. Karlheinz Brandenburg, was in Hyderabad, attending the International Conference on Acoustics, Speech, and Signal Processing (ICASSP) as one of the speakers. Speaking with Telangana Today at the event, Prof. Brandenburg shared his experience of being the co-inventor of software that changed the way the world listened to music. “I still have to pinch myself to believe that our work at the Fraunhofer Institute in Germany has yielded such results and is still popular to this day,” Brandenburg says, talking about the MP3 format. Talking about the future in the field of audio technologies, he says: “There is a lot

more to be discovered, a lot more to be developed, and a lot more to be invented, since sound is perceived by humans in different ways, based on different factors such as their location, noise in the background, etc.” When asked about the impact of Artificial Intelligence in the fields of audio engineering and psychoacoustics, he says that at this point, AI is just one of the tools used in developing better sound solutions. On being asked where India stands in the field of audio engineering, Prof. Brandenburg stresses the importance of introducing more detailed courses on the subject at the college level in universities across the country. He believes that India has a lot of potential to become more prominent in the field of sound engineering at the global level, and that programmes like ICASSP help draw more and more youth toward the field. “Youth should stick with their fields of interest even if they are not the most popular ones, and always remember to work very hard,” he says when asked to give tips for young Indians interested in sound engineering. Currently, Prof. Karlheinz Brandenburg is working on intelligent headphones for super hearing with his team at Brandenburg Labs.

In the age of age-tech: How Bengaluru's elderly are getting empowered



Drop the piecemeal ways to social security for workers



Early screening for gestational diabetes can ensure healthy and happy future for mother and child

This World Health Day (April 7) the World Health Organization (WHO) in its wisdom, has chosen an apt theme: Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures. As diabetologists, we have, for decades, been propounding the theory of primordial prevention, or preventing diabetes in the womb itself, in order to ensure a happy and healthy future for both the mother and the baby. We see the WHO's choice of theme for this World Health Day as a vindication of the work and advocacy campaigns we have undertaken towards this goal. Diabetes has long been a silent epidemic, affecting millions worldwide, but its roots often lie much earlier than commonly recognised. Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) is a high risk for type 2 diabetes in mothers and metabolic disorders in children. GDM is usually diagnosed between 24 to 28 weeks of pregnancy. However, current evidence also points to the ability to prevent its onset during the first trimester or even earlier, and its impacts on both the mother and the child are profound and lasting.

Research in the growing body underlines that maternal glucose levels should be carefully regulated as early as the eighth week of pregnancy. An early intervention that would help prevent foetal hyperinsulinemia, a metabolic disturbance that occurs in the 11th week, might avoid this and reduce the risk of the child developing diabetes and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs) later in life. Given India's recent burgeoning diabetes burden, this matter needs immediate attention from the medical community and policymakers.Existing GDM management is based on screening in the second trimester and commencing treatment. Nevertheless, it may be too late. Maternal hyperglycemia in the first trimester appears to program the child's foetal metabolism, increasing the risk that the child will be obese and insulin-resistant or develop diabetes later in life.Learning endocrinologists concur that glucose intolerance

RRI scientists develop affordable device for preliminary screening of sickle cell disease



Scientists at Raman Research Institute (RRI) have developed an affordable electro-fluidic device that aids in preliminary screening of Sickle Cell Disease (SCD).According to RRI, the innovative, cost-effective electro-fluidic micropore device, quantifies whole-cell stiffness with high-resolution and high-throughput, with specific focus on screening for SCD.

"This technology has the potential to change preliminary diagnostic methods for blood disorders," RRI said.Gautam Soni, S. Kaushik, and A. Mishra from the Soft Condensed Matter Theme at RRI, Bengaluru developed this device and R. Ross, S. Srivastava, and C. R. Ross from St. Johns Medical College Hospital, Bengaluru helped with testing the device on real-world samples by comparing blood cells from SCD patients to that of healthy donors."This new technology makes high-resolution measurement on changes in RBC physiology and cell stiffness and connects it to the underlying disease-state" said Gautam Soni, Lead Investigator.RRI said that the researchers were able to create a system that effectively differentiates SCD and healthy donor RBCs, due to differences in their inherent stiffness with high precision."They studied the samples in free-flight and constricted-flight modes to measure cell volume and stiffness, respectively. They used Latrunculin A (an actin inhibitor, that reduces cell stiffness) treated RBCs, to first quantify the correlation between flight time in the micropore and cellular stiffness," RRI said.Using the above methodology, they showed that their device allows for the rapid alternative detection of mechanical abnormalities in RBCs and hence, can act as a preliminary screening device for multiple blood conditions"The portability and cost-efficiency of the device would make it an attractive option for mass-screening leading to early detection of SCD in both rural and urban areas of the country," RRI said.It further said whole cell stiffness, being a ubiquitous parameter for cell's health, may be applied beyond SCD screening, such as, in areas of tumor cell detection and veterinary blood disorders."The device principle has possible non-medical applications as well, for example, in improving the hydrogel materials used in drug delivery systems," RRI said.

Non alcoholic fatty liver disease on the rise, Apollo Health of Nation report

Hyderabad: Cases of non-alcoholic fatty liver (NAFLD) disease, which is connected to obesity, overweight, and diabetes, are on the rise not only in Telangana State but even in other parts of the Country, the fifth edition of Health of Nation 2025 report released by Apollo Hospitals on Monday indicated. The Health of Nation report, based on the health screenings of 2.5 million individuals at Apollo Hospitals in the Country, has indicated that NAFLD has emerged as an important health issue linked to obesity, diabetes, and hypertension."Of the 2,57,199 individuals screened across all the units of Apollo Hospitals in the country, about 65 per cent had fatty liver, and 85 per cent of those were non-alcoholic," the report said.In Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, nearly 1 in 2 individuals (47 per cent) showed signs of Grade I fatty liver, an early-stage condition tied to obesity and metabolic imbalances. About 24 per cent of the individuals in TG and AP had hypertension while a combined 82 per cent of the screened were obese and overweight. About 81 per cent of patients screened in TG and AP are Vitamin D deficient and 27 per cent screened were found to be anaemic. • 24 per cent of individuals have hypertension• A combined 82 per cent of the screened population is overweight/ obese• 81 per cent were Vitamin D deficient• Nearly 1 in 2 individuals (47%) showed signs of Grade I fatty liver• 27 per cent were anaemic, pointing to nutritional gaps, especially in iron-rich foods 83 per cent of people have reduced flexibility, an indication of no physical activity

should be screened much earlier—at about the eighth week of pregnancy. Reasonable justification exists because, by the 24-week time point in GDM, the foetus has been exposed to excessive glucose for months. This results in excessive foetal insulin production, which can lead to life-long metabolic disorders.The "Foetal Origin of Adult Diseases" (Barker's Hypothesis) suggests that conditions during gestation will affect the child's health over the long term. Early in development, if a foetus is exposed to high blood glucose levels, the programming will be to store more fat, resist insulin, and form metabolic disorders later in life. As a result, researchers have called for a rethink of prenatal care, with glucose control as a primary concern right from the start of pregnancy.Our aim is not only to deal with diabetes in pregnancy but to prevent it before it starts, as stated earlier, through a policy called primordial prevention. The goal of primordial prevention is to prevent diabetes from ever developing in the first place and decrease risk factors before they occur.To mitigate these risks, a new model of early GDM intervention has been proposed, focusing on a key eight-point agenda. These include: Firstly, glucose testing by eight weeks of pregnancy. That way, anything potentially wrong could be picked up before it starts harming the development of the unborn.

Secondly, doing so will prevent foetal hyperinsulinemia, and no long-term hypoglycemia (low sugar levels) is observed. If the 10-week glucose control of postprandial blood sugar remains below 110 mg/dL, metabolic risks will be limited. In case the post prandial blood sugar levels are over 110 mg/dL, medical nutrition therapy and low-dose metformin (250 mg twice daily) can halt the rise of glucose to prevent the development of GDM later in pregnancy. There is clinical evidence that this strategy has been effective in preventing GDM in the third trimester with less probability. It

Understanding what drives the fascination for fairness and skin lightening

The debate over how the preference for fair skin impacts on those who are a darker shade was alive recently, after Kerala's Chief Secretary Sarala Muraleedharan called out colour and gender bias. Across much of the world, and particularly in India, skin colour remains quietly powerful — shaping ideas of beauty, respectability, and even social mobility. In this environment, the desire for lighter skin has fuelled a booming market of creams and combinations, many of which are not only ineffective, but actively harmful.

But understanding this trend — and challenging it — requires more than dermatological guidance. It calls for an interdisciplinary approach, one that draws on anthropology to trace the cultural roots of colourism, and on dermatology to address its consequences.Between evolution and meaningHuman skin colour is, in evolutionary terms, a remarkable adaptation. Populations in equatorial zones developed more melanin to protect against ultraviolet radiation, while those further from the equator evolved lighter pigmentation to aid in vitamin D synthesis.Yet over time, skin tone came to signify more than just geography. As S. Sumathi, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Madras, explains, "The idea of colour has historically been linked to opposites — fair and dark, good and bad. These dualities became part of how communities organised themselves socially." In the Indian context, she notes, these ideas were reinforced by colonial rule and social hierarchies.

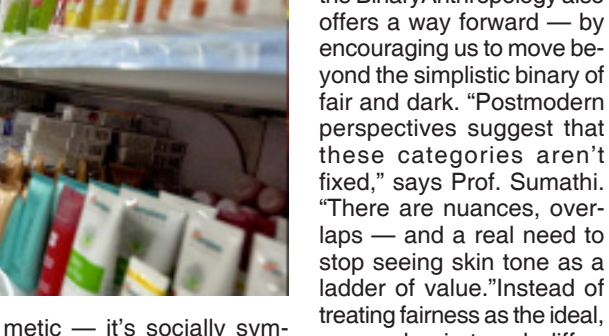
Early British ethnographers classified populations based on skin tone and other features, embedding a value system that persists subtly to this day. "Fairness gradually came to be associated with refinement, aspiration, even moral character," she says. "Unfortunately, those perceptions were absorbed across communities and continue to influence how we see ourselves and each other."The quiet cost of fairnessWhile cultural beliefs sustain the demand for lighter skin, dermatologists are increasingly concerned with the health risks that follow.Ramesh Bhat, head of research at Father Muller Medical College and former International Director (2019–2024) of the International League of Dermatological Societies (ILDS), has been witnessing a steady rise in patients suffering from the misuse of topical corticosteroids — powerful prescription drugs intended for con-



further prevents the necessity of insulin therapy since it is at this stage that GDM is mostly diagnosed.

Currently, India has more than seventy-seven million people with diabetes, and the numbers are increasing. It is pretty alarming that about 20% of pregnant moms in India develop GDM, exposing both the mothers and their offspring to long-term health burdens related to metabolic disease. One reason this is so is because the maternal care check-lists and prenatal care guidelines remain anchored to traditional screening times. There are several issues which are prevalent only in India that make early intervention all the more important. Lack of early care: The majority of women of Indian origin do not go for antenatal checkups until the second trimester, thereby missing the screening period. Indian women are more vulnerable to insulin resistance and diabetes profile than any other racial group. Therefore, colourful efforts should be made in early diagnosis and intervention. Not only patients but also healthcare providers lack sufficient knowledge of first-trimester hyperglycemia and its possible consequences. Therefore, the development of the early GDM screening and intervention policy across

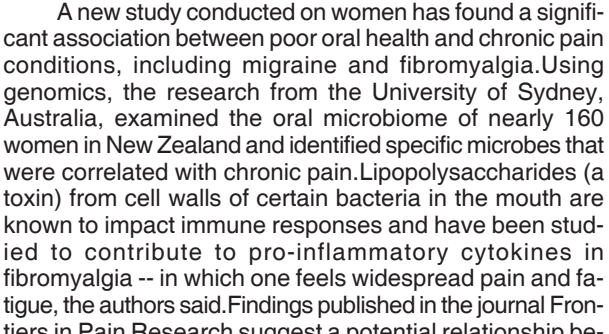
India's MMR comparison to Nigeria unfair, says Health Ministry



Comparing India's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) to Nigeria is unfair, the Union Health Ministry said on Wednesday, while reacting to the recently released United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group (MMEIG) report titled 'Trends in maternal mortality 2000-2023', which has indicated that India has made significant strides in reducing MMR but it registered 19,000 maternal deaths in 2023 contributing almost 7.2% to global mortality.

The biggest contributor was Nigeria (28.7%), followed by India and the Democratic Republic of Congo (7.2%), and then, Pakistan (4.1%). "The comparison is not entirely fair when considering the total populations of the two countries (Nigeria: 23.26 crore, India: 145 crore)," said the Ministry, in its statement.India has made significant strides in reducing MMR going from 103 per lakh live births to 80 per lakh live births. The MMR of India has now declined by 86% compared to the global reduction of 48% over the past 33 years from 1990 to 2023. Also, the number of estimated maternal deaths in India has also reduced from 24,000 to 19,000, states the report. However, India is still contributing 7.2% (19,000) of total maternal deaths worldwide, ranking second after Nigeria, which has 75,000 maternal deaths; it adds.The MMEIG comprises World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Bank Group and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Population Division (UNDESA/Population Division). In collaboration with technical experts, they developed global, regional and country-level maternal mortality estimates for the period 2000 to 2023. Maternal mortality rate is defined by the WHO as the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or other causes. "It's a crucial metric to track the progress of maternal health and identify areas for improvement in healthcare systems," it notes. The report adds that every day in 2023, over 700 women died from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth - meaning that approximately one woman is dying every two minutes. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 3.1 is to reduce maternal mortality to less than 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030.

Study on women relates poor oral health with chronic pain



A new study conducted on women has found a significant association between poor oral health and chronic pain conditions, including migraine and fibromyalgia. Using genomics, the research from the University of Sydney, Australia, examined the oral microbiome of nearly 160 women in New Zealand and identified specific microbes that were correlated with chronic pain. Lipopolysaccharides (a toxin) from cell walls of certain bacteria in the mouth are known to impact immune responses and have been studied to contribute to pro-inflammatory cytokines in fibromyalgia -- in which one feels widespread pain and fatigue, the authors said. Findings published in the journal Frontiers in Pain Research suggest a potential relationship between the oral microbiome and the nervous system. The study also highlights the importance of good oral health towards addressing pain and improving overall well-being.

"This is the first study to investigate oral health, oral microbiota and pain commonly experienced in women with fibromyalgia, with our study showing a clear and significant association between poor oral health and pain," said lead researcher Joanna Harnett, associate professor at the faculty of medicine and health, University of Sydney. First author, Sharon Erdrich, a PhD candidate at the university, said, "Our findings are particularly important to fibromyalgia which, despite being a common rheumatological condition, is of-

ten under-recognised." Fibromyalgia is also marked by mood, cognitive and sleep disturbances. For the study, the women responded to the World Health Organization's questionnaire on oral health. Body and abdominal pain, headaches and migraines were measured using surveys, including one created by the International Headache Society.

Women having the poorest oral health were more likely to suffer from higher pain scores: 60 per cent were more likely to experience moderate to severe body pain, and 49 per cent were more likely to experience migraine headaches, the researchers said.

Dollar sinks to decade-low as US faces loss of confidence: impact on Indian rupee, other currencies



On Friday, the dollar slumped as investors ditched US assets in favour of other alternate safe havens including the Swiss franc, the Japanese yen and the euro, as well as gold. On Friday, the dollar slumped as investors ditched US assets in favour of other alternate safe havens including the Swiss franc, the Japanese yen and the euro, as well as gold. US President Donald Trump may have hit the pause on his trade vacillations, but there seems to be a lingering deleterious effect on the American Dollar, which has slumped sharply. Reason: waning confidence in the American economy is leading to a huge flight out of the green-back to other safe haven currencies and gold.

This is reflective of a breakdown of a fundamental assumption underpinning global finance – that when there are serious bouts of volatility in the forex markets and a spike in the VIX (volatility index), it normally leads to a surge in demand for dollar assets. Over the last week, the trend has been exactly the opposite. On Friday, the dollar slumped as investors ditched US assets in favour of other alternate safe havens including the Swiss franc, the Japanese yen and the euro, as well as gold. Gold recorded a new all-time peak, and the Swiss franc notched a fresh decade high, according to Reuters data. Also, investors dumped Wall Street stocks overnight after the strong relief rally on Wednesday in the aftermath of Trump’s pause. Longer-dated US Treasuries are also selling off, putting 10-year yields on course for their biggest weekly jump since 2001, Reuters said. The rupee opened weak on Friday, even though it is projected to strengthen if the sharp decline in the dollar index and a slide in oil prices continue. The dollar’s slide “will obviously”

Inflows into equity mutual funds decline 14.4% to Rs 25,082 crore in March: AMFI data

Inflows into equity mutual funds declined by 14.4 per cent on a month-on-month basis to Rs 25,082.01 crore in March, compared to Rs 29,303.34 crore in February, the latest data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed. The inflows in equity schemes in March were lowest in 11 months. The decline in inflows was witnessed despite the Sensex and Nifty rising 5.76 per cent and 6.3 per cent, respectively in March. In March, inflows through systematic investment plan (SIP) stood at Rs 25,926 crore compared to Rs 25,999 crore in February 2024.

Net assets under management (AUM) of the mutual fund industry increased by 2 per cent to Rs 65.74 lakh crore in the reporting month compared to Rs 64.53 lakh crore in February. Within equity mutual fund schemes, inflows into small cap funds stood at Rs 4,092.12 crore in March, compared to Rs 3,722.46 crore in February. Flows into mid cap funds was Rs 3,438.87 crore as against Rs 3,406.95 crore in the previous month. Large cap funds witnessed inflows of Rs 2,479.31 crore compared to Rs 2,866 crore in February. Inflows into sectoral/thematic declined 97 per cent to Rs 170.09 crore in March from Rs 5,711.58 crore in the previous month. Flexi cap mutual funds witnessed inflows of Rs 5,615 crore, as against flows of Rs 5,104.22 crore last month.

Insider trading? The allegations against Donald Trump amid tariff pause

Just hours before he announced the 90-day tariff pause, US President Donald Trump posted messages on his social media platform, Truth Social, that seemed to be a stock tip for his followers: “THIS IS A GREAT TIME TO BUY!!!” Trump wrote, signing off with his initials “DJT”. DJT incidentally is also the stock symbol for his company, the Trump Media and Technology Group Corp. This came at a time when stocks were still in negative territory over an intensifying trade war, especially with China. Also, Trump signed off the post with his initials—something that he generally does not do in his posts. After the announcement of the tariff reversal on Wednesday, Trump Media and Technology Group saw its stocks shoot up over 20 per cent, as did other stocks.

“BE COOL! Everything is going to work out well. The USA will be bigger and better than ever before!” Trump had said in yet another Truth Social post as the markets opened Wednesday, just a few hours before he posted his decision to pause his tariffs for 90 days. These posts are now at the centre of a stock manipulation charge levelled by opposition Democrats, who say the post, coming just hours before the Trump administration’s decision to pause, was tantamount to insider trading. “We need to get to the bottom of the possible stock manipulation that



is unfolding before the American people, including what if any advanced knowledge did members of the House Republican Conference have of Trump’s decision to pause the reckless tariffs that he put into place, there are several members of Congress who will be aggressively demanding answers and transparency, particularly as it relates to stock purchase decisions that may have occurred over the last few days, there will be several avenues that we will be able to pursue and will do so aggressively,” Hakeem Jeffries, House of Representatives minority leader and leader of the House Democratic Caucus since 2023, said in a conversation with reporters in Washington DC.

The question really is, whether these charges will stick? There are two aspects to this: one, the release

lend support to the rupee at open, an FX spot trader at a Mumbai-based bank quoted by Reuters said, adding that it is unlikely that the rupee will move past 86. The dollar index, a tracker of the US dollar value relative to a basket of foreign currencies, was down over 3 per cent Thursday, falling to the 99.70 level – its biggest dip in over 12-months that took it below the 100 level for the first time since July 2023. Trump’s sudden climbdown on reciprocal tariffs is said to have been triggered by the selloff in American bonds, as confidence in the US economy plummeted and bond holders waned. Foreign holders, including Japanese and Chinese investors, are among those said to have dumped US government debt amid spiralling concerns over the impact of Trump’s tariffs. A government bond is essentially a debt instrument, issued by a sovereign government to raise money from financial markets to finance public spending, in return for which interest is paid. Is there a relation between bond yields and the currency value of a country? Higher bond yields and lower bond prices typically attract investments from other regions, boosting a country’s currency. The difference in the interest rates between two countries then incentivises investors to borrow money in a low-rate environment and invest in the high yielding one. Also called carry trade, this strategy can be a major factor of currency movements.

The US has bonds worth more than \$35 trillion in circulation, much of which is in foreign hands. America does not normally see interest rates — or yield — spikes on its debt since its bonds are viewed as among the safest investments. That seems to be changing now. US dollars The dollar index, a tracker of the US dollar value relative to a basket of foreign currencies, was down over 3 per cent Thursday, falling to the 99.70 level. Large-scale selloffs of American bonds could pose a problem for the world’s biggest economy, making it more expensive for it to raise the money to finance its budget gap. If the American government cannot sell its debt, it is then unable to pay for things such as social security or flagship programmes such as Medicaid. The bond spike came after Trump escalated Washington’s trade war with China. Bloomberg reported on Tuesday that for the first time in 24 months, investors had started to demand a bigger premium to hold junk-rated American debt over European equivalent, reflecting fears of a slowdown in the world’s largest economy.



Debt mutual fund schemes saw outflows of Rs 2.02 lakh crore in March as against outflows of Rs 6,525.56 crore in February. Higher outflows can be attributed to the higher redemption pressure from corporates due to the quarterly payments for advance tax. Liquid funds saw highest outflows of Rs 1.33 lakh crore. During the reporting month, outflows from the money market funds were Rs 21,301.14 crore and from overnight funds were Rs 30,015.8 crore. Net outflows from the hybrid mutual fund schemes stood at Rs 946.56 crore in March compared to inflows of Rs 6,803.85 crore.

UAE-based Indian national, his 4 firms sanctioned by US over alleged involvement in Iran’s oil trade



iranian oil, US India, world news, indian express The Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated Brar, two UAE and two India-based entities that own and operate Brar’s vessels that have transported Iranian oil on behalf of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and the Iranian military. (Source: File) US Sanctions: A United Arab Emirates-based Indian national and four of his firms have been sanctioned by the United States for their alleged involvement in trade and transportation of Iranian crude oil and petroleum products. According to the US Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), the Indian national—Jugwinder Singh Brar—owns multiple shipping companies that cumulatively have nearly 30 vessels, many of which operate as part of Iran’s “shadow fleet”.

Apart from Brar, four of his companies—India-based Global Tankers and B and P Solutions, and UAE-based Prime Tankers and Glory International—have also been sanctioned by Washington as part of the Trump administration’s “maximum pressure campaign” on Iran, which has now seen five rounds of sanctions against individuals and firms in less than three months. For instance, in February, the OFAC and the US Department of State had imposed sanctions on over 30 persons and vessels in various countries, including four India-based firms. Then in March, the US sanctioned a Chinese refinery for buying and processing large volumes of Iranian oil, which is under US sanctions that were imposed in 2018 during the first Trump presidency. According to the OFAC, Brar’s four firms that have been sanctioned own and operate vessels that “transported Iranian oil on behalf of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and the Iranian military”.

The OFAC claimed that Brar’s vessels engage in high-risk ship-to-ship (STS) transfers of Iranian petroleum in waters off Iraq, Iran, the UAE, and the Gulf of Oman, following which these cargoes reach other facilitators who blend the oil or fuel with products from other countries and

falsify shipping documents to conceal links to Iran. The US agency also accused Brar of coordinating with the “illicit shipping associates” of Sa’id al-Jamal, who is claimed to be an Iran-backed financier for the Yemen-based Houthi militia. “The Iranian regime relies on its network of unscrupulous shippers and brokers like Brar and his companies to enable its oil sales and finance its destabilizing activities... The United States remains focused on disrupting all elements of Iran’s oil exports, particularly those who seek to profit from this trade,” said US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent.

“OFAC is committed to aggressively targeting Iran’s oil supply chain, including imposing sanctions on those enabling Iran’s export of its oil to key third countries and the wider international market. These shipments rely on an intricate and extensive web of shell companies, clandestine smuggling, STS transfers, oil storage and blending, and document falsification,” the OFAC said. The shadow fleet refers to vessels involved in Russian, Iranian, and Venezuelan crude oil and petroleum products trade. With Western fleet operators loath to get involved in the oil trade of these countries due to sanctions of varying degrees, obscure operators from countries like Greece, Russia, and China, and tax havens like Marshall Islands, Liberia, and Panama have emerged as the major players. The oil and gas industries of Russia, Iran, and Venezuela have been under sanctions or restrictions from international powers, particularly the US.

A large number of opaque fleet tankers have complex and obscure ownership structures and are registered in geographies with lax regulatory oversight. Often, such vessels, which are quite old, operate with substandard insurance and certifications. Even prior to Trump’s administration’s campaign against Iran’s oil trade, a few Indian companies had been placed under sanctions for involvement in sanctioned energy transportation and trade through the so-called shadow fleet of tankers. For instance, in October, India-based Gabbaro Ship Services was sanctioned for alleged involvement in transportation of Iranian oil. In August and September, three India-registered shipping firms were sanctioned by the US over their alleged involvement in transporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Russia’s Arctic LNG 2 project, which is under American sanctions. Most of the Indian companies that have been sanctioned by the US over purported violations of energy sector-related sanctions appear to be small and hitherto little-known entities set up in recent years, and not large enterprises. It is in line with the trend observed in other countries where shipping entities have been sanctioned for facilitating trade that is restricted or under sanctions.

India set to ‘expedite’ relief on quality norms as sought by US and EU

Amid flaring trade wars that have heightened the urgency for trade diversification globally, India has hinted at greater flexibility in accommodating trade concerns — such as quality control orders (QCOs) — raised by Western partners including the US, UK, EU, and New Zealand, all of whom are negotiating a trade deal with India, The Indian Express has learned. This comes after the conclusion of initial talks between India and US when officials from the US were here in March to finalise the scope of the trade agreement. The US had then sought a range of commitments from the Indian side to ease market access for American goods into India.

In its report on foreign trade barriers, the United States Trade Representative (USTR) had particularly pointed out flaws in QCOs stating that the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) norms are “not always fully aligned with international standards” and “without a clear demonstration that the international standards would be ineffective or inappropriate.” A number of concerns were raised by exporters on QCOs, who find it difficult to source input materials due to these norms, during a meeting with government officials on Wednesday. The government said it would expedite concerns raised by Western partners, as there are not many quality-related challenges originating from them,” a source said, indicating that QCOs may primarily be targeting goods from China and the ASEAN region.

QCOs, which typically require foreign exporters and domestic producers to mandatorily meet specific quality norms, have been a source of major concern for both domestic manufacturers who import input materials and foreign countries looking to access the growing Indian market. In recent years, India has dramatically ramped up the use of QCOs to prevent the influx of low-quality goods and simultaneously build a domestic manufacturing base, in tandem with schemes such as the Production Linked Incentive (PLI). However, the US, EU, and UK have raised as many as 10 trade concerns over QCOs at the World Trade Organisation (WTO). These cover a range of products including furniture, automotive parts, man-made fibres, cookware and utensils, toys, chemicals, and footwear. The USTR said QCOs often lack “clear means of establishing conformity” or involve significantly burdensome requirements. “For example, India requires chemicals to have BIS marks prior to importation, which necessitates a site visit to the manufacturing facility by an Indian inspector,” the USTR said.

“India’s National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) caps prices of coronary stents and knee implants. US companies have raised concerns, noting that the price controls have not kept pace with inflation and do not differentiate based on production costs or technological innovation, which discourages US firms from serving the market,” the US flagged. Earlier, the US had also asked India to “ensure” that QCOs “do not create unnecessary barriers to international trade”, in a trade concern raised over QCOs on chemicals and petrochemical products during a June 2024 meeting of a WTO committee. Similar concerns were raised by the US, EU, and five other countries. At the same time, even the domestic industry has raised red flags over certain QCOs that apply to key input goods such as chemicals and man-made fibres. Domestic users of such goods have long called for these QCOs to be scrapped, arguing they restrict access to raw material imports and undermine export competitiveness. The EU, alongside Indonesia, has raised a trade concern over India’s QCO on viscose fibre and supported South Korea’s concern over QCOs on chemical fibres and yarns, including polyester. Viscose and polyester fibres are key inputs for synthetic textiles.

In a WTO meeting held in November 2024, the EU said India’s “policy of adopting” QCOs across sectors “continues to send worrying signals to EU industry, EU investors, and EU Member States, as the majority of QCOs introduced by India appear to have a protectionist orientation”. “The EU regrets that significant issues faced by EU exporters of viscose staple fibres persist and cause major problems in accessing the Indian market. The EU



also regrets that India has not responded to questions raised by Members in their statements on this issue,” it said. The EU further described the current certification process carried out by BIS as “excessively burdensome and onerous”. “Manufacturing facilities in the exporting country must be audited in person by a team of BIS officials—at the expense of the EU company—in a procedure which can take several months to organise. Such a system effectively prevents EU companies from accessing the Indian market and thus creates a barrier to trade,” it added. The focus on easing QCOs flagged by the US, EU, and UK coincides with India’s ongoing trade negotiations: a bilateral deal with Washington, and separate FTAs with Brussels and London.

Ola’s Roadster X+ to hit road this month, check out details



New Delhi: Ola Electric Mobility on Friday said it has rolled out the first Roadster X+ motorcycle from its Futurefactory in Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu. The electric bike is set to hit the road this month. “The Roadster X+ series represents our commitment to taking the EV revolution to the next level. Today’s rollout celebrates not just a new product, but a new era for us and the industry, as it represents the next phase of revolution in electric mobility,” Ola Electric Chairman and MD Bhavish Aggarwal said in a statement. The Roadster X+ Series comes with a mid-drive motor that boosts performance and safety. Its also features a chain drive and an integrated MCU for efficient torque transfer, providing better acceleration, and improved range. The Roadster X+ series also features flat cables in the motorcycles — an industry-first innovation. These cables improve packaging efficiency, reduce weight, and enhance thermal performance, improving overall durability and reliability. The Roadster X+ series offers a breakthrough in motorcycle technology and comes with first-in-segment patented brake-by-wire technology with single ABS, and smart MoveOS 5 features such as advanced regeneration, cruise control, and reverse mode.

The battery system of the Roadster X+ series gets an IP67 waterproof and dust-proof certification, advanced wire bonding technology, and a serviceable Battery Management System (BMS) enabling easy maintenance. Prices of Roadster X+ series are Rs 84,999, Rs 94,999 and Rs 1,04,999 for 2.5kWh, 3.5kWh, and 4.5 kWh, respectively.

Stubbs praises KL Rahul's match-winning knock, calls him "seriously good player" in top form



Hyderabad: GNS News Agency, April 15,Tristan Stubbs of Delhi Capitals said that he had the best seat when the seasoned campaigner and India star K.L. Rahul played a blinder to help the team cross the line against Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Thursday night."Rahul said it afterwards; this is his ground. He has grown up here, so he knows how to play and stay positive throughout the innings. He kept enforcing and reminding me to look straight and that gave me confidence," Stubbs recalled."Rahul can do anything. He's a seriously good player and he's in really

good form. So, if he can get on a really good wicket, we will be able to see his full potential," he said."I had sort of had old school cricket in mind and chatted with Faf (du Plessis). We were like, it's an old school game. You set it up and then you look to get 50 off the last five. But, KL did his thing, so I didn't have to take a risk early on," Stubbs said in the post-match briefing."And then when we sort of got a sniff, I joined him on the act and we got the game over the line," he said.

When asked about Yadav and Nigam's performances with the ball and the team's approach in the net sessions, Stubbs revealed that it had been so good to watch them perform well for the team."Kuldeep actually asked to bowl to me (in the nets) because the last time he bowled to me was in the World Cup final. Honestly, if you can get through that next session, you're in a really good position," hesaid. "You feel really confident because they are bowling really well and then if you walk out of that session feeling good, you are in a good space," he added.

Talking about his role, Stubbs said the roles had been pretty different. "I feel international cricket can sort of be classed as old school cricket because the scores aren't as big as they are here. So you sort of always in that space," he said."It's sort of just falls back on past experiences. It's tough playing in different situations, but it's cricket and that's why we love it," Stubbs concluded.

More women than men at 2028 Los Angeles Games; 'merit based', says IOC

GNS News Agency, April 15

The Los Angeles Olympics are more than three years away. But already, the Games have secured a place in the history books — for the first time, there will be more women competing at the Olympics than men.Following years of steady rise in their participation numbers, the scale tipped in the favour of women athletes after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on Wednesday decided to shrink the men's football competition from 16 teams to 12. At the same time, the Olympic body expanded the women's tournament by four teams, taking the total to 16. The addition of two teams in women's water polo and one extra weight category in women's boxing, taking the total to 12 and 7 respectively, meant that women will have more spots (5,655) than men (5,543) over 36 sports.'Momentous decision'

"It's a momentous decision, one that will encourage a lot of women to get into sports," boxing legend Mary Kom, who won the bronze medal at the 2012 London Olympics, told The Indian Express. "The current generation will get opportunities we didn't get. I wish I was competing right now just so that I didn't have to wait for so long to compete at the Olympics."Mary, a women's boxing pioneer who won five World Championships between 2002 and 2010, had to wait till 2012 to compete at the Olympics. Until then, women boxers were not invited to the biggest sporting party. And even after their inclusion, only three categories were approved for women as opposed to 10 for men.But the addition of women's boxing to the 2012 programme ensured the first big step towards gender parity was taken. It meant that women, after first competing in 1900, finally were able to vie for a medal in every event at the Olympics.Twelve years later, another landmark was achieved at the 2024 Paris Olympics, which saw an equal number of events for both genders for the first time. If Paris marked the culmination of a 128-year battle for equality, Los Angeles would go a step further and have 50.5 percent women representation.

At Paris, India fielded 45 women in a contingent of 110. The number is likely to increase in LA if the women's hockey and cricket teams qualify. The IOC's sports director Kit McConnell said 'every single one of those decisions was merit based.' "All of these decisions are supported by numbers. The ticket demand — the incredible success of Paris across all venues including every single session focussed on women sports. We have seen the broadcast numbers of women's sport being absolutely equal if not even stronger and we've seen the media coverage increase exponentially. All reflective of participation and popularity,"

Norway Chess organisers exploring possibility of a chess tournament in India

GNS News Agency, April 15

The organisers of Norway Chess, one of the most prestigious tournaments on the chess calendar annually, are exploring the possibility of hosting an event on Indian shores next year. The top management of Norway Chess — including founder Kjell Madland, co-owner Hogne Hide and marketing manager Dea Maioli Egeli — were in Mumbai on Thursday to meet with potential partners. The push to have an event in India comes from India's growing footprint on the chessboard.First started in 2013, Norway Chess has become an annual fixture on the chess calendar with some of the world's greatest players like Garry Kasparov, Viswanathan Anand and Magnus Carlsen competing at the event in the past, with Kasparov famously calling it the Wimbledon of Chess. While Anand has competed at the event in Stavanger eight times in the past, he is going to be in the commentary panel this year. Last year, there were three Indians in the fray, including Praggnanandhaa. This year, the event will see four Indians competing, including world champion Gukesh, Arjun Erigaisi, Koneru Humpy and Vaishali."We have done Norway Chess for many years. It has been a very well known name and we are exploring the possibility to do something more. Of course, India is very interesting for us because there are so many chess fans and so many good players. So we are exploring the possibility of doing something in India maybe next year. And of course, we are looking if there are some possible partners, sponsors, things like that, to be a part of the event. We have some meetings and it's interesting for us to meet people who could maybe help us and maybe are interested to be a part of this," Madland told The Indian Express on the sidelines of an event in Mumbai before clarifying: "We don't want to move the actual Norway Chess tournament."

This year, the Norway Chess event will see former world champion Magnus Carlsen take on Indian stars like world champion Gukesh and Arjun Erigaisi. This will be the first time Carlsen will face Gukesh in classical chess after the 18-year-old became the world champion. Last year, Praggnandhaa had created a flutter at Norway Chess by defeating Carlsen for the first time in classical chess.

Former world champion Anand, who would be doing commentary at this year's Norway Chess event, said he



McConnell said.Interestingly, most professional sports, which ironically also form the core Olympic disciplines, cite the same points — ticket demand and broadcast numbers — as reasons for not being able to strike gender parity in their own events. Stories of unequal pay, discrimination and lack of opportunities are rife across sports, including football, tennis and cricket.Yet, the symbolism in the IOC's decision is hard to miss, especially in relation to football.The US is where one of the biggest and landmark gender equality battles took place. The USA women's football team dragged the country's federation to courts over equal pay and rights. In 2022, after six years of legal wrangling, they finally reached a landmark agreement where their demands were met.

The US is also where women's football was introduced in the Olympics programme, back in 1996. The hosts went on to win the gold medal, the first of their record five titles, including the top-of-the-podium finish at Paris 2024. Come 2028, the Stars and Stripes will headline the largest ever women's Olympic competition.The IOC acknowledged the increasing popularity of women's sport, especially the US women's football team. "We wanted to do something to reflect that growth and equally with the United States being the home of the highest level of popularity of women's football," McConnell said.He added that the decision will also lead to an increase in overall participants as more teams will compete for the additional spots."We have seen the incredible growth of women's team sports around the world — women's football being a leader in that regard," McConnell said. "For every single one of those quota places in the Olympic Games, there's a number of countries that are investing in women's sports to chase that qualification. So when we add two teams in water polo, it's not just further investments in two countries... four women's football teams, that's not just another four countries that are chasing those places."



was looking forward to the battle between the Indian prodigies and the Norwegian, who succeeded him on the world champion's throne."I expect a very exciting battle. Gukesh will not lack motivation or the determination to go after Magnus Carlsen. But Magnus is also highly motivated by the challenge of playing against our young players. I've seen him in multiple tournaments, whether it's Kolkata (Tata Steel Rapid and Blitz) or World Rapid and Blitz, he eagerly looks forward to these match-ups and so we have the perfect storm," he said.

Hyderabad-based Shrivally's hat-trick wins help in India's victory at Billie Jean King Cup Asia-Oceania Group 1

Hyderabad: Shrivally Rashika Bhamidipati of Hyderabad completed a remarkable hat-trick of wins to help the Indian team carry on the winning run at the Billie Jean King Cup Asia-Oceania Group 1, delivering a strong performance to secure a 2-1 victory against Hong Kong, China, here on Thursday evening.India got off to the ideal start on day three, courtesy Vaidehi Chaudhari's splendid performance against Ho Ching Wu, in the Indian's first game of the tournament. The youngster, hailing from Ahmedabad, fought tooth and nail in a tightly contested first set, winning the tiebreak 10-8. She wasted no time to impose herself in the second set,eventually securing a 7-6 (10-8), 6-1 victory

‘Compliment to Liverpool, Mo Salah, a great player, could’ve gone anywhere, but he stayed with our club’



GNS News Agency, April 15

Arne Slot was chuckling away in his press conference ahead of the West Ham game, and talking tertiary benefits of getting a contract extension from Mo Salah. It's a flex for the Liverpool manager as he pursued his ambition of big signings, knowing that Mo Salah is in his camp.However, the grinning manager first shared his glee with fans. "Happy ofcourse. He's shown this club for so many years in a row now how much value he has for team and club so I assume all our fans and his team were very happy and hopefully he can show us again how important he has been for the club," Slot said.The manager who's settled in nicely at Anfield also quipped that as manager he might've just had a heads-up on the famous contract extension that Telegraph's Chris Bascombe put at £480,000 per week. "Relief for fans I'm sure it is. I don't think it's a surprise to you that I knew a bit better how his contract situation went over the course of the season. Maybe for fans it was a pleasant surprise. I knew a little bit longer it was headed in right direction," he said. "I think it's a big compliment to Liverpool we managed to achieve to extend Mo Salah, such a big player as a free agent. He can probably go to any club wherever he wants to. But he stayed in our club," he added.

However as manager, Slot has an entire squad to look after, and though he remained tight lipped on confirmations, all indications pointed to Slot having secured two of three

Tanisha-Dhruv journey ends in quarters, but Ningbo will remain memorable for precedent

The Chinese 'rural' city of Ningbo has held some eye-popping surprises for a large number of Indian students last few years (more on that later). But the city's personal interest in the progress of badminton's mixed doubles pairing of Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila peaked when they remained the only Indian shuttlers in the Badminton Asia Championships draw on Friday. Ningbo city social media handles noted their impressive buzz in a close first set with fiery exchanges.

A 22-20, 21-13 loss to World No 6 Tse Yong Suet and Tang Chun Man however ended their promising fray even as the 18th ranked Indians are still looking for that big Top 10 scalp that will bring them due attention. The Ningbo experience offers insights into where the two fell short.It was only the third match of the tournament, and winning titles will need them to string together five wins, with the intensity increasing as the week progresses. Against the considerably higher ranked opponents, the Indians started well leading 8-0, but the HK pair had caught up at 10-10. From trailing 10-12 to regaining lead at 17-16, the Indians did well to threaten an upset and stayed in the fray at 19-18.

However the Indians couldn't close out at the crunch of 20-19. Experience and a far more composed temperament saw HK take the opener at 22-20.In the second, Tanisha and Dhruv were once more up 8-5. However it was the HK pair's turn to wrack up 8 points in a row, as they went on a point binge to lead 17-9. The end was nigh for the Indians, as an opportunity was lost to nick a Top 10 scalp.Not



being able to close out has been an Indian malady across singles and doubles, and the general levels of low confidence in converting tiny margins aren't really helping anyone.Maybe, they needed inspiration from Ningbo's most famous recent shuttler, mens doubles Olympics silver medalist Wang Chang, who patiently built his famous partnership with Liang Weikeng.Ningbo happens to be a popular university graduation centre for several Indian students, known for the weekly gong that goes out in the countryside when 55-year-old Zhong Yunyan, (a.k.a Chinese mom) packs home made lunches for the international students. The Chinese city known for its manufacture on a large scale of Russian designed home appliances, is a melting pot with many Indian students pursuing niche education along campuses lined with cherry blossoms.

Mohamed Salah extends contract with Liverpool for two more years

GNS News Agency, April 15

Liverpool's Mohamed Salah, right, kicks the ball ahead of Fulham's Antonee Robinson during the English Premier League soccer match between Fulham and Liverpool, at Craven Cottage, London, Sunday, April 6, 2025. (AP Photo)Liverpool's Mohamed Salah, right, kicks the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Fulham and Liverpool, at Craven Cottage.

Mohamed Salah has signed a new contract extension at Liverpool for two years thereby ending months of uncertainty over his future. Salah's future was a major point at the club given that he's established himself as a club legend during his stint at the Merseyside club with 243 goals in 394 appearances. This sees him ranking third in the list of Liverpool's all-time top scorers."Of course I'm very excited. We have a great team now. Before also we had a great team. But I signed because I think we have a chance to win other trophies and enjoy my football," Salah said after the announcement was made by the club. "It's great, I had my best years here. I played for eight years, hopefully it's going to be 10. Enjoying my life here, enjoying my football. I had the best years in my career (at Liverpool)."

"I would like to say to (the fans), I am very, very happy to be here. I signed here because I believe we can win a lot of big trophies together. Keep supporting us and we'll give it our best, and hopefully in the future we're going to win more trophies," Salah added.Liverpool will now hope to convince



two other stars — Trent Alexander-Arnold and Virgil van Dijk — to extend as well because they are also out of contract at the end of this season.Thanks to Salah banging in a league-high 27 goals so far this campaign, Liverpool command an 11-point lead in the Premier League as they chase their record-tying 20th English league title.Over the past three Premier League seasons, Salah has been the league's top scorer. At Liverpool, he has helped the club win seven major trophies including the Premier League in 2020 and the Champions League in 2019.Club manager Arne Slot said: "Mo Salah is such a great player that as a free agent he can go probably to every club in the world, wherever he wants to. But he stayed at our club."

fell short in a hard fought battle against Eudice Chong and Hong Yi Cody Wong. The experienced Indian pair secured the first set in a tie-break, before the Hong Kong, China duo fought back in the second set. And from there on in, Hong Kong, China had the better of the exchanges, winning the final set, and the contest at 7-6, 3-6, 11-13.Sponsored by Suhana, the Indian team will take on the Chinese Taipei in their third match of the Billie Jean King Cup on Thursday, April 11.The tournament is powered by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Ministry of Sports and Youth Welfare (Maharashtra). Other partners for the tournament include Biserli, Shiv-Naresh, Manipal Hospitals.

Are Walton Goggins and Aimee Lou Wood feuding after on-set romance gone wrong? White Lotus 3 controversy explained



The White Lotus Season 3 might have ended with an underwhelming finale, but behind-the-scenes drama seems to be compensating for it. It all started when some fans noticed a digital fallout: Walton Goggins and Aimee Lou Wood, who played Rick and Chelsea—the lead couple in Season 3—are no longer following each other on Instagram. Many found it odd, considering they had shared screen space, posted tributes, and spoken warmly about each other during the press tour. And just as Reddit began rolling out theories, fellow cast member Jason Isaacs made cryptic comments, calling the shoot a “pressure cooker,” and hinting at a tense dynamic on set.

Did Rick and Chelsea’s romance turn sour off-screen?

It was just days ago when Aimee Lou gave an interview to The Hollywood Reporter, expressing her sadness over Walton skipping the White Lotus Season 3 finale viewing party, saying she missed him since it was something they did together. “Like, of course Walton had to watch it alone, and of course I had to watch it in the group, because there is so much Aimee in Chelsea and so much Walton in Rick.” Now, a subtle change on social media quickly snowballed into full-blown speculation. Some even noted the absence of tags in recent posts where the actors posted each other’s photos and pointed out that Aimee Lou’s past comments on Walton’s posts had mysteriously vanished. A section of fans is convinced that the beloved on-screen couple has blocked each other. It’s worth mentioning that even months earlier, their bond appeared solid. In August 2024, Walton left a glowing comment on one of Aimee Lou’s posts: “You are the brightest light in every room. A Human’s Human. Miss you.

Naturally, Reddit and X (formerly Twitter) had thoughts. Some fans believe a fallout may have occurred during or after filming. “They used to idolise each other,” one Reddit user wrote. “It’s so weird that all of a sudden there’s this switch up.” One user even broke down all the changes in bullet points—like how he was the one who blocked her, and skipped the finale only to end up watching it with another co-star. The same user also hinted there might be trouble in paradise for Walton, pointing out that “Leslie Bibb, his co-star, absolutely loves Aimee Lou, always brings her

up in interviews, and was apparently close with Walton’s wife before.” The Reddit user mentioned how Walton’s wife recently posted twice, and both times he commented, “I love you so much.” Just last week, he also shared an Instagram story about leaving for another trip and said again how much he loved her. And then, both Aimee and Walton ended up posting tributes to their characters using Fleetwood Mac’s “Silver Springs”—hers was a post, his was just an Insta story. But, amid all this just a few days ago, Walton shared a carousel of behind-the-scenes photos from their time filming in Thailand, calling their story “a love story... hindered by unresolved, childhood trauma.” In a long, hand-written post, he thanked series creator Mike White and Aimee Lou, writing, “Thank you Aimee Lou for being my partner... a journey I will never forget.” She also reciprocated the feeling and shared her own tributes. A simple caption—“The perfect storm ?? ?? ??”—on a photo of their on-screen characters walking together, and another image of graffiti that read, “I love you. Forever,” signed off with “R and C forever ??.”

In an appearance on The Happy Hour on SiriusXM, Jason Isaacs (Timothy Ratliff) seemingly acknowledged that “there were tense dynamics during production.” He described the summer set as filled with “friendships, romances, arguments, cliques that form and break and reform.” But he also pushed back at fan speculation. “Nobody has the slightest clue what they’re talking about,” he said, addressing internet theories. “I’m careful. I’m not stupid. I look at the Internet. I only read every single word written about The White Lotus and about everybody in it,” he said. Isaacs clarified that his earlier hints about drama referred to crew departments, not necessarily the main cast. Still, for fans convinced something went bad between Walton and Aimee Lou, his comments didn’t do much to quash speculation. Despite the online theories, neither Walton nor Aimee Lou has publicly confirmed any fallout. All we know so far is that they have always spoken fondly of each other. Yet, the absence of mutual tags, vanishing comments, and conspicuous unfollowing have left fans to create their own conclusions.

Mike White and White Lotus Composer fallout

Mike White, the creator of The White Lotus, has finally addressed the behind-the-scenes drama with the show’s composer, Cristóbal Tapia de Vee. During his appearance on The Howard Stern Show, White revealed he was shocked to see that Tapia de Vee went to the press and said they had a falling out. “I don’t think I ever had a fight with him, except maybe some emails — it was basically me giving him notes,” White said. The director added that he genuinely wasn’t sure from the start how much of a team player the composer was, and labeled the composer’s press move ahead of the finale as “kind of a bitch move.” The Emmy winning composer, on the other hand has already confirmed he won’t be back for season four. In that same Times interview, he hinted that their creative clashes started as early as season one. “We already had our last fight forever, I think,” the composer said. White, on the other hand, believes the real issue was Tapia de Vee’s attitude. “He didn’t respect me,” White said adding that the composer “wanted to do it his way.”

Mrithik Roshan secretly went on auditions before debut, dad Rakesh found out and called him back: ‘Don’t do such things’



Actor Hrithik Roshan, who is on tour in the US currently, attended a fan meet-and-greet event in New Jersey. Several pictures and videos from the show, hosted by Sophie Choudry, are doing rounds on social media. During the event, Hrithik opened up about feeling ‘nervous’ and ‘afraid’ ahead of his directorial debut, Krish 4, and how his father, filmmaker Rakesh Roshan, reacted when he found out that he was secretly auditioning for Shekhar Kapur once. The actor also revealed that he chilled with his Krish co-star Priyanka Chopra and her husband Nick Jonas while in the US. He shared, “Last night, I was with Nick Jonas and Priyanka Chopra watching his Broadway show, which, by the way, is brilliant. It’s called The Last Five Years if you haven’t seen it, you must see it. We were chatting and he actually told me that he is from New Jersey.”

Hrithik made his debut at the turn of the century with the blockbuster film Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai, but he didn’t know that his father was planning on launching him. A young Hrithik took matters into his own hands, but his strategy didn’t work out. He said, “My father always told me that you have to make your own life, don’t expect me to make a film for you just because I am a director and you are my son. So, I grew up knowing that my dad would never compromise his work just to make a film for me. I really had to be deserving of it. There came a time when I thought I am not deserving of that. So, I would just go outside and audition. I went to my friend Daboo Ratnani, and we did a photo session. I had no money to pay him, so I said if I earn some good bucks once I become an actor, I will pay you back, he said ‘Don’t worry about it.’”

Wow HR never spoke about this before: He had on his own gone to audition for a movie called Ta Ra Rum Pum Pum helmed by Shekhar Kapur before KNPB but his dad felt a sense of loss that he couldn’t be the one to launch him so he dissuaded Hrithik from doing it

He continued, “Then, I auditioned for many filmmakers and one of them was Shekhar Kapur. He was auditioning me for a film called Ta Ra Rum Pum Pum, which never got made, it was an amazing script. My dad found out and

he called me while I was in the audition. He said, ‘Hello, where are you?’ I told him that I am auditioning for Shekhar Kapur’s film. He said, ‘What? Come back now, don’t do such things’. I think my dad felt a sense of loss that somebody else is going to take his son away and make a film for him. Before that, he only thought of a film for me. I always feel great and want to pat myself on the back because I did not get an offer from the father Rakesh Roshan, I got an offer from the director Rakesh Roshan. That is something I am always going to be proud of.”

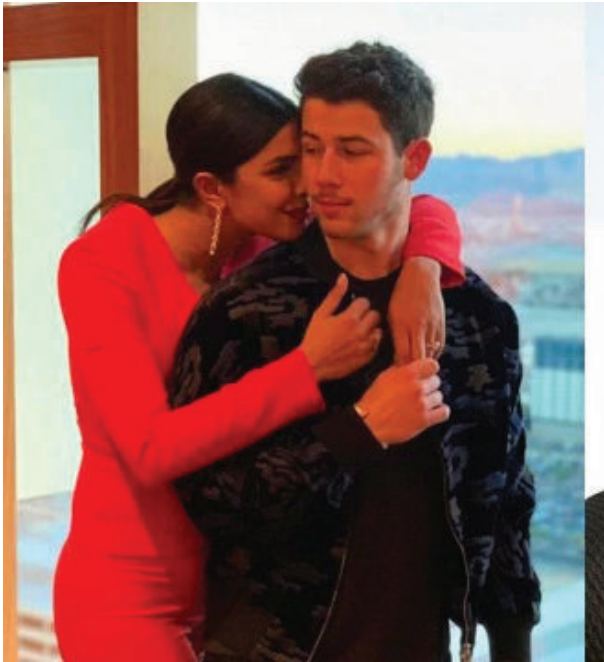
When the host pointed out his versatility in different films, Hrithik said that he is just doing his job as an actor. “I don’t think it should be a problem that I am doing my job. The job is to get into the character and getting paid for it. You are paying to go into a theatre and to get some honesty and integrity. You want to watch something that entertains you. I love my job, I love being an actor and getting into a character,” he said. Expressing his happiness about the love that the Krish franchise has received, Hrithik said, “I am so full of gratitude that all of you have kept the idea of Krish alive. Also, thanks to social media I think. I keep hearing about Jaadu and Krish, so we are on the heels of beginning the journey of Krish 4 now, as soon as I go back. I hope and pray that you will give it as much love as you did to the previous ones.” Talking about turning director with Krish 4, Hrithik said, “Deep inside, I think I am a filmmaker. I don’t know what to say. I am afraid, I am nervous. I am back to kindergarten. There will be so many uncertainties and new things. The moments where I face fear, I will remember you all. It is going to be a new challenge.” Hrithik recently made headlines with his Dallas show, when the attendees returned unhappy due to mismanagement by the organisers. Several fans took to social media to complain and express disappointment about the event.

'Kingdom': 50 days to go for theatrical release

Hyderabad: The makers of Kingdom have released an official poster announcing that the film will hit theaters in 50 days. The movie is set to be released on May 30, 2025. Kingdom stars Vijay Devarakonda, Bhagyashri Borse, and Satyadev in key roles. Details about the rest of the cast and crew are yet to be announced. This marks Vijay Devarakonda’s 12th film. It is directed by Gautham Tinnanuri, known for Jersey, and produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sounjanya under Sithara Entertainment and Farnesi Four Cinemas, while Anirudh Ravichander is composing the music.



Hrithik Roshan meets ‘brilliant’ Nick Jonas and Priyanka Chopra in New York, fuels Krrish 4 cast rumours



Actor Hrithik Roshan is about to make his directorial debut in the 4th edition of the Krish franchise, as his father Rakesh Roshan, who directed Koi Mil Gaya (2003),

Krish (2006), and Krish 3 (2013), announced that his son will be taking his spot in the director’s chair. Since the announcement, speculations are in the air about who is going to be returning from the cast of the previous films. To fan the flames even further, Hrithik just met with Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas, although the reason for the meeting is still unclear.

Both Priyanka and Roshan attended Nick Jonas’ Broadway show on Wednesday, and during a meet and greet the next day, Roshan commented, “Last night, I was with Nick Jonas and Priyanka Chopra. We were watching his Broadway show, which is, by the way, brilliant. He was absolutely amazing. It’s called The Last Five Years. If you haven’t seen it, you must see it.” Chopra and Roshan worked together in Krish (2006) and Krish 3 (2013). In the 2006 film Hrithik’s character Krishna was introduced as the son of Rohit Mehra from Koi Mil Gaya, who also inherited his father’s powers. The film was a big hit at the box office and was considered India’s entry into the superhero genre. After 12 years, Krish is back on people’s minds, as Roshan will likely be playing a double role on the screen and will definitely be playing a role behind the camera. According to a report by India Today, the studio is planning to bring back many familiar phases. Throughout the three films in the franchise as of yet, there have been many big names such as Preity Zinta, Priyanka Chopra, Vivek Oberoi and Rekha, but none of these names have been confirmed for the new film.

Warfare movie review: Bareboned film on battle of Ramadi accurately showcases futility of war

Stripped literally to the bones, here is a film about war that does not feature grand battles or majestic battlefields. All of its action involves an ordinary house on an ordinary street on an ordinary day, and surviving that one day, through one battle and then the next and the next. With limited dialogues, no showboating, and neither moralising nor lecturing, it illustrates the futility of America’s foray(s) into Iraq, with scared men on both sides shooting at each other, often randomly and repeatedly, blinded by smoke and sweat. Of talk there may be little, but with sound, writer-directors Garland and Mendoza (hat-tip to sound effects editor Danny Freeman) mount an assault all its own. The night is dotted with scattered gunshots, but as the day dawns, every sound carries a warning. A Navy SEALs team cooped up inside a house in Ramadi, Iraq, that they have taken over to prepare for a Marines ground operation — shepherding the two Iraqi families sharing the house into one room — must keep their eyes open and ears cocked for the scenes outside.

Does the busy street market have too many young men walking around? Now, does it have too few? Is the market emptying? Why are all the men going into one building? What is that car driving up to this building, and what is the thing being taken out of its boot? And the call to prayer, what is that about?

If quiet fills the house, but for the scribbling of notes about the operation and the peeing of SEALs into bottles as they take duty breaks, sound bombards and stuns when the men call in a “show of strength” and US planes fly in for that, zooming close to the ground and rattling every living being and standing structure. An IED blast hits a tank and day turns instantly to night, with the men taking their time waking up to distorted, muddled senses and the sounds of their own screaming. There is no hiding those screams as pain and fear wipe away any stoicism, with streaks of blood on the floor and the insides of a body on the street staring the men in the face. The determination of the men to not leave their severely injured buddies behind is the one flourish of heroism in Warfare. For the most part, shot almost in real time as the SEALs team is ambushed, and waits desperately for a difficult rescue, Warfare wants us to look past the helmets, the bullet-proof jackets, the gear and the guns, at very young men just trying to survive.

‘Poulter leads a cast that does what is required of it,

Karan Johar, Akshay Kumar clap back at General Dyer’s granddaughter calling Jallianwala Bagh massacre victim ‘looter’: ‘How dare she?’



At the Kesari 2 press conference, Karan Johar expressed his anger over General Dyer’s granddaughter calling the Jallianwala Bagh genocide victims ‘looters’.

Kesari 2 actor Akshay Kumar and producer Karan Johar strongly criticised the comments of General Reginald Dyer who recently called the victims of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre as ‘looters’. Akshay plays C Sankaran Nair in the film who sued the British Empire for carrying out the genocide in Amritsar in which at least 1,650 people were killed. Talking about the film and the Jallianwala Bagh incident, Karan Johar said, “I have heard stories of true valor and bravery of unsung heroes various times. These stories have been embedded in the archives of history and not portrayed on celluloid. This took me back to a few stories that came on my table like Raazi, that film went on to prove that true stories resonate gorgeously, it could strike a chord with the audience. There was also The Ghazi Attack, and Kesari.

“This one is an absolutely outstanding story of C Shankaran Nair, based on the book, The Case That Shook The Empire. We knew the massacre, but none of us knew the truth. Every time we have watched the tragedy, we have felt the pain, the anger. What makes us all angry is that there isn’t an apology even now. Neither the crown, nor the monarchy or the British Government apologized. We came out of the British Raj valiantly as a country, but as a nation we deserve an apology and this film demands just that,” he said. Earlier, in an interview General Dyer’s granddaughter spoke to a family member of the victim where she said, “General Dyer is an honorable man, greatly liked by the Indians, who spoke three or four Indian languages which very few people did.”

Responding to the victim’s family, she asked, “Was he a looter? I think history is history and you’ve got to accept that.” Reacting to this, Karan Johar said, “I have seen that video, and not just as an Indian or humanitarian, but as anyone who has an iota of empathy, it will anger you. How ridiculous was she to say that, and how dare she? She was calling those thousands of people looters, they were innocent people who collected on the auspicious day of Baisakhi, thinking something else was going to be the eventuality of the day. By his own admission, General Dyer said that he only stopped shooting when the bullets ran out.” She went on in an interview to say that he loved India, and all kinds of things that he had the greatest compassion. What love can you have, when your actions only spoke of hate. She is living in a lala land of her own and in some delusion. I don’t know her, haven’t met her, and don’t wish to. The fact that she even said those things boiled my blood, she had such disdain for the biggest genocide in the history of our nation, that it made me demand an apology even more,” Karan added. Akshay Kumar also shared his views and said, “One nation’s trauma is another nation’s lesson. That is what she never understood and kept saying History is history. I appreciate what Karan said and the way he said it.”